National Agriculture and Food Research Organization

**Joint Linkage Call 2025 between INRAE and NARO**

# What are joint linkage calls?

Joint linkage calls are designed to facilitate mobility of researchers between the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food & Environment (INRAE) and National Agriculture and Food Research Organization, Japan (NARO). Joint linkage calls act as seed funding for bilateral research projects and, in a spirit of reciprocity, the calls also foster short-term exchanges of scientific staff (with emphasis on early-career researchers).

Joint linkage calls can have multiple associated benefits, including improved knowledge and functional understanding of the two organisations involved, as well as their national and international scientific policies. In addition, these bilateral research projects support several scientific outputs such as data sharing and synthesis, modelling activities, and the development of novel methodologies and joint publications. These small projects can also lay the groundwork for larger collaborations by then applying conjointly for other funding sources.

# How does it work?

In 2016, INRA and NARO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), followed by a Letter of Intention (LoI) in October 2018, which outlined a framework for collaboration through a joint linkage call.

In 2021, the MoU was renewed, incorporating the contents of the LoI directly into the updated agreement.

Topics of interest for both organisations are defined in the MoU and then outlined in the annual call for linkage research projects. The call for applications is launched in parallel by both partners and disseminated to their scientific staff. From the launch date, the active period lasts 12 months and includes an exchange of scientific staff from both partners (e.g. INRAE researchers going to the partner organisation, and the partner organisation’s researchers visiting INRAE).

Topics of the JLC for 2025 are as follows:

1) Environmental Sciences

2) Agricultural and Food Sciences

3) Plant and animal Sciences

5) Social Sciences

6) Other areas determined through mutual consultations

In the 2025 JLC, priority will be given to proposals focusing on "Environmental Science" and "Innovation in Fermented Food Science," with an emphasis on improving agricultural and food productivity while promoting global environmental conservation. Applicants must clearly explain how their research or activities align with these specific topics in their proposals. Additionally, we strongly encourage young scientists to apply and will prioritize their applications.

Applicants respond by submitting fully filled “Proposal for INRAE-NARO Joint Linkage Call 2025” by 22nd March 2025 to the coordinators in each organisation. A joint selection committee, comprised of representatives from both partner organisations, will select the projects for funding based on the quality of the project.

Each partner will exclusively fund the outgoing mobility of their own scientific staff, covering travel and accommodation expenses, as well as domestic transportation for the host scientist(s) to accompany their counterpart. Additionally, each partner will contribute 50% of the coordination costs if required. Both parties are expected to provide equal total financial support for the annual call.

The budget and research topics may be adjusted during the MoU period through mutual agreement. In exceptional cases where researchers are unable to travel, such as during a pandemic like COVID-19, the use of funds will follow each organization’s internal validation processes to ensure the success of the approved project.

# The general procedure is as follows:

Here’s the revised and integrated version with the timeline:

* A call for proposals is issued annually at the same time and shared within both organizations, with a unified submission deadline of **22nd March 2025**.
* All submissions are compiled and exchanged, ensuring both organizations have an identical list of projects.
* Each organization independently reviews and ranks the projects.
* On **24th April**, a joint evaluation is conducted by a NARO-INRAE panel.
* A joint selection committee, consisting of 1–3 members from each partner organization, deliberates initially via email and then finalizes decisions during a videoconference.
* The final results are communicated on **5th May**.