

# Outline of JSPS Core-to-Core Program, FY2025

## I. Program Objective

The Core-to-Core Program comprises two components: A. Advanced Research Networks and B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms. The program is designed to create world-class research hubs in research fields considered to be cutting-edge and internationally important in Japan or to create high-potential research hubs in fields of special importance or significance to Asia and/or Africa and of high priority in Japan. These multilateral hubs are built and operated through sustainable collaborative relations established among research/education institutions in Japan and countries around the world. While advancing research in these fields and building core research and education hubs, the Core-to-Core Program also concentrates on fostering the next generations of trailblazing young researchers.

Core institutions in Japan and in its counterpart countries conduct collaborative research exchanges. They take the form of joint research projects, seminars, and researcher exchanges, which are organized and carried out effectively under the program. Core institutions are expected to continue operating as research hubs after funding under this program has ended.

## II. Types of Programs

- A. Advanced Research Networks
- B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms

## III. Applicant Eligibility

- (1) Japanese universities and research institutions eligible to apply for this program as a core institution are those specified in Article 2 of the Rules for the Handling of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (*Kakenhi*), issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). To qualify, institutions or their departments must possess sufficient research funding, equipment/facilities and human resources, and be capable of establishing an organizational structure for implementing the overall research project as a core institution.

\* Institutions specified as eligible in the Rules for the Handling of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research:

- 1) Universities and inter-university research institutes
- 2) MEXT facilities and other institutions engaged in scientific research
- 3) Technical colleges
- 4) Institutions designated by MEXT

- (2) Core institutions play a leading role in conducting collaborative research exchanges under this program. Each must have one project coordinator. S/he must be a full-time researcher or a researcher positioned as full time at the core institution. However, a researcher who is not employed full-time may qualify as a coordinator if his/her affiliated institution guarantees the implementation of the core-to-core project including the provision of an appropriate research environment (e.g. laboratory, equipment, personnel). In any case, the coordinator must be eligible to receive Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (*Kakenhi*). As the coordinator plays a vital role in carrying out the project plan, care should be taken not to appoint a person to the position who might lose his/her coordinator eligibility or otherwise be unable to perform the coordinator's duties during the full period of the project's implementation.

#### **IV. Period for Application Acceptance**

Tuesday, 3 September to Tuesday, 1 October 2024, 5:00 p.m.

(Please note that applicants' affiliated institutions may set earlier deadlines.)

#### **V. Details of Type A. Advanced Research Networks**

##### **1. Targeted Research Fields**

Research topics considered to be cutting-edge and internationally important in Japan. (All fields of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.)

##### **2. Eligible Countries**

At least two or more countries that have diplomatic relations with Japan. (JSPS treats Taiwan and Palestine in this manner.)

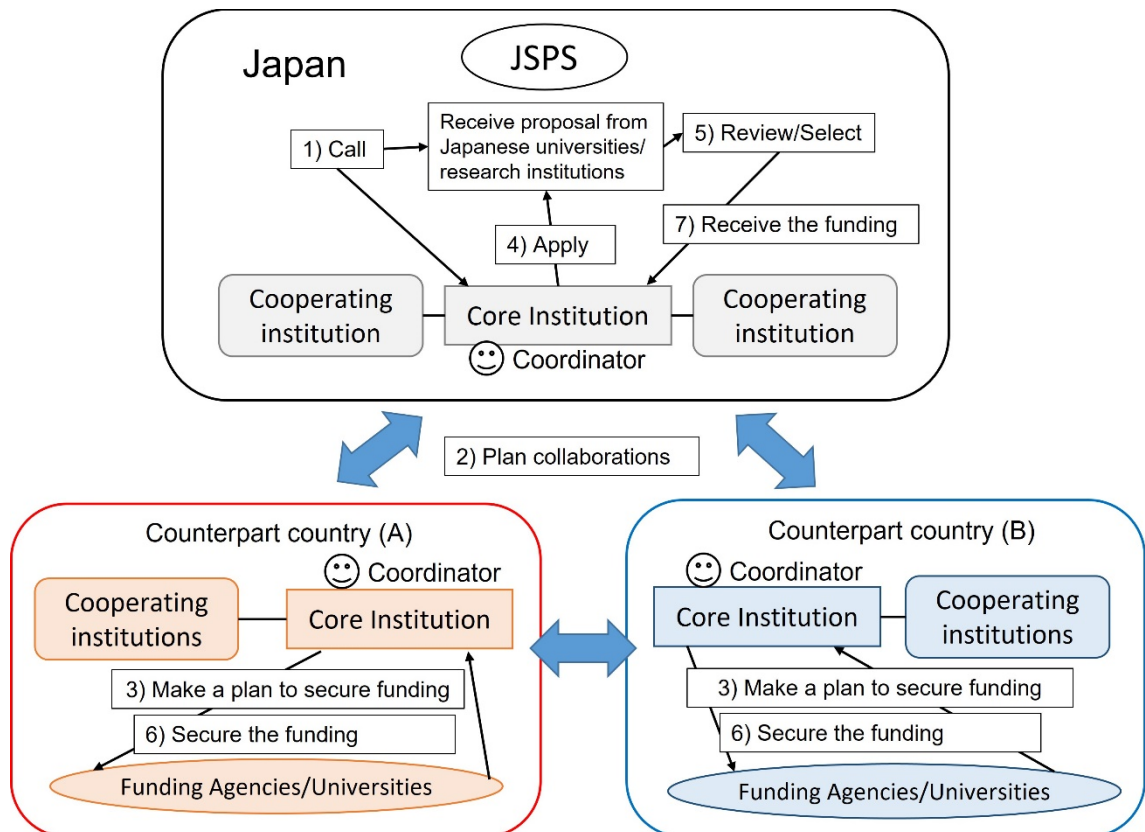
##### **3. Application and Selection Process**

- 1) JSPS issues a call for proposals to Japanese universities/research institutions.
- 2) Those universities/research institutions interested in conducting multilateral collaborations via joint research projects, seminars and researcher exchanges with universities/research institutions in other countries ("counterpart core institutions") consult with each other and develop plans for collaboration under this program.
- 3) All the counterpart core institutions secure the necessary funding to implement the project throughout the project period. If counterpart core institutions are able to obtain funding under any system in an amount needed to share the cost of the collaborative research, based on either cost-sharing pattern 1 or 2 in Appendix 1, JSPS considers them eligible to participate in this program.
- 4) Japanese universities/research institutions submit applications to JSPS after their

counterpart core institutions confirm that they have either acquired funding, been selected for funding, or promised such funding. (An application may be submitted while a counterpart's funding request is being processed. If the funding is not obtained, the application will be cancelled.)

5) JSPS reviews proposals received and selects projects.

#### Application and Selection Process



#### 4. Project Period

From April 2025 through March 2030 (under the FY2025 call)

#### 5. Project Funding

(1) JSPS provides Japanese core institutions with the following funding:

Up to ¥18 million per fiscal year

(2) JSPS covers the following expenses of the Japanese core institutions:

- i. International travel expenses
- ii. Domestic travel expenses
- iii. Cost of goods
- iv. Honorariums/personnel cost\*

\* Personnel costs are limited to short-term employment expenses associated with temporary work. Continuous employment expenses are not covered.

v. Others

## **6. Number of Projects Slated to Start in FY 2025**

About 9 projects

## **7. Screening Criteria Used in JSPS Reviews**

Applications are screened from the following perspectives.

### **① Scientific/academic merit**

- Degree to which the proposed project is recognized as being cutting-edge and unique in the subject research field.
- Whether there is a clear need and value to implement the project with the proposed counterpart institutions.
- Degree to which the collaboration between the core institutions in Japan and the counterpart countries can be expected to yield results of sufficiently high academic value to contribute to the establishment of a world-class research hub.
- Degree to which the project will build upon and expand the core institutions' past international research activities and accomplishments.

### **② Fostering young researchers**

- Whether the project includes a program for honing the skills and expertise of young researchers.

### **③ Creating an implementation framework on the Japan side**

- On the Japan side, plans to build a world-class research hub should be strategically placed within the core institution's overall education and research program.
- The Japanese core institution should have in place on an institutional level a system for ensuring the ongoing implementation of the proposed project.
- The project should be capable of enlisting the participation of an adequate number of researchers in Japan who are qualified to build a world-class research hub. It should also have an effective scheme for mobilizing cooperation from researchers of different institutions in Japan.
- The Japanese core institution should be capable of continuing its operation as a world-class research hub after funding under this program has ended.
- A system should be established for accommodating gender balance in the project or a plan established for achieving it.

### **④ Network building between core institutions**

- The match-up of core institutions should hold good promise for sustained research collaboration.

- A clear-cut framework for implementing the project, such as a signed cooperative agreement, should be established between the core institutions.
- The project should be expected to contribute to the continuous development of multilateral collaborations between the core institutions in the future.
- Counterpart core institutions must, on an institutional level, have one coordinator and an adequate number of researchers in place to ensure the continuous implementation of the proposed collaborative research exchange. The participation of an adequate number of researchers is an essential qualification.

⑤ Appropriateness of collaborative research plan

- The project should have a clear vision of how to build a world-class research hub in the subject field in Japan.
- Whether advanced consultation has clearly been carried out between the participating coordinators and institutions, and whether the plan for research collaboration is sufficiently concrete to achieve the program objectives and is highly attainable.
- Whether the degree of collaboration laid out in the plan is practicable in terms of its fiscal and operational scope.
- Whether pertinent information has been obtained on the counterpart countries' prospects to secure matching funds.

In selecting projects, an attempt is made to strike a balance among counterpart countries, fields and institutions.

## **8. Evaluation of Selected Projects**

In principle, JSPS's International Program Committee carries out an interim evaluation of projects at their 3-year juncture and also conducts a post-project evaluation. Japanese core institutions should provide all the information requested by JSPS to perform these evaluations, including on the degree of equivalence achieved in cost-sharing. The amount of funding allocated for the fiscal years after the interim evaluation will be based on the results.

## **VI. Details of Type B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms**

### **1. Targeted Research Fields**

Research topics of special importance or significance to Asia and/or African and considered to be of high priority within Japan (All fields of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences.)

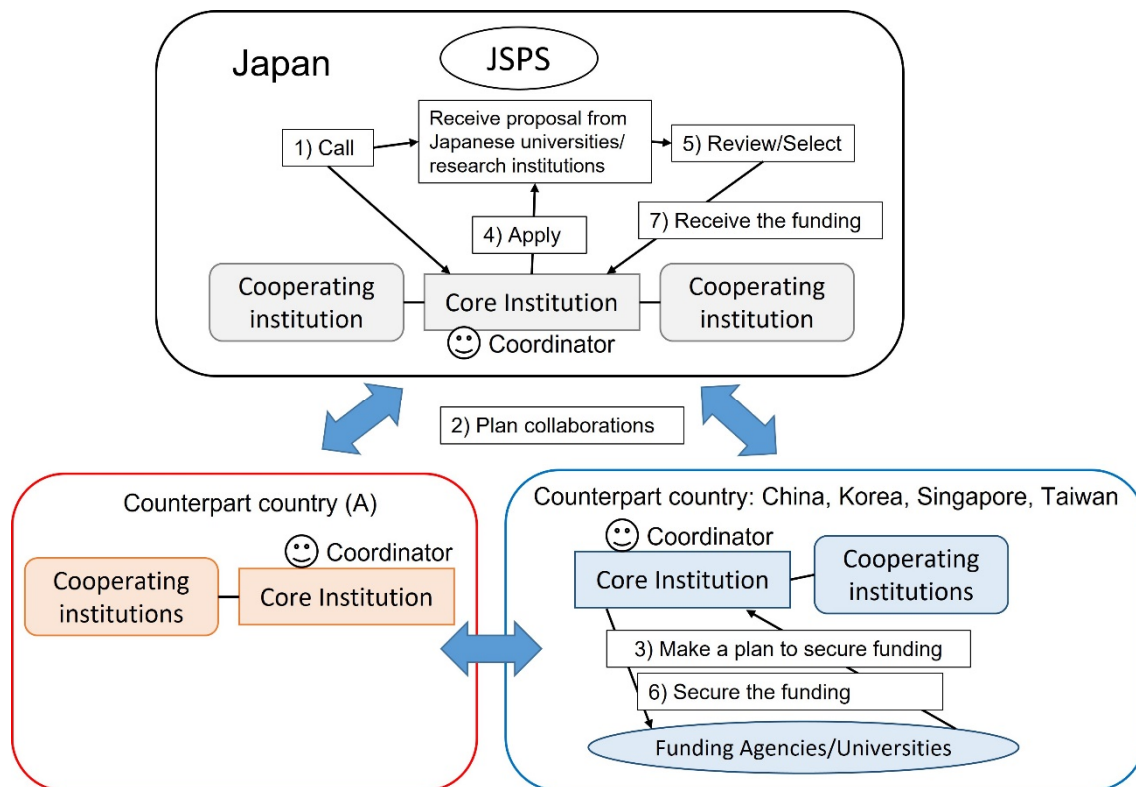
### **2. Eligible Countries**

At least two Asian and/or African countries that have diplomatic relations with Japan (JSPS treats Taiwan and Palestine in this manner.). However, Type B Asia-Africa Science Platforms does not support multilateral projects that comprise only researchers from institutions in China, Korea, Singapore or Taiwan as they are expected to obtain sufficient funding. (For collaboration with these countries only, please apply under "A. Advanced Research Networks.")

### **3. Application and Selection Process**

- 1) JSPS issues a call for proposals to Japanese universities/research institutions.
- 2) Those universities/research institutions interested in conducting multilateral collaborations via joint research projects, seminars and researcher exchanges with universities/research institutions in other countries ("counterpart core institutions") consult with each other and develop plans for collaboration under this program.
- 3)※ All the counterpart core institutions secure the necessary funding to implement the project throughout the project period. If counterpart core institutions are able to obtain funding under any system in an amount needed to share the cost of the collaborative research, based on either cost-sharing pattern 1 or 2 in Appendix 1, JSPS considers them eligible to participate in this program.
- 4)※ Japanese universities/research institutions submit applications to JSPS after the counterpart core institutions confirm that they have either acquired funding, been selected for funding, or promised such funding. (An application may be submitted while a counterpart's funding request is being processed. If the funding is not obtained, the application will be cancelled.)  
  
    ※ The above 3) and of 4) processes are necessary only for institutions in China, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.
- 5) JSPS reviews proposals received and selects projects.

## Application and Selection Process



## 4. Project Period

From April 2025 through March 2028 (under the FY2025 call)

## 5. Project Funding

(1) JSPS provides Japanese core institutions with the following funding:

Up to ¥8 million per fiscal year

(2) JSPS covers the following expenses of the Japanese core institutions:

- i. International travel expenses
- ii. Domestic travel expenses
- iii. Cost of goods
- iv. Honorariums/personnel cost

\* Personnel costs are limited to short-term employment expenses associated with temporary work. Continuous employment expenses are not covered.

v. Others

## 6. Number of Projects Slated to Start in FY 2025

About 10 projects

## 7. Screening Criteria Used in JSPS Reviews

Applications are screened from the following perspectives.

### ① Scientific/academic merit

- Degree to which the proposed project is recognized as being of common interest and special importance to the Asian and African regions and whether it is scientifically meaningful for Japan to conduct priority research in the subject field.
- Whether there is a clear need and value for the Japanese core institution to take the lead in carrying out the research collaboration with counterpart institutions in Asia and/or Africa.
- Degree to which the collaboration between the core institution in Japan and the counterpart countries can be expected to yield results of sufficiently high academic value.
- Degree to which the project will build upon and expand the core institutions' past international research activities and accomplishments.

### ② Fostering young researchers

- Whether the project includes a program for honing the skills and expertise of young researchers.

### ③ Creating an implementation framework on the Japan side

- On the Japan side, plans to build a core research hub should be strategically placed within the core institution's overall education and research program.
- The Japanese core institution should have in place on an institutional level a system for ensuring the ongoing implementation of the proposed project.
- The project should be capable of enlisting the participation of an adequate number of researchers in Japan who are qualified to build a core research hub. It should also have an effective scheme for mobilizing cooperation from researchers of different institutions in Japan.
- The Japanese core institutions should be capable of continuing its operation as a core research hub after funding under this program has ended.
- A system should be established for accommodating gender balance in the project or a plan established for achieving it.

### ④ Network building between core institution

- The match-up of core institutions should hold good promise for sustained research collaboration.
- A clear-cut framework for implementing the project, such as a signed cooperative agreement, should be established between the core institutions.
- As a core research hub in the subject field, the project should be expected to contribute to the continuous development of multilateral collaboration between the core institutions in the future.



- Counterpart core institutions must, on an institutional level, have one coordinator and an adequate number of researchers in place to ensure the continuous implementation of the proposed collaborative research exchange. The participation of an adequate number of researchers is an essential qualification.
- ⑤ Appropriateness of collaborative research plan
- Whether advanced consultation has been clearly carried out between the participating coordinators and research institutions, and whether the plan for research collaborations is sufficiently concrete to achieve the program objectives and is highly attainable.
  - Whether the degree of collaborations laid out in the plan is practicable in terms of its fiscal and operational scope.

In selecting projects, an attempt is made to strike a balance among counterpart countries, fields and institutions.

## **VII. Application Instructions**

- (1) Researchers who are eligible to participate in this program are as follows:
  - ① Researchers employed at a university or research institute (In the case of Japan, researchers eligible to apply for MEXT Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research)
  - ② Postdoctoral researchers at universities or research institutes
  - ③ Researchers enrolled in a postgraduate course, either master's or doctoral
- (2) One core institution may be established in each counterpart country. Other institutions in each counterpart country will be registered as cooperating institutions.
- (3) Funding provided under this program is for implementing projects between Japan and counterpart countries. It is not for supporting travel by Japanese researchers to a counterpart country for conducting fieldwork or surveys carried out only by themselves.
- (4) A moderate number of researchers from other countries may participate in projects as collaborating researchers. Regarding the covering of their costs, Japanese institutions should refer to pertinent regulations.
- (5) Under JSPS's international programs, researchers who are already representing a project in one of JSPS's program categories are not eligible to concurrently represent a project in another category with some exceptions. (Such researchers are those responsible for implementing an already-selected project as its research representative, coordinator, chief seminar organizer or person in similar capacity. However, the heads of institutions and/or departments who represent the implementing organization are exempted.) For information on the approval of projects overlapping program categories, see Appendix 2 "Table, Overlapping Program Restrictions." However, no restriction is placed on duplicate application or duplicate grant receipt between the Core-to-Core Program and Grants-in-

Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) program. Once an application is submitted, the project's representative may not be changed. A person may not assume the role of coordinator in projects under both Type A (Advanced Research Networks) and Type B (Asia-Africa Science Platforms) at the same time.

- (6) Japanese coordinators who are now or have been supported under any of JSPS's international programs are required to state their correlations (if any) with the Core-to-Core program for which they are applying.
- (7) If the applying institution is receiving or is scheduled to receive funding from another funding program\* that is relevant to the proposed project, it must state so and clearly describe the relationship of that funding to the project. Projects that are already receiving funding from another funding program will not be supported in duplicated areas.  
\* Here, a "funding program" is a program for supporting an organization.
- (8) Your application form will be printed out in black and white (gray scale) and mailed to reviewers. Please be careful so that the contents you create can be clearly seen when printed out.

#### **VIII. Obligation of Japanese Core Institutions**

Core institutions are to establish a website and proactively post information about the project both during and after the funding period. Though JSPS does not participate in negotiations over rights to results yielded through the project's implementation, core institutions are to acknowledge JSPS's support by mentioning the "JSPS Core-to-Core Program" when announcing the results.

#### **IX. Measures Against Misuse of Research Funds and Handling of Personal Information, etc.**

- (1) JSPS will take appropriate measures (e.g. terminate project, require reimbursement of part or all of allocated funds) in cases of misuse of research funds, improper practices (e.g. fabrication, falsification, plagiarism), unjustifiable acts (e.g. discrimination, harassment), or violation of laws.
- (2) Researchers participating in research activities under this program are obligated to complete before the activity starts a research ethics education course so as to prevent research misconduct.
- (3) The names and affiliations of the coordinators, project titles, budgets, implementation periods, reports and the evaluation results may be disclosed on JSPS's website and in its publications.

- (4) Personal information provided by applicants will be handled according to the “Act on the Protection of Personal Information” and JSPS’s “Personal Information Protection Policy,” and be used solely for the purpose of implementing JSPS programs.
- (5) When a member of project is a resident of a country belonging to the European Economic Area, including countries in the European Union and/or the UK, his/her consent to process personal data in the manner described above should be acquired in line with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 “General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)” and the “United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).” For more information on the GDPR, please go to the website: <https://www.ppc.go.jp/en/index.html>

#### **X. Others**

- (1) JSPS does not bear responsibility for any accident, sickness or other such incident that may occur over the period of the project’s implementation.
- (2) JSPS may discontinue support for a project if carrying it out becomes difficult or impossible due to a natural disaster or other unforeseen circumstances during the implementation period.
- (3) As to the ownership of rights for research results obtained under the JSPS Core-to-Core Program, they are to be determined by the core institutions based on pertinent laws and regulations in Japan and the counterpart countries. JSPS does not intercede in this process. The core institutions are asked to decide in advance the rules pertaining to the ownership of intellectual property rights.
- (4) Along with the development of information communication technology (ICT) over recent years, scientific journals are using the Internet to provide free access to research papers. This “open access” trend is proliferating rapidly across the globe. Many public grant institutions are either promoting or requiring open access for the results of research projects they fund. Researchers who author papers under the Core-to-Core Program are, within the degree possible, asked to proactively give open access to their published papers.

## Appendix 1

### Cost-sharing between Japan and counterpart countries

#### A. Advanced Research Networks

The patterns shown here in Type A (Advanced Research Networks) are applied to Type B (Asia-Africa Science Platforms) in the cases of cost-sharing with institutions in China, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.

#### Pattern 1

Cost Items		Courtiers	Coverable by JSPS	※ Counterpart Countries
Japan-side researchers	International airfare		✓	X
	Maintenance allowance in counterpart country		✓	X
	Travel cost in Japan		✓	X
	Research grant		✓	X
Counterpart-side researchers	International airfare		X	✓
	Maintenance allowance in Japan		X	✓
	Travel cost in home country		X	✓
	Research grant		X	✓
Cost for holding seminars in Japan			✓	X
Cost for holding seminars in counterpart country			X	✓
Research facilities costs at core institution			X	X

※ For sharing costs during the project period, core institutions are to obtain “matching funds” from science-promotion agencies, core institution’s own resource, regular budgets (etc.), and other funding organizations in their respective countries. For this purpose, it is desirable to use a funding scheme similar to that of the Core-to-Core Program, which supports research exchanges. However, if it should not be possible for a core institution to obtain such financial support from a funding agency or external funding source, part of its own research funds may be allocated to the research exchange as “matching funds.”

## Pattern 2

Cost Items		Countries	Coverable by JSPS	※ Counterpart Countries
Japan-side researchers	International airfare		✓	X
	Maintenance allowance in counterpart country		X	✓
	Travel cost in Japan		✓	X
	Research grant		✓	X
Counterpart-side researchers	International airfare		X	✓
	Maintenance allowance in Japan		✓	X
	Travel cost in home country		X	✓
	Research grant		X	✓
Cost for holding seminars in Japan			✓	X
Cost for holding seminars in counterpart country			X	✓
Research facilities costs at core institution			X	X

※ For sharing costs during the project period, core institutions are to obtain “matching funds” from science-promotion agencies, core institution's own resource, regular budgets (etc.), and other funding organizations in their respective countries. For this purpose, it is desirable to use a funding scheme similar to that of the Core-to-Core Program, which supports research exchanges. However, if it should not be possible for a core institution to obtain such financial support from a funding agency or external funding source, part of its own research funds may be allocated to the research exchange as “matching funds.”

## B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms

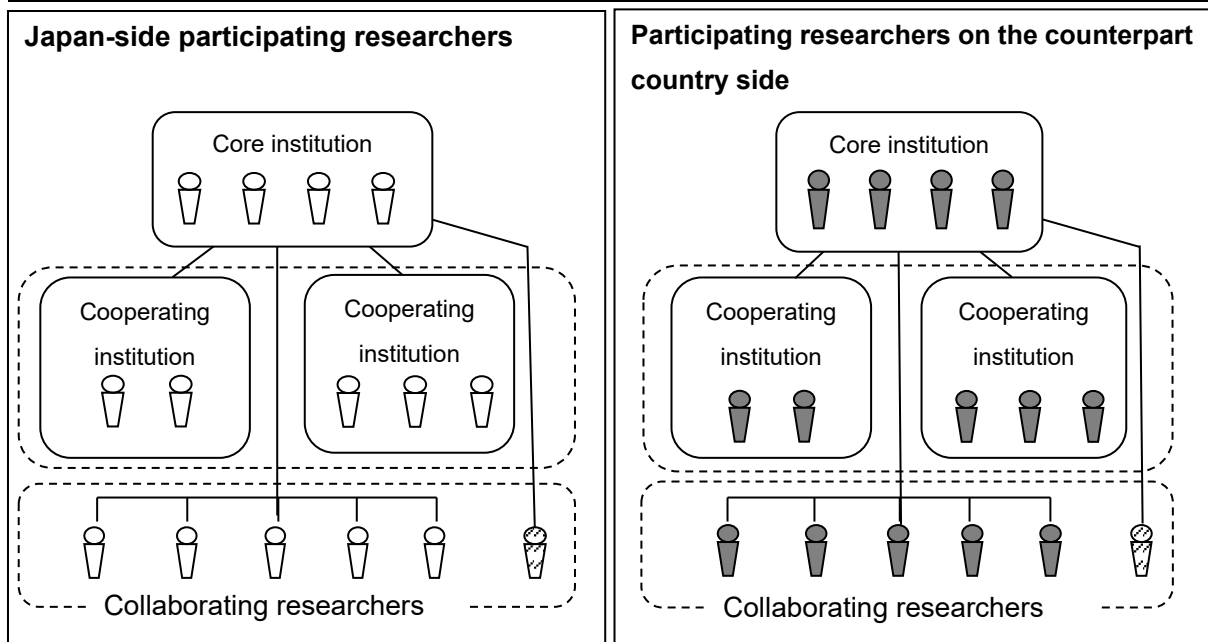
Cost-sharing with institutions in China, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan follow the patterns shown in Type A (Advanced Research Networks) on pages 12-13.

Cost Items	Coverable by JSPS
Japan-side researchers	
International airfare	✓
Maintenance allowance in counterpart country	✓
Travel cost in Japan	✓
Research grant	✓
Other-side researchers	
International airfare	✓
Maintenance allowance in Japan	✓
Travel cost in home country	X
Research grant	✓
Cost for holding seminars in Japan	✓
Cost for holding seminars in counterpart country	✓
Research facilities costs at core institution	X

## Types of participating researchers

Types of Japan-side participating researchers	Within Japan	Researchers affiliated with the core institution
		Researchers affiliated with cooperating institutions
		Collaborating researchers
	Other countries	Researchers from outside the country approved by the Japan side (called “Japan-side collaborating researchers”).

Types of participating researchers on the counterpart country side	Within the counterpart country A	Researchers affiliated with the core institution
		Researchers affiliated with cooperating institutions
		Collaborating researchers within the counterpart country
	Other countries	Researchers from outside the country approved by the counterpart country side (called “Counterpart country-side collaborating researchers”).
	Within the counterpart country B	Researchers affiliated with the core institution
		Researchers affiliated with cooperating institutions
		Collaborating researchers within the counterpart country
	Other countries	Researchers from outside the country approved by the counterpart country side (called “Counterpart country-side collaborating researchers”).



Researchers affiliated with universities and research institutions in Japan

Researchers affiliated with universities and research institutions in the counterpart country

Researchers affiliated with universities and research institutions in countries outside Japan and the counterpart country

## Appendix 2

### Overlapping Program Restrictions

This table shows the overlapping restrictions on the following two categories of applicants.

1. A researcher who applies for a project under Program A as a representative of a new project while concurrently applying for an international scientific exchange project under Program B.
2. A researcher who already has been working as the representative of a project under Program A while concurrently applying for an international scientific exchange project under Program B.

<div>Program B</div> <div>Program A</div>		① Bilateral Programs (Joint Research Projects/ Seminars)	② Internation al Joint Research Program	③ Japanese- German Graduate Externship	④ JSPS Core- to-Core Program	⑤ A3 Foresight Program
		New Proposal	New Proposal	New Proposal	New Proposal	New Proposal
①Bilateral Programs (Joint Research Projects/Seminars)	New Proposal	△	○	○	○	○
	Continued	△	○	○	○	○
②International Joint Research Program	New Proposal	○	—	▲	▲	▲
	Continued	○	—	×	×	×
③Japanese-German Graduate Externship	New Proposal	○	▲	—	▲	▲
	Continued	○	×	—	×	×
④JSPS Core-to-Core Program	New Proposal	○	▲	▲	—	▲
	Continued	○	×	×	—	×
⑤A3 Foresight Program	New Proposal	○	▲	▲	▲	—
	Continued	○	×	×	×	—

#### Notes

○: The researcher may be the representative of two projects in overlapping programs.

△: The researcher may apply for both programs but may not be the representative of two projects in overlapping programs if they are with the same counterpart country. (S/he must choose one of the overlapping programs.)



- ▲: The researcher may apply for both programs but may not be the representative of two projects in overlapping programs. (S/he must choose one of the overlapping programs.)
- ×: The researcher may not apply for the projects under Program B. Note that an application made in the last fiscal year of the project duration under Program A is acceptable.
- : In principle, the researcher may apply with one research topic under the same program. (S/he must work on a research topic proposed for a project under Program A when selected for a project under Program A.)