



# Announcement

## 17th Call for proposals for joint industrial research and development (R&D) projects between Germany and Canada

**Mandatory Canadian Expression of Interest Form Submission Deadline:  
March 31st, 2026**

**International Consortium Joint Project Proposal Submission Deadline:  
June 19th, 2026**

### 1. Scope

Germany and Canada are pleased to announce a call for proposals for joint industrial R&D projects focusing on developing innovative products, processes, or technology-based services in all technological and application areas, which have a strong market potential.

The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) will provide access to public funding for joint projects through BMWE's ZIM (Central Innovation Programme for SMEs) in Germany, and through the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) in Canada.

NRC IRAP and AiF Projekt GmbH (project management agency for the BMWE) will provide all necessary assistance to project partners during project proposal, evaluation and monitoring phase.

### 2. Timeline and Deadlines

- Call launch: February 3rd, 2026
- Mandatory Canadian registration deadline (IRAP applicants only): March 17th, 2026
- Mandatory Canadian expression of interest application form submission deadline (for Canadian/IRAP applicants only): March 31st, 2026
- Optional German project sketch deadline (for German/ZIM applicants who wish to receive advance feedback): April 17th, 2026

- International consortium joint project proposal submission deadline: June 19th, 2026
- ZIM/German applicants will file their national proposal in parallel with the joint project proposal
- IRAP/Canadian applicants will be invited to submit national proposals after submission of the joint project proposal

Expected decisions on national funding: Approximately 3 months after submission of the joint project proposal.

### 3. Funding and Eligibility

Eligible project participants from Germany and Canada will finance their costs from their respective national funding schemes (ZIM in Germany, NRC IRAP in Canada) and complementarily from their own resources.

Project results will have to contribute to the development of commercial products, processes and / or technical services, which are based on the international state of the art.

Provision of funding from one national scheme will neither indicate that funding from the other national scheme will be provided, nor bind the other national scheme in its provision of funds to the eligible project participants.

#### 3.1 Canadian Funding and Eligibility

Canadian SME applicants must be eligible for funding as NRC IRAP clients before they can be considered for funding through this call. Canadian SMEs already registered as NRC IRAP clients must contact their NRC IRAP Industrial Technology Advisor (ITA). If your organization is not already an NRC IRAP client, please contact the NRC IRAP office at 1-877-994-4727 to become a client and for information on NRC IRAP eligibility.

Canadian SMEs may receive up to 50% reimbursement of their part of eligible project costs through NRC IRAP to a project maximum of \$500,000 over 12-24 month (an extension of 12 months may be considered if sufficiently justified and accepted by both countries).

Canadian applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be incorporated, profit-oriented small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), with 500 or fewer full-time equivalent employees, registered in Canada;
- Be ready to collaborate with their German partner on an industrial R&D project including having the capacity to co-develop technology with international partners;
- Be intending to grow and generate profits through the development and commercialization of innovative, technology-driven, new or improved products, services, or processes;
- Be committed to aggressive growth through global market expansion;

- Be ready and have the resources to make a serious new market entry push, generally measured by having more than 15 full time equivalent employees and \$500,000 CAD in annual revenue;
- Have world class, differentiated, protectable technology; which may already be commercialized in Canada

### 3.2 German Financing and Eligibility

Each German project partner submits an individual ZIM application to AiF Projekt GmbH. Every German SME, in accordance with the relevant EU regulations, as well as medium-sized companies with less than 500 employees (full-time equivalents), which carry out R&D for the development of innovative products, processes or technical services, are eligible to apply. Other medium-sized companies with less than 1,000 employees are eligible to apply for funding if they cooperate with at least one SME (EU definition) whose project is being funded. Research and technology organizations (RTOs) are eligible to apply as cooperation partners of eligible companies.

An instruction and detailed criteria for submitting applications can be found on the ZIM website ([Zentrales Innovationsprogramm Mittelstand \(ZIM\) | Volldigitalisierte Antragstellung im ZIM](#)); you may also contact AiF Project GmbH directly as described below. The application must be written in German and comply with the regulations of the ZIM guideline.

If you do not have any previous experience in ZIM, we highly recommend that you contact AiF at least 6 weeks prior to the deadline to increase your chances of preparing a qualified application.

## 4. Project Requirements

Project results have to contribute to the development of commercial products, processes and / or technical services, which are based on the international state of the art. Projects must comply with the following requirements:

- The consortium has to include at least two independent enterprises (SMEs), one from Canada and one from Germany, which contribute considerably to the project. Participation of research institutes and other companies are welcome as additional participants or subcontractors according to each country's funding regulations.
- The project should have an obvious advantage and added value resulting from the cooperation between the participants from the two jurisdictions (e.g. increased innovation capability, market potential, access to R&D infrastructure, new fields of application, etc.).
- Project duration should not exceed two (2) years. An extension of one (1) year could be accepted by both countries if sufficiently justified.

Any partner whose cooperative industrial R&D project is consistent with the aforementioned requirements can apply to the present call for proposals in accordance with the national laws, rules, regulations and procedures in effect.

## 5. Application Process

IMPORTANT: Each interested partner must contact their local funding agency before starting to fill in a project application. Applicants who do not contact their funding agency in advance of submitting their application may be ineligible for support through this call for proposals.

### 5.1 Canadian Expression of Interest

By the expression of interest deadline (March 31st, 2026) all interested Canadian applicants must submit an Expression of Interest Application Form to NRC IRAP. The **Expression of Interest Form will be provided by NRC IRAP, please consult the NRC IRAP call announcement to register for the EOI form.** See section 3.1 for information on how to register as an IRAP client and become an NRC IRAP client.

Note: The EOI form will not be provided unless your organization has registered as a client with NRC IRAP. EOIs will be reviewed to determine if your organization, project, and consortium meet IRAP eligibility guidelines for this call. Only those who are eligible will be invited to submit an International Consortium Joint Project Proposal.

### 5.2 Optional German Project Sketch

By the optional German project sketch deadline (April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026) all interested German applicants may submit a German project sketch to ZIM. Please visit the webpage [www.zim.de](http://www.zim.de) for more information.

### 5.3 International Consortium Joint Project Proposal

By the international consortium joint project proposal deadline (June 19th, 2026) project participants must submit all the items below as instructed:

#### 5.3.1 Documents to be submitted jointly to both ZIM and IRAP

The following items must be submitted by the international consortium to both ZIM and NRC IRAP via email to [zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de](mailto:zim-international@aif-projekt-gmbh.de) and [IRAP.International.Forms-Formulaires.international.PARI@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca](mailto:IRAP.International.Forms-Formulaires.international.PARI@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca):

- International consortium joint proposal application form, prepared jointly in English (legally signed by all partners participating in the project). The joint proposal application form will be provided to eligible Canadian participants by NRC IRAP and is available for German participants on [www.zim.de/kanada](http://www.zim.de/kanada).
- A draft international consortium agreement (not yet signed) that regulates the terms of cooperation between all partners (in English).

- The minimum requirements for the cooperation agreement are:
  - Names of all project partners
  - Description of the project aims and the differentiation of subprojects by each partner including brief work plans with effort estimated in person-months (proposal application form declared as annex is normally sufficient)
  - Identifying and naming of any 3rd party contractors required in the project
  - Regulation of intellectual property rights (background and arising)
  - Basic regulation of joint commercialization and apportioning of benefits
  - If research organizations from either country are involved, the publishing rights of each party must be regulated.

Upon request, an international consortium agreement template can be provided by IRAP as a guideline for preparation of the cooperation agreement.

### 5.3.2 Documents to be submitted to IRAP

An NRC IRAP Canadian Annex Form. The NRC IRAP Canadian Annex Form containing additional information will be provided to eligible Canadian participants by NRC IRAP. The NRC IRAP Canadian Annex must be completed in Adobe Acrobat and submitted using the “Submit” button included in the form.

### 5.3.3 Documents to be submitted to ZIM

Note: Every German project partner must file an individual ZIM application to AiF Projekt GmbH via [Förderzentrale Deutschland](#).

- See the website [www.zim.de](http://www.zim.de) for more information or contact us as mentioned below.
- The ZIM application comprises different documents that must be submitted in addition to the information provided in the application form. Please be sure to contact the project management agency, AiF Projekt GmbH, listed below.

## Contact



National Research  
Council Canada

Conseil national de  
recherches Canada

### Deutschland

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### Canada

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