

National Science and Technology Council
Partnership Program for the Connection to the Top Labs in the World
(aka Dragon Gate Program)

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) is the government agency dedicated to promoting scientific and technological development in Taiwan. NSTC supports academic research through providing grants to universities and research institutions for their scientific and technological research and international academic activities.

To encourage Taiwanese research teams to participate actively in the advanced research work outside Taiwan, NSTC launched “Partnership program for the Connection to the top labs in the world” in 2010. Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers of approved projects will go abroad and perform their ten-or-more-month research training at world-class foreign research institutions (hereinafter referred to as “foreign research institutions”) to study key areas of technology, science, the humanities, and the social science and obtain independent R&D capabilities. The program aims not only to cultivate R&D talents needed for Taiwan's future development, but also to enable Taiwan's research teams to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with foreign counterparts and strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Summary of the Program

Proposal Processing Timeline:

Annual program solicitation will be announced by the NSTC in the first season of each year and review results will be issued within 4 months from the day following the application deadline.

Project Team Members Requirements:

- Project team members shall include PI, co-investigator (optional), and the Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers who have been chosen to perform research training at a foreign research institution (Each project shall at least include one and a maximum of three Ph.D. students or postdoctoral researchers research fellows).

- In each project, Each Ph.D. student or postdoctoral researcher must stay at least 10 months at a foreign research institution every year. Annual subsidies provided for the PI and co-investigator to make round-trip visits to a foreign research institution shall be limited to two persons and whose duration of stay shall be at least two months in total.
- Project team members shall obtain prior consents from foreign research institutions to host them, provide them standard office space, and grant them access to laboratories.

Review and Selection Process:

- Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be evaluated according to merit review process. To identify which projects to support, NSTC relies on a merit review process that incorporates consideration of both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to achieving the program's aims. The following elements should be considered in the review.
 1. Past performance of the PI
 2. Ability for project execution and PI's experience in international cooperation
 3. Ph.D. student's or post-doctoral researcher's expertise and capabilities, and the benefits of overseas research training to their future research
 4. Significance and innovation of the project
 5. Project feasibility and compatibility with the aims of the program
 6. The expected research outcomes and the necessity for and possible contribution to the technology development in Taiwan
 7. Necessity, appropriateness, and prospects of the collaboration and mentoring relationship with international research teams.
- A two-stage review process, including initial review and final review, will be adopted. Initial review will be conducted by experts in relevant fields through a review of documents. Final review shall be performed by NSTC with reference to the initial review opinions and the "Foreign Research Institution Reference Opinion Form (aka Review Form)". The top-ranked proposals shall be chosen after the two-stage review process.

Grant information:

The grant period may either be one year or two years. The total length of grant shall not exceed two years. A maximum grant of NT\$4 million (about US\$ 130,000) shall be provided annually to each project. The PI may apply for the following subsidy items depending on the nature of the project and actual needs:

- **Overseas travel expenses of PI and co-investigator:** includes per diem, transportation expenses, passport and visa application fees, and general subsidized expenses.
- **Experiment expenses:** includes supply fees, and other approved necessary items for research projects (such as the research institution's management overhead, equipment use fees, laboratory access fee, infrastructural expenses, etc.).
- **Research training expenses for Ph.D. students and post-doctoral researchers:** A maximum annual amount of NT\$900,000 (about US\$ 30,000) per person for Ph.D. students, and NT\$1.5 million (about US\$50,000) annually per person for postdoctoral researchers.

Reporting Requirements:

The PI is required to submit a mid-term progress report or final report online of NSTC website within three months after the completion of each project period. Final reports, except when the content involves core scientific technology research projects or patents or other intellectual property rights, shall be immediately made accessible for public query.

Other Information

Comments and suggestions regarding this program from foreign research institutions are welcome. The NSTC has officially appointed our 18 Overseas Liaisons Offices to be the primary channel for communication with foreign research institutions. Please refer to the link of their respective webpages (https://www.nstc.gov.tw/sci/ch/list?menu_id=a3c7966b-db7f-4def-b8f2-84cbe9694503&view_mode=listView) and contact them for further information.

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