



AXA
Research Fund
Through Research, Protection

Campaign 2012

Call for Projects Modus Operandi

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1 Aim of the guide

This guide contains the practical information needed to apply for a Project from the AXA Research Fund (AXA RF), as well as a general overview of the selection process.

2 Description of the call for Projects

Projects funded by the AXA Research Fund aims at providing a department/laboratory with the means to strengthen its research and explore new avenues. The project is expected to be submitted and led by a Head of department/laboratory and be consistent with the long-term development strategy of the institution. Hence, there is a restriction to one application per institution per year.

The Principal Investigator of the project must meet the following criteria:

- Be already established in the institution as Head of department/laboratory
- Be of the highest caliber (publications in first-rate journals, international stature and network)
- Have demonstrated sound capacity to lead large-scale projects

3 Eligibility and selection criteria for a Project

Only the most renowned research institutions, which meet the highest standards of excellence, may apply for a Project. These institutions must satisfy the stringent selection criteria set forth below (See §3.3).

Every application that is submitted must be complete and must comply with the criteria below in order to be considered by the Scientific Board of the Fund.

The Scientific Board oversees the selection process, basing its decisions on the assessments offered by a network of experts whose reputation in their fields is international.

3.1 Geographical scope

Excellent research institutions with an international scope and located in:

- one of the member states of the European Union
- one of the countries associated to the EU within the meaning of the 7th Framework Programme of the EU
(FP7, i.e. Switzerland, Israel, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Turkey, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, Albania and Montenegro)
- in Asia *(Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Japan, South Korea, India)*
- in Latin America *(Brazil and Mexico)*

The Fund does not place restrictions on the nationality of the Principal Investigator.

Important:

- If the project involves researchers from different institutions, the application must be submitted by the Principal Investigator. His/her institution is deemed to be the leading house with which the AXA Research Fund will sign the contract if the proposal is selected.
- Applications received after the deadline cannot be considered.
- The AXA Research Fund does not fund research projects meant for commercial exploitation.

3.2 Eligible research fields

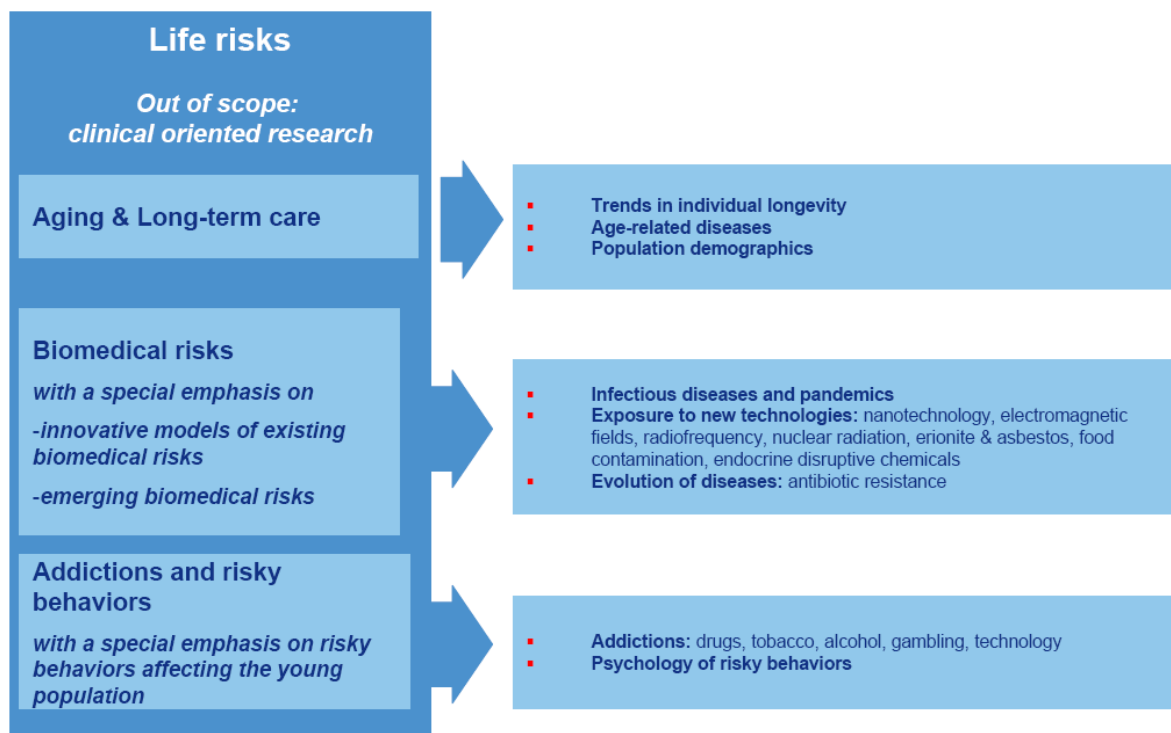
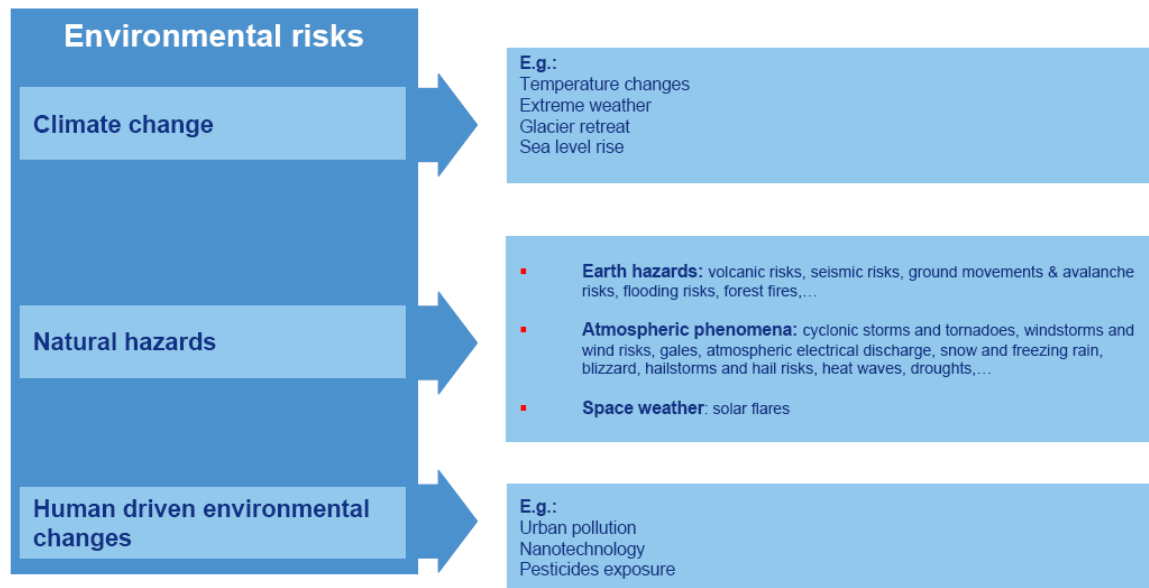
Projects funded by the AXA Research Fund must be related to one of the subjects identified by its Scientific Board. The themes for 2012 are identified below, and can also be found on the website of the AXA Research Fund:

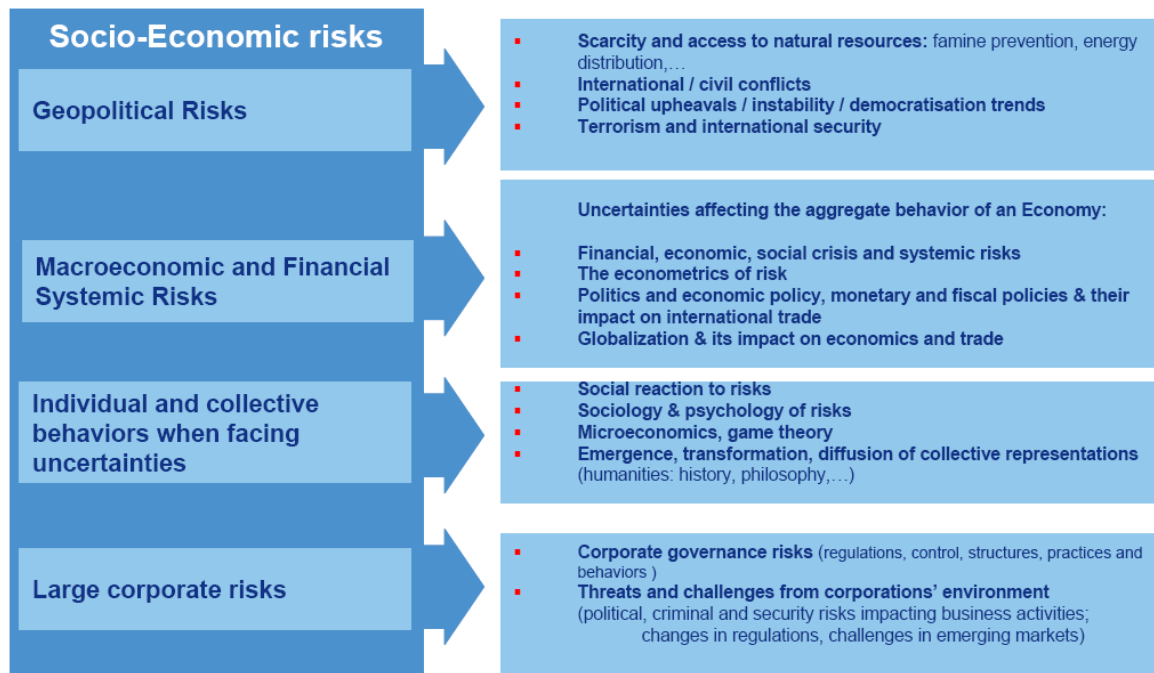
<http://www.axa-research.org/en/>

- Environmental risks
 - Climate change
 - Natural hazards
 - Human driven environmental changes
- Life risks
 - Aging and long term care
 - Biomedical risks
 - Addictions and risky behaviors
- Socio-economic Risks
 - Geopolitical risks
 - Macro-economic and financial systemic risks
 - Behaviors towards risks
 - Large corporate risks

The AXA Research Fund, for ethical reasons, does not fund research in the following areas:

- *research violating national regulations*
- *research having direct military use*
- *research having potentially dangerous environmental impact*
- *biomedical research led without the informed consent of the donor*
- *research on embryo stem cells*
- *processing of private personal data without the informed consent of the concerned (incl. genetic information)*
- *research activities aiming at human cloning*





3.3 Selection criteria

Criteria used to make the scientific and academic assessment of all applications are the following:

1. The institution's reputation for academic excellence
 - Quality of its research: publications in scientific journals, presence of internationally-renowned researchers
 - Quality of the research environment and working conditions offered to researchers
 - Relationship to the international community: international impact of the research carried out
2. The academic excellence of the Project
 - Scientific originality and innovative nature of the Project
 - Project's contribution to strengthening international networks (valued but not mandatory)
3. Robustness of the Project
 - Consistency between the research Project and the long-term development policy of the institution
 - Operational strength and quality of the organization set up to support this Project (including a realistic and coherent budget)
4. Academic excellence of the Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator must be first-rate in his/her scientific field (see section 2).

Please note that the selection process is made up of **two rounds**:

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- The first round is meant to select the institutions allowed to submit a proposal for a Project. This selection will be primarily based on academic excellence of the institution in the chosen fields –as assessed by our Scientific Board. Then, institutions will be informed on whether they are invited to submit an application or not.
- The second round aims at selecting proposals with regard to 3 criteria: innovative nature, robustness of the research project and academic excellence of the Principal Investigator.

4 Project funding

The AXA Research Fund commits up to €100.000 per year for Projects which might be carried out over a period of two to five years. Six to ten Projects are selected per year.

Note that while selecting Projects, the Scientific Board of the Fund makes its decision based on the pure scientific quality of the proposal regardless the budget. Budget issues may be challenged by the Board in a second step, once the proposal is selected.

Nevertheless, the budget is expected to be coherent, well-structured and consistent with the length and the research field of the project. There are no stringent rules and the following is aimed at guiding the applicant in the setting up of the budget.

The following costs are eligible:

- Personnel costs. As the PI is expected to be already employed by the institution, the budget should not include his/her salary but may include salaries of research team members (PhD, Post Doctoral fellows, research assistants...) hired for the completion of this specific project.
- Travel and subsistence costs for collaboration
- Publication costs

Indirect costs are not eligible:

- costs related to general administration and management
- costs of office or laboratory space including rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment and related expenditure such as water, heating...
- maintenance, insurance and safety costs
- communication expenses, network connection charges, postal charges and office supplies
- common office equipment such as PC, laptops, office software
- miscellaneous recurring consumables.

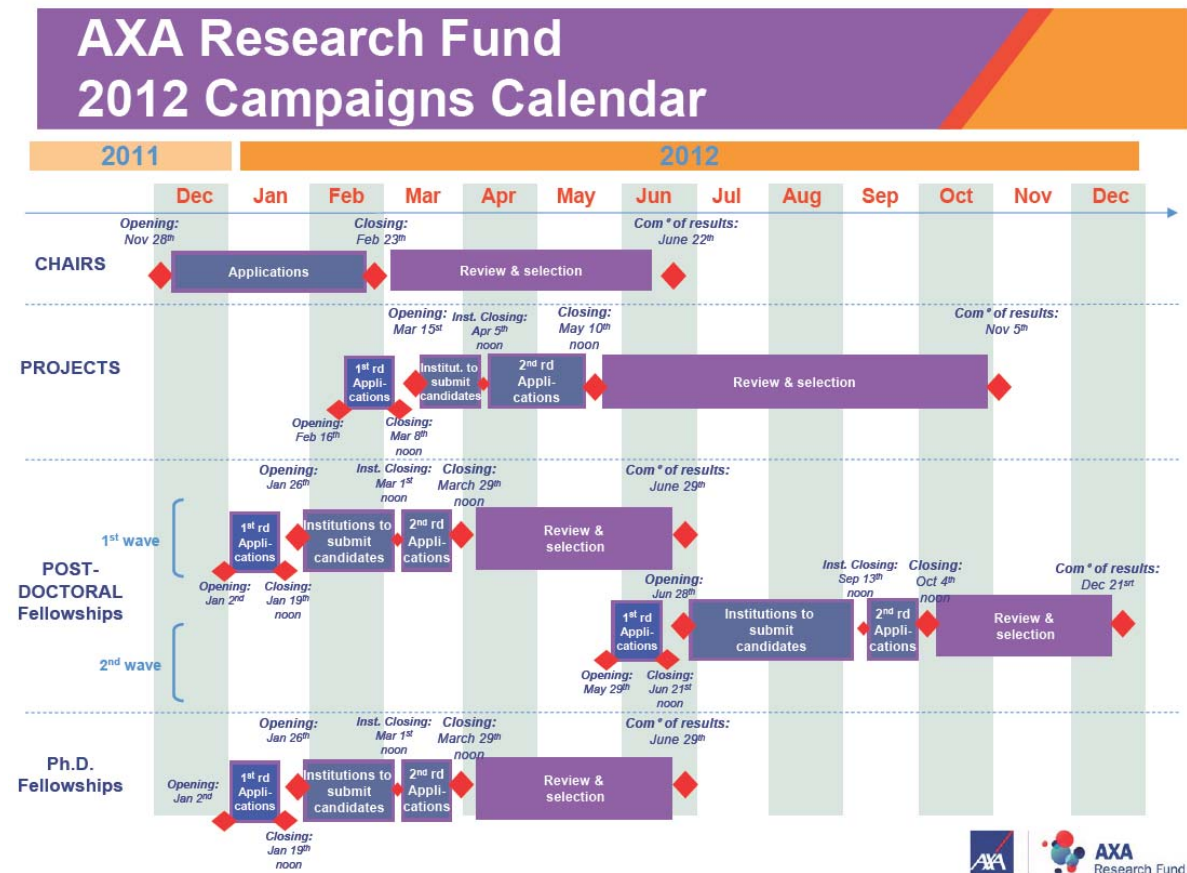
Please note the AXA Research fund does not cover infrastructure or overhead costs.

5 How to apply?

5.1 2012 Timetable

In 2012, one call for Projects will be organized.

- 1st round application (i.e. deadline for institutions to register and pre-apply):
 - opening: **February 16th, 2012**;
 - closing: **March 8th, 2012 at noon (French time GMT+1)**.
- Institutions to submit the name of the Principal Investigator:
 - opening: **March 15th, 2012**;
 - closing: **April 5th, 2012 at noon (French time GMT+1)**.
- 2nd round application (Principal Investigator to fill in his/her application):
 - opening: **April 6th, 2012**;
 - closing: **May 10th, 2012 at noon (French time GMT+1)**.
- Review and selection:
Results will be released on **November 5th, 2012**.



5.2 Detailed application and selection process

Step 1: Registration of the institution and first round application (by the Institution Representative)

Institutions are required to designate a single point of contact responsible for partnerships (Institution Representative) with the AXA Research Fund and register. It is possible to check whether an institution is already registered or not (<https://secure-researchfund.axa.com/Public/InstitutionSearch.aspx>).

Registration is an online process (<https://secure-researchfund.axa.com/Public/InstitutionEdit.aspx>) and is explained in detail in the modus operandi entitled “How to register” available on the website (<http://www.axa-research.org/how-to-register-an-institution>).

The Institution Representative is expected to select from 1 to 12 research fields where he/she believes fundamental research carried out within the institution is excellent and in which he/she thinks the institution might submit an application. The Institution Representative has the opportunity (not mandatory) to write a free text on the strengths of the institution and any relevant information worth communicating to the AXA Research Fund.

A few days after March 8th, the Institution Representative will be informed whether the institution is invited to submit an application or not.

Step 2: Institution to submit candidates (by Institution Representative)

The AXA Research Fund relies on the Institution Representative to designate the Principal Investigator on behalf of the institution (i.e. after discussion with the presidency/rectorate) by filling-in his/her name & email address on line (<http://researchfund-platform.axa.com/>).

Once the Principal Investigator is validated by the Institution Representative, an e-mail is sent directly to the candidate, enclosing the necessary details to access the application form (URL, username and password).

Step 3: Second round application (by Principal Investigator)

1. The application form is accessed by clicking on the URL provided in the e-mail. The Principal Investigator enters the username and password provided in the e-mail to login and validates.

2. The Principal Investigator is required to fill out all the required fields and upload the needed files.

The application form can be filled over during different sessions. Make sure you save the form by clicking on the “SAVE AS A DRAFT” button before closing the window; otherwise all the information will be lost.

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Once the form is filled in, he/she clicks on the button “PUBLISH FORM”. He/She will receive an automatic confirmation email. Once you have pressed the button “PUBLISH FORM”, you do not have the possibility to make any changes in your form.

For security reasons, your session will expire automatically after 60 minutes of inaction. Please make sure that you regularly save your data by clicking on the "SAVE FORM AS DRAFT" button at the bottom of the application form.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Applications filled in after the stated deadline will be considered ineligible.
- All fields and documents must be written in English as applications are reviewed by international experts.

This online form is divided into four tabs:

- Project (A)
- Principal investigator (B)
- Project Team members (C)
- Costs and funding (D)

We strongly advise you to collect and/or prepare the following pieces of information before filling out your online form:

TAB A- Project:

-A paragraph with the research project summary ready to be pasted in the form (of max. 4800 characters spaces included)

-A detailed research project presentation document (about 10 pages in Pdf), including:

General background information on current and past research work

Positioning of this project vs other national/international research programs in the same research field (please provide a comparative overview) and existing collaborative work

Scientific objective of the project: explain how the project will contribute to creating new knowledge compared with current state of the art research work

Consistency of the project with the long-term strategy of the institution

Approach of the projects and methods that will be used

Presentation of the planned research dissemination of the project

Indication on how the Principal Investigator plans to promote interactions between AXA and academics

-A paragraph ready to be pasted in the form with the project plan (of max. 4800 characters spaces included)

-A paragraph ready to be pasted in the form with the planned organization to achieve the specific aims of the project (of max. 4800 characters spaces included)

-A paragraph ready to be pasted in the form with the research design and methods. The content expected are conceptual procedures, analysis that will be used to fulfil the specific aims of the project. (of max. 4800 characters spaces included)

-A letter of support by the president/ rector of the institution (in Pdf)



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(Please note that additional letters of recommendation may be uploaded separately in the form)

TAB B- Principal Investigator:

-A detailed CV including publications. Regarding publications please provide the list of the 10 with the most impact and the 10 most recent ones.

TAB C- Team members:

-Detailed CVs for each team member including publications. Regarding publications please provide the list of the 10 with the most impact and the 10 most recent ones.

TAB D- Cost and funding:

-A detailed budget template with the breakdown between the financial support expected from AXA Research Fund; the financial support provided by the institution and the amount to be funded externally. Please note that a template is ready to be downloaded in the form.

Step 4: Selection and communication of results

The Scientific Board bases its decisions on the assessments provided by world-renowned experts in the appropriate area.

As soon as the Board makes its decision, the Fund informs the Institution Representative and the Principal Investigator.