

First Step projects
Projets "Tremplin International"
2026 Call for proposal

Closing date for applications
September 21, 2026 at 05:00 p.m. (Paris time)

1. Context and objectives of the program

Context

Inserm aims to create a strong impulse to its international relations by mobilising tools suited to the conditions and requirements of the collaboration of its research teams with their foreign partners.

The First step projects (*projets Tremplin international*) are exploration tools used to meet the needs of young researchers who wish to explore avenues for collaboration through a call for projects that are open both geographically and thematically. They aim to initiate a collaboration between a young Inserm researcher and a foreign team in order to foster new international cooperations.

Objectives

The First step projects (*"Tremplin international"*) are intended to initiate and develop scientific and technological exchanges of excellence between two research laboratories. The creation of a First step project must demonstrate **a potential for complementary expertise**. The call targets young Inserm researchers (up to 5 years after permanent recruitment at Inserm).

NB. This call aims to support new collaborations. Projects resulting from previous work between the 2 teams, especially when a co-publication has been produced, will not be evaluated.

The duration of this partnership between an Inserm research team and another foreign research team is eighteen (18) months.

Then this label could lead to considering more in-depth collaborations, for instance by responding to calls for "International Research Projects" ([see IRP fact sheet](#)), with a duration of 5 years, for teams with a history of scientific cooperation.

2. Application procedure

Applications must be submitted online through the Eva3 Inserm Platform.

<https://www.eva3.inserm.fr/login>

The following documents must be downloaded, filled out and uploaded through the Eva3 platform (“*documents à joindre*”):

- The application form;
- A list of relevant scientific outputs of the laboratories (3 max each) – if any;
- The recommendation file from the Head of the laboratory

Documents to upload directly (no format imposed)

- The CV of the French coordinator
- The CV of the foreign coordinator;
- A support letter signed by the foreign coordinator indicating, where applicable, the resources that may be committed to the project (including travel funds, human resources, *etc.*)

Candidates must inform their supervising institutions (“*tutelles*”), and their regional office of the submission of their application.

3. Examination of proposals

3.1 Eligibility criteria

1. The submitted project must be led by one coordinator from an Inserm research unit (referred to as 'French coordinator') and one coordinator from a foreign research country (referred to as 'Foreign coordinator');
2. The French coordinator must work in an Inserm laboratory (up to 5 years after recruitment at Inserm).
3. The application must contain all the requested information (see list in section 2);

3.2 Evaluation criteria

Once the eligibility of the applications is validated, they will be evaluated by a scientific evaluation committee. The final validation/decision will be made by the executive management.

Evaluation of proposals will be based on ¹ :

- 1- The scientific quality of the project and its potential;
- 2- The scientific expertise and quality of the teams;
- 3- The feasibility of the project;
- 4- The complementarity of the teams and the potential for collaboration.

Special attention will be paid to projects with low-income or middle-income countries (LMICs)². For more details, please refer to the evaluation criteria table.

The candidates will be informed of the results at the beginning of the year 2027.

4. Funding of selected projects

First Step projects will be granted a funding of **10000€ for 18 months (fixed amount)**. The

¹ The FS call for proposals, in line with Inserm's policy on equal opportunities and parity, will follow the ambition and recommendations of the [plan for professional equality](#) between women and men and will pay particular attention to gender balance.

² LMICs list : <https://data.worldbank.org/country/low-and-middle-income>
Source defining the notion of PRFI : <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>

funding will not cover human resources expenses.

The projects will begin in the second quarter of 2027, and the funding will be allocated to the French laboratory in two instalments: €4,000 in 2027 and €6,000 in 2028.

5. Monitoring of selected projects

The funded “First Step” projects will be monitored by the Department of Partnerships and External Relations (DPRE) and the thematic institutes. For the purposes of evaluation, a final report will be required upon completion of the project (sent by the DPRE by the end of 2028). Furthermore, the laureates will be required to present their main findings and the future direction of their project to the DPRE and the thematic institutes during a joint meeting.