

**Collaborative Bilateral Research Program Bavaria - Québec
StMWK and Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ)**

AI-POWERED AND HUMAN-CENTERED ROBOTICS FOR REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS

Program Category: International collaboration

1- REGISTRATION SUBMISSION (MANDATORY) OCTOBER 13, 2026 4 p.m. (Bavaria time) 10 a.m. (Québec time)	FRQ Program Officer Leslie Walsh +1-418-643-8560, ext. 3457 programmes.internationaux@frq.gouv.qc.ca
2- PROPOSAL SUBMISSION NOVEMBER 16, 2026 4 p.m. (Bavaria time) 10 a.m. (Québec time)	WKS at BayFOR Senior Scientific Officer Dr. Florence Gauzy +49 (0) 89 9901 888-180 gauzy@bayfor.org

As science becomes more global and complex, many research questions cannot be addressed without international collaboration between researchers from different sectors. For this reason, Québec and Bavaria have developed a new Bilateral Research Call with the aim of creating a leverage effect for scientific excellence and encouraging researchers from Bavaria and Québec to develop together research projects with novel and unused approaches. These collaborations will allow major scientific breakthroughs, in the short and medium term, by combining and potentiating the strengths, expertise and structural levers of both regions, as well as by promoting the transfer of knowledge to the research and user communities.

This Call for proposals is jointly conducted by:

- WKS Bavaria-Québec/Alberta/International at Bavarian Research Alliance (WKS at BayFOR) on behalf of the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts (StMWK)
- Fonds de recherche du Québec, managed by the Nature and Technologies sector.

CONTEXT

AI-Powered and Human-Centered Robotics for Real-World Applications represents a transformative approach to developing intelligent robotic systems that can operate effectively, safely, and collaboratively in dynamic human environments. By combining advances in artificial intelligence, including machine learning, computer vision, sensor fusion, and natural language understanding, with human-centered design principles, modern robots are becoming capable of supporting people across a wide range of real-world domains. In manufacturing and logistics, collaborative robots (cobots) work alongside human operators to improve productivity, flexibility, and workplace safety. AI-powered robots play a critical role in environmental monitoring, including disaster response where human intervention may be dangerous or impractical. In healthcare, robots assist with surgical procedures, patient rehabilitation, elderly care, and hospital logistics, enhancing both precision and quality of care. In agriculture, autonomous robots perform tasks such as crop monitoring, precision spraying, harvesting, and livestock management, helping address labor shortages and promote sustainable farming. A human-centered perspective ensures that these systems remain transparent, trustworthy, explainable, and adaptable to user needs, fostering effective human-robot collaboration and societal acceptance. As robotics technologies continue to mature, their integration into real-world applications is expected to drive significant improvements in efficiency, safety, resilience, and quality of life across multiple sectors.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Priority themes	The joint projects must relate to concrete applications in the fields of industry, logistics, environmental monitoring, healthcare or agriculture. Projects will need to use an approach that brings together research methods, practices or researchers from at least two of the three sectors of the FRQ (Health sector // Society and Culture sector // Nature and Technologies sector)
Objectives	The main objective of this program is to establish new collaborative efforts or reinforce existing collaborations to advance knowledge and technology in AI-powered and human-centered robotics for real-world applications. Projects must be structured in such a way as to bring an original added value that researchers, funded by each funding site, could not reach by themselves.
Language	IMPORTANT: Because this program is international, and the proposals are common to both teams, <u>the proposals must be written in English.</u>

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Conditions	Research team structure • One Principal Investigator from Bavaria who will represent the project and will assume the internal and management direction, according to the conditions/ administrative requirements of the funding site to which they refer • One Principal Investigator from Québec who will represent the project and will assume the internal and management direction, according to the conditions/ administrative requirements of the funding agency to which they refer Can be added to the team: • Up to 1 co-Investigator from Bavaria and 1 co-Investigator from Québec, no minimum • Collaborators participating in the project without access to funds. Collaborators may come from outside Québec or Bavaria. No minimum or maximum The research teams submitting a project under this call for proposals must be composed of researchers working in institutions eligible under the conditions / administrative requirements of the funding sites to which they refer (see below for more details).
Bavaria	In Bavaria, the call is open to researchers (post-doctorate or higher-level scientific staff) at Bavarian state universities and Bavarian state universities of applied sciences as well as at EVHN, at KSFH, KUE and HFPH. Applicants in Bavaria are advised to contact the scientific officer in charge of the call to check eligibility and general conditions before submission.

Québec	Eligible statuses For Principal Investigators : - University researcher (status 1) or clinical university researcher (status 2) as defined in the Common General Rules For co-Investigators : - University researcher (status 1) - Clinical university researcher (status 2) - College researcher (status 3) Postdoctoral trainees are only eligible to this program as collaborators. In addition, all researchers of the Québec team must be affiliated to a Québec university or have an affiliation to a college-level training institution (including college centers for technology transfer (CCTT)), under the conditions described above.
Single application	A researcher may submit only one project under this Call for Proposals as a Principal Investigator but can participate in more than 1 project as a co-Investigator.
Employment and domicile	For Bavaria : This call for proposals follows the rules for grants of the State of Bavaria. For Québec: The Principal Investigator and the co-Investigators must: Be employed by a managing institution and be domiciled in Québec at the time the application is submitted (see section 2.1 of the CGR)
Professional associations/orders	Clinical university researchers must prove that they are members in good standing of the Québec professional order governing them, have a valid license to practice in Québec and have professional liability insurance.
Ethics (Québec)	Principal Investigator(s) and co-Investigators must comply with the ethical regulations as defined in sections 5.4 and 5.5 of the CGR .
Basic training in research ethics (Québec)	Basic training in research ethics is mandatory for all grant holders under this program, as well as for co-investigators, when the research involves human participants (direct participation or the use of human biological materials or data concerning human beings). This requirement consists of successfully completing the online TCPS: CORE-2022 / FER-2022 training offered by the Panel on Research Ethics (or any subsequent version of this training) before the grant payments begin.

SUBMISSION OF THE REGISTRATION FORM (MANDATORY)

Submission must be done to the Bavarian funding site per PDF:

The Bavarian Principal Investigator is asked to submit the completed registration form as a PDF on behalf of the proposal team. The completed registration form is to be uploaded as a PDF in [BayFOR's secure cloud for registration](#). In addition, the Bavarian Principal Investigator is asked to submit a copy of the PDF via mail to Bayern-quebec@bayfor.org

Please name your registration document as follows: *Name of the applicants*_Registration Form_2026

Only the last version submitted will be taken into account. Any previous version of the same registration form will not be considered as valid and will not be assessed by BayFOR and FRQ.

The **registration form is mandatory** and will serve for the constitution of the review committee. Applicants will therefore need to have submitted a registration form to be eligible to submit a full application.

Registration forms, or any document, received after the competition deadline of October 13, 2026, at 4 p.m. (Bavaria time) or 10 a.m. (Québec time) shall not be considered and shall be deemed ineligible.

By submitting the registration form, applicants agree that this document will be shared with FRQ using secured platforms.

SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION FOR FUNDING AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS – PROPOSAL

Incomplete applications and applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this document may be withdrawn from the competition.

Applications, or any document, received after the competition deadline of November 16, 2026 4 p.m. (Bavaria time) or 10 a.m. (Québec time) shall not be considered and shall be deemed ineligible.

Any information in excess of the maximum number of pages for each section of the application shall be removed from the submission and shall not be considered in the review process. Any attachment to the application that is not required under the competition rules shall not be submitted to the review committee.

All documents must be integrated into a single (1) PDF document. The CVs of all Investigators should be inserted one after the other in the PDF document.

The application form must be filled in English.

- However, the title and the abstract must also be in French and in German, since they may be used by FRQ and by WKS at BayFOR for promotion and dissemination purposes.

By submitting an application, applicants agree that these documents will be shared with FRQ using secured platforms.

The funding sites reserve the right to validate the authenticity of any document or information provided in the application with relevant authorities.

The Bavarian Principal Investigator is asked to submit the complete application form as a PDF on behalf of the proposal team. The complete application form is to be uploaded as a PDF in [BayFOR's secure cloud for full application](#). In addition, the Bavarian Principal Investigator is asked to submit a copy of the PDF per email to Bayern-quebec@bayfor.org

Please name your full application document as follows: *Name of the applicants*_Full Application Form_2026

Only the last version submitted will be taken into account. Any previous version of the same project proposal will not be considered as valid and will not be assessed.

The complete application PDF must include:

- Application form (See form in the Toolbox)
- CV for Principal Investigators and co-Investigators, if applicable (please use the CV template provided in the Toolbox)
- For the PIs: List of publications of the last three years
- Letter of support from the administrators of the institution or university department in which the research will be carried out (for the PIs only)
- Letter of support from collaborators, for the Bavarian team only, when applicable

TERM AND AMOUNT OF THE GRANT

	Budget Bavarian Team** (Maximum)	Budget Québec Team*** (Maximum)
Total budget/research project	€225,000	CA\$225,000
Period	3 years	3 years
Projects funded	Maximum of 3 projects	
Funding start date	May 1 st , 2027	

**Awardees from Bavaria will be funded by StMWK

IMPORTANT NOTE: In Bavaria, based on the evaluation results from the joint evaluation committee, the successful applicants shall submit an application for funding to the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and the Arts (StMWK). The application form will comprise a short project description including a budget calculation. Funding will be awarded subsequently as a direct allocation of funds to the applicant's university.

*** In Québec, based on the evaluation results from the joint evaluation committee, successful applicants will be asked to create a FRQnet account and complete a registration form in order to facilitate the post-octroi process.

Also, please note that the Québec side of each application may receive up to \$75,000 CAD per year for three years; the requested budget therefore must not exceed this amount. Indirect costs of research (ICR) will also be paid directly to managing institutions. The ICR will equal 27% of the grant awarded and will be in addition to the grant amount.

Québec:

Salary support for eligible status 3

Salary support for eligible Status 3, non-teaching researchers from CCTTs : A portion of FRQ grants may be used to support salaries for team members who are college researchers that do not have teaching duties. The PI's institution may transfer this portion directly to the college institution or to the college affiliated with the CCTT (in the situation where the researcher is from a CCTT).

Salary support for eligible Status 3 researchers who have teaching duties:

SUPPLEMENT for release time from teaching : For each college researcher who is a member of the team and has regular teaching duties, an additional amount of up to \$16,000 per year will be paid directly to the college. This amount, paid directly to the managing college institution, may be used to compensate for the portion of the researcher's salary dedicated to the release from teaching duties or to ensure that the researcher's teaching duties are performed by another college faculty member.

Management

For Bavaria:

In Bavaria, the call is open to researchers (post-doctorate or higher-level scientific staff) at Bavarian state universities and state universities of applied sciences as well as at EVHN, KSFH, KUE and HFPH.

For Québec:

The list of institutions that can administer funding from the FRQ is limited to the [managing institutions](#) recognized by the FRQ.

The managing institution is the employing institution of the funding recipient (see section 6.2 of the [CGR](#)).

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Eligible expenses such as salaries, research material, equipment and other expenses related to the project are subject to the regulations and practices of the agency that will fund the project.

Exchanges of students and postdoctoral fellows are encouraged.

For Bavaria researchers

- Eligible expenses such as salaries, research material, equipment and other expenses related to the project are subject to the regulations applied in Bavaria
- Applicants in Bavaria are advised to contact the scientific officer in charge of the call to check eligibility and general conditions before submission

For Québec researchers

In addition to the list of eligible and non-eligible expenses detailed in section 8 of the FRQ [CGR](#), the following expenses are eligible or non-eligible:

Eligible

- Master's and doctoral awards or scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships and supplements
- Travel and accommodation costs for Québec researchers going to Bavaria
- Participation in conferences

Non-eligible

- Remuneration of the Principal Investigator(s), co-Investigators and collaborators
- All indirect expenditures related to layout organization or reorganization, facilities leasing and maintenance or the indirect costs covered by the host institution
- Funds cannot be transferred outside of Québec

EVALUATION – PROPOSAL

Evaluation process	Each proposal will be reviewed by a joint scientific committee, composed of international experts from scientific domains, selected by FRQ and WKS at BayFOR. Representatives from the bilateral working group Bavaria-Québec will attend the review committee meeting in an advisory capacity as to the existing research cooperation environment between Bavaria and Québec. Members of this scientific committee will be in charge of ranking all proposals, based on discussions during the scientific review committee meeting. Administrative eligibility check will be conducted by both agencies based on the rules of each agency.
Evaluation criteria	Research project – 40% • Compliance with the priority themes of the call, including the potential for real-world concrete applications in the targeted fields • Clarity of the objectives and scientific excellence of the project • Originality and innovative aspects of the project • Scientific and technical appropriateness of the project, choice of methods • Added-value of the bilateral cooperation on the project and capacity to leverage existing research strengths and resources Scope and quality of interdisciplinary cooperation across at least two of the three sectors of the FRQ (Health sector // Society and Culture sector // Nature and Technologies sector) Research team 20% • Complementarity of expertise of the researchers from Bavaria and Québec involved in this proposal, including the interdisciplinary aspects • Track record of the researchers and international scientific level of the research teams Feasibility (including appropriate budget) 20% • Realism, significance and rigor in defining the project structure, expected results and identification of milestones; contingency plan when applicable • Realism of research schedule and relevance of the follow up indicators • Efficient use of available resources and infrastructures on both sides • The requested budget is in line with the proposed project Project outcomes 20% • Contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the field of AI-Powered and Human-Centered Robotics for Real-World Applications • Knowledge transfer to the scientific, and to the users community • Added value of the project with respect to the development of new concepts, models, approaches, and methodologies • Potential expected outcomes of the proposed approach(es) on the future of robotics

RESEARCH OUTCOMES AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Reports submission	By accepting the funding, recipients commit to provide: • Mid-term brief joint scientific report and a final joint scientific report maximum 3 months after the end of funding for FRQ and WKS at BayFOR • Annual financial reports and a final financial report at the dates indicated by FRQ and WKS at BayFOR
Use and dissemination of the results by the partners	Subsidy recipients authorize the funding agencies to use the final report and published research outputs (from a scientific publication, a conference, a seminar, a symposium or an e-publication), notably for reproduction, translation, implementation or public dissemination through whatever means, along with other uses. This use will solely be for non-commercial purposes and will comply with copyright legislation.
Open Science	Bavaria: Awardees are encouraged to promote and practice open science according to the EU's open science policy. Québec: Peer-reviewed publications resulting from the research work made possible by this grant must be disseminated in immediate open access (without embargo) and under an open licence, in accordance with the Open Access Dissemination Policy (revised in 2022).

APPLICANT AGREEMENT

For Bavaria	In Bavaria, based on the evaluation results from the joint evaluation committee, the successful applicants shall submit an application for funding to the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and the Arts (StMWK). The application form will comprise a short project description including a budget calculation. Funding will be awarded subsequently as a direct allocation of funds to the applicant's university.
For Québec	By submitting a proposal, the candidate commits, among other things, to: • Comply with the obligations outlined in the CGR, as well as the terms and conditions stipulated in the form and the program rules • Submit additional files linked to the grant, if requested by the FRQ • Comply with the FRQ's Research Ethics Policy and Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research

HOST INSTITUTION AGREEMENT

Québec

The host institution commits to:

- Provide functional laboratory or research facilities, equipment and infrastructure necessary to carry out the research project
- Offer an environment that respects FRQ's [Research Ethics Policy](#) and Policy for the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Funding sites acknowledge that awardee researchers and their host institution possess the intellectual property rights, under the internal regulations of the host institution.

All institutions involved in the project are encouraged to discuss about a collaboration agreement.

PARTNERS

WKS Bavaria-Québec/Alberta/International at Bavarian Research Alliance on behalf of the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts (StMWK)

Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ)

APPENDIX

PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS ET CONFIDENTIELS

WKS est assujéti au Règlement général sur la protection des données (RGPD) de l'Union européenne et traitera les renseignements personnels et confidentiels en conformité avec cette Loi.

WKS communiquera au FRQ les renseignements personnels et confidentiels qui vous concernent nécessaires à la réalisation du programme. Cette communication est essentielle pour que le FRQ puisse traiter et évaluer votre demande de financement, de l'admissibilité à l'annonce de l'octroi. De plus, certains de ces renseignements serviront à gérer les octrois, le cas échéant.

Le FRQ est assujéti à la *Loi sur l'accès aux documents des organismes publics et sur la protection des renseignements personnels* (RLRQ, c. A-2.1) (Loi sur l'accès). Le FRQ traitera les renseignements personnels et confidentiels qui vous concernent conformément à la Loi sur l'accès et à [l'Énoncé de protection des renseignements personnels et confidentiels](#).

En soumettant une demande de financement dans le cadre de ce concours, vous consentez à la communication par WKS de vos renseignements personnels et confidentiels au FRQ et à l'utilisation et la conservation de ces renseignements par le FRQ, conformément aux modalités décrites dans l'Énoncé et dans la Loi sur l'accès, sous la condition que les personnes ayant accès à des renseignements personnels et confidentiels s'engagent à en respecter le caractère confidentiel.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

WKS is subject to the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will process personal and confidential information in accordance with that Act.

WKS will disclose to the FRQ the personal and confidential information concerning you that is necessary for the implementation of the program. This disclosure is essential so that the FRQ can process and assess your funding application, from eligibility through to the announcement of the award. In addition, some of this information will be used to manage the awards, where applicable.

The FRQ is subject to the *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information* (CQLR, c. A-2.1) (Access Act). The FRQ will process the personal and confidential information concerning you in accordance with the Access Act and the [Statement regarding the Protection of Personal and Confidential Information](#).

By submitting a funding application under this competition, you consent to WKS disclosing your personal and confidential information to the FRQ and to the FRQ's use and retention of that information, in accordance with the terms described in the Statement and in the Access Act, provided that the persons who have access to personal and confidential information undertake to respect its confidential nature.