



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Constructive Advanced Thinking (CAT) Programme

Goals

The aim of the CAT initiative is to foster **networks of excellent early-career researchers** dedicated to devising new ideas to understand and to tackle current or emerging **societal challenges**. Although the programme has a strong focus on the societal relevance of the projects, it is entirely **blue sky**, bottom-up and non-thematic. CAT encourages a **collaboration with stakeholders outside academia** (industry, policymakers, NGOs...) who are willing to support or engage in innovative research initiatives.

In order to engage in fruitful discussions and mature their ideas, the groups will be given the opportunity to **meet for short stays** in different participating institutes, and to be **put in contact with the institutes' fellows and local research communities**.

With few guidelines and a very light application process, CAT is designed to maximize the creativity of research groups. This call has been incubated in the **Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study (NETIAS)** and also involves institutes beyond the network. The collaboration between several institutes in different countries aims at giving these groups access to a great variety of high-level thinkers and researchers in order to **go beyond the current frontiers of knowledge** and to develop highly innovative ideas on how to address very complex societal issues.

Support

CAT will provide teams of **early-career researchers** (three to five persons) time and space for thought and discussion in the best research environments Europe has to offer. The groups may include one representative of a stakeholder organization related to the theme of the project. During a period of up to three years, teams will benefit from a series of short stays (i.e. between one and two weeks, two to three times a year, for a maximum of six stays) in



institutes participating in the program (**see list below**). Online meetings and digital research stays at the institutes are possible alternatives to onsite stays and can complete the work and time plan of CAT groups.

CAT will cover travel and accommodation expenses for the team meetings/short work stays in the participating institutes. CAT will not fund salaries or research-related expenses.

The participating institutes will support the teams by connecting them with the most knowledgeable and experienced researchers onsite as well as digitally, and by helping them valorise the obtained results through their legitimating channels. During their stay, CAT teams will benefit from the institutes' amenities and conviviality for work and exchanges. Discussions at the institutes will provide a unique sounding board for innovative ideas and will give valuable feedback.

Obligations for CAT groups

At mid-term, the continuation of the institute's support to the team's work will be subject to approval after evaluation of a short progress report.

At the end of their project, in addition to the organization of (a) final meeting(s) presenting the results, the CAT teams will be expected to produce a final report in the form of a text, video, website or other media, that will be made public.

In keeping with the policies of the participating institutes, the researchers keep the intellectual property rights to their work.

Eligibility criteria

The project must address emergent societal issues.

- The **Principal Investigator** (team leader) must have a **stable research position** in a European (EU as well as UK and [associated countries](#)) higher education and/or research institution for the entire duration of the project.
- S/he must have obtained a PhD between January 2016 and September 2025.
- No team member should have obtained his/her PhD before January 2016. Doctoral researchers may also participate.



- The eligibility can be extended beyond 10 years after the PhD for any member of the group for certain properly documented circumstances such as maternity and paternity leaves, clinical training, long-term illness, national service, natural disaster or seeking asylum.
- There is no specific diploma or age requirement for representatives of stakeholder organizations.
- Each team should include participants from at least **two different countries** (current workplace, including non-European countries; any nationality).
- The team of 3 to 5 persons (stakeholders included) must be **fully constituted, with CVs** of all members named in the proposal.

Applications

Please submit your application documents in English as PDF files (the various parts of the application may be sent as one PDF). Applications should include the following materials:

1. a 300-word **abstract**;
2. a 3000-word max project proposal (references not included in the count) OR a video of 15 min max (in this case, please include the web link in the abstract), describing the team's **research question** and how it plans to address it. The team's motivation as well as the societal issues addressed and the interdisciplinary aspects of the project should be specified;
3. a **work plan** for the whole project duration, including meetings (tentative dates and possibly preferred hosting IAS) and activities with an indicative calendar;
4. a **short description** of the team
5. **CVs** for each participant and an indication of where they will travel from to the meetings;
6. **letters of support**: at least two letters from academic researchers; additional letters from a stakeholder outside academia are encouraged.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Submit proposals via the **online application platform**.

Selection and evaluation process

The proposals will be examined by the participating institutes and peer-reviewed by experts. In the spirit of a bottom-up and open call, the way the teams understand the call and design their proposal is one assessment criterion. Other criteria include the academic quality and interdisciplinarity of the proposal and its societal relevance, the quality of the team, the organization and feasibility of the work plan and the innovativeness of the approach to the issue at stake.

The CAT selection committee will distribute stays of teams to the various participating institutes. Teams may suggest specific participating institutes, providing the reasons, but the final decision will be taken by the selection committee. Selected projects will be given a binding list of institutes that can host them. This list is non-negotiable.

The institutes will discuss the dates of planned meetings with the teams.

Non-selected projects will not receive feedback on the reasons for rejection.

More information is available [online](#) or on the web pages of the participating institutions.

Questions can be directed to: cat@savion.huji.ac.il (Ms. Keren Rechnitzer)

Schedule

Deadline for applications: October 14, 2025, 15:00 CET

Successful applications will be notified by the end of January 2026

Stays in participating institutes will take place between January 2026 and December 2028.

Institutes Participating in the 2026 call for applications

Aarhus Institute for Advanced Studies Aarhus	 AIAS AARHUS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES
CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH Germany	ZiF
CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY AT THE NORWEGIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND LETTERS Norway	 CAS OSLO
CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY SOFIA Bulgaria	 <i>-sofia</i>
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN THE ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES United Kingdom	CRASSH
COLLEGIUM DE LYON France	 COLLEGIUM DE LYON Université de Lyon
COLLEGIUM HELVETICUM Switzerland	Collegium Helveticum
FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES Germany	 FRIAS FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
HAMBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY Germany	HIAS
HANSE-WISSENSCHAFTSKOLLEG Germany	 Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg Institute for Advanced Study
HELSINKI COLLEGIUM FOR ADVANCED STUDIES Finland	 UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI HELSINKI COLLEGIUM FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

IMÉRA - INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY France	
INSTITUT FÜR DIE WISSENSCHAFTEN VOM MENSCHEN Austria	 Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen Institute for Human Sciences
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE HUMANITIES United Kingdom	
Institute for Advanced Study at CEU, Budapest	 INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES OF BOLOGNA Italy	 ALMA MATER STUDIORUM UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA ISTITUTO DI STUDI SUPERIORI ISTITUTO DI STUDI AVANZATI
Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem	 IIAS ISRAEL INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
Madrid Institute for Advanced Study, Madrid	 MIAS Madrid Institute for Advanced Study
NANTES INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY France	 institut d'études avancées de nantes fondation reconnue d'utilité publique
Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, Amsterdam	 NIAS
NEW EUROPE COLLEGE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY Romania	
Paris Institute for Advanced Study, Paris	 IEA PARIS INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES AVANCÉES DE PARIS
Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala	 SWEDISH COLLEGIUM for ADVANCED STUDY

Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Berlin	 <i>Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin</i>
Zukunftskolleg, Konstanz	 <p>Zukunftskolleg</p>
Montpellier Advanced Knowledge Institute on Transitions, Montpellier	
Scienza Nuova, Torino	 <p>SCIENZANUOVA</p> <p><small>ITALIAN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN TORINO "UNIVERSITÀ ECL"</small></p>