



The AXA Foundation for Human Progress supports high-impact initiatives that help societies better understand, anticipate, and respond to the major risks of our time. By mobilizing knowledge across disciplines and sectors, the Foundation aims to contribute to a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for people, societies, and the planet.

Within this ambition, this guide contains the information needed to apply for an AXA Chair : a 5-year, 1.5M€ highly selective funding scheme that enables senior researchers to **build and lead transdisciplinary research networks**. For this call, transdisciplinary research means: (i) integrating at least two academic disciplines, including at least one from social sciences / humanities / economics and at least one from natural sciences / engineering / technology; and (ii) substantively involving societal partners (public authorities, communities, civil society organizations, practitioners) in co-design, co-development, and co-implementation throughout the project.

This guide and the F.A.Q. section (page 19) may be used as a reference by both institutions and candidates. The information presented within overrides any contrary terms that could be found elsewhere.

Participation in this call for applications implies acceptance of the following rules.

Table of contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Research topics	3
3.	Key information and Timeline	5
	Timeline:	6
4.	Eligibility criteria.....	7
	Host institution	7
	Chairholder	7
	Chair research program.....	8
5.	Evaluation criteria	9
	Chairholder profile criteria.....	11
6.	Selection process	11
	Application documents	11
	Application process step-by-step	12
7.	Grant and agreement terms and conditions.....	14
	Payment terms and conditions.....	15
	Use of grant.....	15
	Institution support to the Chairholder	16
	Monitoring of grant and obligations of Chairholder/Institution	17
	Intellectual property.....	17
	Publicity on the grant.....	17
	Open access policy	17
8.	F.A.Q.....	19

1. Introduction

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress supports high-impact initiatives that help societies better understand, anticipate, and respond to the major risks of our time. In a world shaped by climate change, accelerating inequalities, health crises, environmental degradation, and new technological disruptions, the Foundation aims to contribute to a more resilient and inclusive future by mobilizing knowledge and action across sectors and disciplines.

As part of this ambition, the AXA Chair is a highly selective funding scheme designed to foster transformative, **transdisciplinary research networks**, at the intersection of multiple fields and societal actors. It is grounded in the belief that protecting what matters, today and for future generations, requires both scientific excellence and meaningful engagement with society. Each AXA Chair supports a senior Principal Investigator (PI) who will:

- develop and lead a strategic, long-term research program within a host institution
- **build and coordinate a network of academic and non-academic partners** working together on complex risk-related challenges.

The scheme aims to:

- build **durable international networks** that continue beyond AXA funding (e.g. centers or consortia)
- generate **new knowledge** and **concrete solutions / pilot interventions**
- **influence policy and practice** and contribute to human progress
- strengthen **transdisciplinary capacity** within and across institutions.

For the purposes of this call, **transdisciplinary research** refers to collaborative research that:

1. integrates **at least two distinct academic disciplines**, including
 - i) **at least one from social sciences / humanities / economics**
 - ii) **at least one from natural sciences / engineering / technology;**
2. **substantively involves societal partners** (public authorities, communities, civil society organizations, practitioners) in a co-design, co-development and co-implementation approach throughout the project lifecycle.

Private for-profit companies are **not eligible as project partners** under this call. The AXA Foundation for Human Progress considers transdisciplinarity a core condition for maximizing scientific rigor, societal relevance, and real-world impact.

While each AXA Chair is anchored in a single host institution through a named Chairholder, the Chair is conceived as a **network grant**: the Chairholder is expected to establish and coordinate a multi-partner network (academic and non-academic) that jointly delivers the research, engagement and impact activities over the 5-year period.

The selection of research projects is conducted independently by a dedicated Scientific Committee, following a **rigorous process of academic pre-screening and peer review**. Composed of leading experts from diverse disciplines, the Scientific Committee guarantees a **transparent, fair, and merit-based scientific evaluation** and issues funding recommendations to the Board of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress, which is the final decision-making body.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress **does not interfere** with the work of its funded researchers and is firmly committed to safeguarding full academic freedom and research independence. These

conditions are essential to fostering innovation, ensuring the quality and integrity of research, and maximizing its potential to inform decisions and drive positive societal change.

Applications must be submitted via: <https://institution.axa-research.org/>

2. Research topics

AXA supports academic projects that deepen our understanding of **major risks facing people, societies, and the planet**, and that help us **anticipate, prevent, and respond** to those risks.

AXA funds **exclusively transdisciplinary projects** that bring together different fields (for example, combining health sciences, social sciences, environmental sciences, economics, law, engineering, or data science) and, work with non-academic partners (public authorities, NGOs, citizen groups).

Projects should clearly fit within one or more of the three following areas:

A. Risks to People Health and Human Wellbeing

We support research on risks that affect people's lives, health, and daily well-being, from birth to old age, such as:

- Aging and longevity
- Changing population structures, fertility and demography
- How the environments we live in (air, water, housing, work, cities, climate) affect our health
- Mental health challenges and neurodegenerative diseases
- Preparedness for epidemics and other infectious threats
- Prevention and management of chronic diseases (e.g. cancer, cardiovascular, metabolic diseases)
- New technologies for health (AI, digital tools, remote care, personalized medicine)
- Unequal exposure to health risks and unequal access to prevention and care
- Approaches linking human, animal, and environmental health (e.g. One Health, Planetary Health)

Projects in this area should help, for example, to:

- Better **anticipate and prevent health risks**
- Make **healthcare and prevention more resilient, fair, and accessible**
- Inform **new ways of organizing care, prevention, and health governance**
- Guide **public policies and practices** that protect and improve people's well-being

B. Risks to Societies

We support research on risks that threaten social cohesion, economic stability, security, and trust in institutions, especially in a context of rapid technological and geopolitical change, such as:

- Social inequalities and exclusion (economic, territorial, gender, digital, loneliness etc.)
- Social cohesion, polarization, and loss of trust within and between communities
- Financial crises, economic shocks, and their long-term consequences
- Responsible investment, sustainable finance, and financial inclusion
- Geopolitical tensions, conflicts, and their human and economic impacts
- Cyber threats and vulnerabilities of our digital lives and critical infrastructures
- Impacts of AI and new technologies on work, democracy, privacy, and daily life
- Governance and regulation of disruptive technologies
- Social challenges of the climate and energy transition (e.g. jobs, lifestyles, "just transition")



- The role of insurance and other protection mechanisms in sharing and managing risks

Projects in this area may, for example:

- Identify **root causes of social and economic fragility**
- Propose or evaluate **mechanisms of protection and risk-sharing**
- Explore **new forms of institutions, regulation, and collective decision-making**
- Help societies **manage emerging and interconnected risks** more fairly and effectively

C. Risks to the Planet

We support research on environmental threats that endanger the long-term habitability of the planet and the conditions for human and societal flourishing:

- Adapting to climate change and building resilience in communities, cities, and regions
- Loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems that support life and economies
- Nature-based solutions for risk reduction and resilience (e.g. wetlands, forests, urban greening)
- Sustainable management of essential resources (water, food, energy, land)
- Circular economy approaches and low carbon transitions
- Pollution of air, water, and soil, and strategies for mitigation and remediation
- Planetary boundaries, tipping points, and cascading environmental risks
- Technological tools to monitor, model, and reduce environmental risks (e.g. remote sensing, AI)
- Interactions between environmental change and human vulnerabilities (health, livelihoods, migration)

Projects in this area should help, for example, to:

- **Limit environmental degradation** and its impacts on people and societies
- Strengthen our **capacity to adapt to environmental and climatic changes**
- Support **deep transitions** toward more sustainable ways of producing, consuming, and living
- Provide knowledge to **inform environmental policies and collective choices**

In addition, projects must clearly demonstrate a **transdisciplinary network approach**, including:

- Integration of **at least two distinct academic disciplines**, with at least one from social sciences / humanities / economics and at least one from natural sciences / engineering / technology.
- **Formal involvement of at least one non-academic partner** (public authority, municipality, NGO, community organization, professional association, public hospital, etc.) as a co-design and co-implementation partner.
- Substantial engagement of these partners in **agenda-setting, co-production of knowledge, and dissemination / uptake of results** (full co-production, not consultation only).

Collaborations with non-academic partners should focus on **public and civil society actors**. **Private for-profit companies are not eligible as project partners** in this scheme.

Projects based solely within a single discipline, or without meaningful stakeholder co-production, will not be considered competitive under this call.



3. Key information and Timeline

Institutions can submit only **one candidate per campaign**.

Non-selected institutions will not be able to re-apply for the same candidate or research program the following year.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress' grant for an AXA Chair amounts to **up to €1.5 million** and is awarded for a period of **5 years**. The grant will be paid in yearly instalments.

The prospective Chairholder is expected to be **PhD + 10 years minimum**.

Call categories for the 2026 campaign

For the 2026 AXA Chair campaign, proposals must be submitted under **one of the following two categories**:

A. Global Category

This category supports international, transdisciplinary research networks that address major risks and challenges related to:

- **Risks to People Health and Human Wellbeing,**
- **Risks to Societies,** and/or
- **Risks to the Planet.**

Projects must:

- integrate at least two academic disciplines, including one from social sciences / humanities / economics and one from natural sciences / engineering / technology;
- involve at least one non-academic partner (e.g. public authority, NGO, community organization, public hospital, professional association) as a **co-design and co-implementation partner**;
- adopt a **network-based approach** with clear international collaboration (e.g. partners, data, or impact across multiple countries);
- show how the Chair will help build a **durable research network** beyond the 5-year funding period.

B. Health in France Category

This category exclusively supports AXA Chairs:

- hosted by **French academic institutions or public research organizations,** and
- focusing on risks to **human health and well-being** in France and in a broader international context.

Topics may include, for example: environmental determinants of health, chronic and infectious diseases, mental health, health inequalities, health systems resilience, or health impacts of climate and social change.

Projects must:

- comply with the same **transdisciplinarity and stakeholder engagement requirements** specified in this document;
- be implemented primarily in **France**, although international partners may be involved;
- articulate clearly how the Chair will contribute to **improving health and well-being** and to informing policies and practices in France.

Across both categories, all proposals must:

- demonstrate **scientific originality and excellence**;



- adopt an **innovative transdisciplinary research design**, with genuine co-production with non-academic partners;
- show clear **relevance and contribution** to at least one of the three overarching domains supported by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress: People Health and Human WellBeing, Societies, and the Planet.

Recommended Budgeting and Timeline for Transdisciplinary Projects

- **Allocate 25–30% of the total budget** to stakeholder engagement, facilitation, partner compensation, and communication (including workshops, travel, translation, and mediation where needed).
- **Structure the 5-year timeline as follows:**
 - **Year 1:** Co-design with partners, building trust and partnerships, refining the problem framing and research questions.
 - **Years 2–4:** Integrated research and joint development (“co-production”) of options, interventions, or prototypes.
 - **Year 5:** Implementation support with key users, scaling and embedding of results, follow-up, evaluation, and learning.

Timeline:

Campaign	Spring 2026
Registration (Only if your institution is not already registered on the AXA Foundation for Human Progress’ online platform.)	March 12 – April 02, 2026 (4PM CEST)
Expression of Interest	March 12 – April 09, 2026 (4PM CEST)
Full application submission	April 20 – May 14, 2026 (4PM CET)
Rebuttal	September 7 – September 14, 2026 (4PM CET)
Online Q&A session with the Scientific Committee’s members – <u>for shortlisted candidates only</u>	October 2026
Results	December 2026

NB: The AXA Foundation for Human Progress Team will inform all applicants of the status of their application, shortlisted or not. However, no feedback will be given on the reasons for shortlisting or not.

4. Eligibility criteria

Host institution

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress partners with **academic institutions** (universities and higher education institutions) registered with World Higher Education Database (World Higher Education Database (WHED) Portal) and public research organizations (e.g., national research institutes, Centres etc.). Associations, foundations, governmental bodies, hospitals, independent research centers, museums and NGOs are not eligible for AXA funding.

Host institutions must be **registered in the AXA Foundation for Human Progress' database**. To register, please click on the following link and follow the instructions: <https://institution.axa-research.org/>

Each AXA Chair must be anchored in a **single host institution**, which will be the sole contractual counterpart of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress. However, the host institution is expected to work in close collaboration with **other academic and non-academic partners** forming the Chair network.

Co-hosting arrangements (e.g. two leading academic institutions) are possible at the level of project governance, but all contractual and financial flows from AXA will go through the **single host institution**.

Institutions can host several AXA Chairs if they are not carried by the same department or laboratory within the Institution.

Host institutions will be expected to participate in the Chair's general funding through studentships, post-doctoral support and material resources related to the research program. The Institution is responsible for providing details of this support in the application.

Transdisciplinary networks: While the AXA Chair must be hosted by an eligible academic institution or public research organization, AXA strongly encourages the formal involvement of **partner organizations** in the Chair research program. These may include:

- academic partners (universities, public research institutes); and
- non-academic partners (public authorities, municipalities, civil society organizations, NGOs, public hospitals, professional associations, community-based organizations).

At least **one non-academic partner** must be formally involved as a co-design and co-implementation partner. These partners cannot act as host institutions, but:

- may be involved through collaboration agreements, subcontracts, or small grants / compensations, for clearly justified activities directly linked to the Chair Research Program and to the benefit of the non-academic stakeholders; and
- should be explicitly identified in the application, with a clear description of their roles throughout the project.

Private for-profit companies are **not eligible as partners** in this scheme.

Chairholder

The Chairholder is expected to be of the highest caliber, as evidenced by the standard indicators for assessing academic excellence: publications in first-rate journals, international stature, and network.



The profile of the candidate should be **at least PhD+10 years from PhD defense date** to the time of application.

The AXA Chairholder must hold a full-time academic position at the host institution for the duration of the Chair. Within that position, they are expected to devote a substantial share of their time to the Chair research program. Their publications will be issued in the name of the host institution during the chair duration.

At equal level of excellence and transformational potential, preference will be given to institutions hiring a Chairholder from another Institution. AXA Chairs are not intended to substitute for an internal promotion.

The AXA Chairholder is expected to have demonstrated experience in leading or significantly contributing to **transdisciplinary research**, including:

- collaborations across multiple academic disciplines; and
- previous engagement with non-academic stakeholders (policy makers, practitioners, communities, civil society, industry, etc.) in research, knowledge exchange or implementation activities.

The Chairholder will be expected to act as a **catalyst for transdisciplinary collaboration** within the host institution and its networks.

The Chairholder will act as **Network Principal Investigator (PI)** and must demonstrate:

- a strong track record of **leading or significantly contributing to transdisciplinary research networks**;
- experience in **full co-production** with non-academic stakeholders (from agenda-setting to dissemination); and
- the ability to build long-term collaborations that can endure beyond the AXA funding.

The Chairholder must hold a **full-time academic position** at the host institution for the duration of the Chair. If they are not already employed full-time at the host institution at the time of application, the institution must commit to creating such a position upon award.

Chair research program

The application must be **submitted in English, on time, and complete**. It must **respect the template structure** and **include all required documents**. The research topic must lie within the scope of the eligible areas as listed under section 2 of this document (see page 3).

Transdisciplinary design: The proposed Chair research program must:

- Integrate multiple academic disciplines relevant to the chosen topic (e.g. climate science and economics; epidemiology and data science and sociology; law and environmental sciences);
- Identify and involve non-academic stakeholders (e.g. public authorities, affected communities, NGOs, professional bodies) in problem framing, co-design of research questions, validation of methods, and/or co-production and uptake of results
- Include a clear stakeholder engagement plan, specifying the role, responsibilities and expected contributions of each stakeholder group.



Expressions of interest and full applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of a transdisciplinary approach and stakeholder involvement may be deemed ineligible or considered less competitive.

Proposed programs must address academic research and not company-driven research & development (R&D) aimed at proprietary commercial products. However, co-developed solutions, tools, or pilot interventions with public or civil society partners are welcome, as long as they are grounded in a robust research program.

Projects must deal with research that conforms to the [AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide](#)

The Following is a non-exhaustive list of disqualifying factors:

- Research violating national regulations
- Research supporting any political activity
- Research having direct military use
- Research having potentially dangerous environmental impacts
- Research relying on the artificial production of highly infectious pathogens with potential for large scale harmful/lethal effects for humans and research involving gain of function
- Biomedical research conducted without the fully informed consent of the participant
- Research on embryonic stem cells (incl. animal, with inferred subsequent human application)
- Research processing private personal data without the informed consent of the concerned parties (incl. genetic information)
- Research activities aiming at human cloning

In addition, projects that may **put community or civil society partners at significant physical, legal or political risk** (e.g. in highly contentious or repressive contexts) will not be considered eligible under this scheme.

Cases of scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of data will be considered as breaches of fundamental ethical principles and the proposals concerned will be excluded.

5. Evaluation criteria

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress has developed an **independent** peer review evaluation process, designed to assess scientific excellence irrespective of the gender and nationality of the Chairholder or any other potential biases. The evaluations are monitored to guarantee transparency, fairness, and impartiality in the treatment of proposals.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress provides clear evaluation criteria. When writing their applications, candidates are strongly urged to keep these criteria in mind to ensure that their proposal provides the required information for reviewers to reach an informed opinion on each individual criterion.

Applications will be assessed against the evaluation criteria below:



- **Potential to transform the considered research field**
 - Scientific originality and innovative nature of the Research Program, including the depth and quality of its transdisciplinary integration (i.e. how different disciplines will be combined to generate new concepts, methods and solutions beyond disciplinary boundaries).
 - Quality and diversity of the collaboration network, including:
 - Integration across disciplines
 - strengthening of international academic collaborations.
 - Depth and quality of engagement with non-academic stakeholders, including the extent to which key stakeholders are involved in co-defining research questions, co-producing knowledge and facilitating implementation and impact.
 - Potential of the Chair to establish a durable research network (beyond the 5-year grant), including prospects for follow-on funding and institutional anchoring.
 - Likelihood that the Chair will change practices and policies in relevant domains (e.g. through co-produced tools, pilots, or guidelines).
- **Transdisciplinary design and implementation**
 - Clarity and robustness of the transdisciplinary concept and approach.
 - Adequacy and complementarity of the disciplines involved, and how they will be integrated methodologically (not just placed side by side).
 - Appropriateness and meaningfulness of stakeholder involvement, including mechanisms for full co-production (co-design, ongoing interaction, joint interpretation of results, co-dissemination), and clear roles for at least one non-academic partner organization.
 - Feasibility of managing a transdisciplinary team (governance arrangements, shared work plans, common milestones)

Proposals with weak or purely formal transdisciplinary aspects will be considered less competitive, even if they show strong disciplinary excellence.
- **Feasibility of the Research Program**
 - Operational strength of the Chair Program. The methodology should be consistent and clearly presented.
 - Alignment of the Research Program with the long-term research strategy of the Institution.
 - Organizational set-up to launch and support this Chair, including the size of the team, diversity, gender parity, and its competencies, as well as a realistic and coherent budget. The institution is free to make an appointment at a higher cost level but must support the extra expenditure from its own funds. The host institution could also invite other funding partners as long as the conditions of the agreement with AXA are still respected, notably regarding the publicity on the grant (see “Publicity on grant” on page 12).
- **Chair outreach and engagement activities**



- Impact for society and timeliness of the Research Program, and potential outreach of Research activities, in particular dissemination activities within and beyond the academic community.
- Engagement with the AXA Foundation for Human Progress in dissemination activities (conferences, webinars, publications, videos...) towards practitioners.

Chairholder profile criteria

- 1) **Academic excellence and strong track record** (publications, scientific commitment, academic collaboration...)
- 2) Previous **achievements and innovative capacity**
- 3) Leadership skills & ability to implement the Research Program, including **governance of complex, multi-partner networks**.
- 4) Strong track record of **transdisciplinary collaborations**, including work across multiple academic disciplines and collaborations with non-academic partners (policy makers, practitioners, civil society, local communities)
- 5) **International recognition** of the Chairholder by their peers (proven international collaborations, prizes, outreach, policy-oriented publications, participation to impactful events/conferences...)
- 6) **In case of two equally scored applications, please note that mobility will be prioritized.** Particular attention will also be paid to the **relevance** of this mobility, e.g., alignment with the research strategy of the host institution and laboratory, adequacy of the move with the track record of the candidate.
- 7) **Personal commitment of the Chairholder** to achieving the aims of the Chair Program.
- 8) Demonstrated skills and strategies for **leading transdisciplinary teams**, including experience in facilitating collaboration between disciplines and sectors, and in managing participatory or co-creation processes.

Each criterion has equal weight and will be marked on a scale of four as follows:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Wording</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>All relevant aspects of the assessment criteria successfully addressed.</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>All assessment criteria very well addressed but a small number of shortcomings are present.</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Assessment criteria broadly addressed, however there are significant weaknesses.</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Serious reservations</i>	<i>Assessment criteria addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.</i>

6. Selection process

Application documents

All information listed below is required from the host institution:

Expression of Interest

- *Personal details of the prospective Chairholder and their current institution*



- *Research program details: title, area (Risks to People Health and Human Well Being, Risks to Societies, and/or Risks to the Planet.), and project description (3000 characters including spaces), including:*
 - o *the long-term vision of the Chair and the network;*
 - o *the transdisciplinary approach (disciplines involved, integration strategy);*
 - o *initial academic and non-academic partners and their envisaged roles;*
 - o *preliminary ideas on network governance and stakeholder co-production.*
- *A short CV (maximum 3 pages) of the prospective Chairholder and a link to an online detailed CV.*

Full application

- *The application form duly completed in English*
- *Requested supporting documents:*
 - *Letter of intent from the prospective Chairholder*
 - *A short CV (3 pages) for the prospective Chairholder and a link to an online detailed CV*
 - *For the prospective Chairholder, a list of 20 publications including the top 10 most impactful publications and the 10 most recent ones*
 - *For the host laboratory, a list of 20 publications including the top 10 most impactful publications and the 10 most recent ones*
 - *Two support letters one by the president/rector of the host institution and one by the main non-academic collaborator*
 - *Two letters of recommendation from peers (at least one from an academic peer and at least one from a non-academic stakeholder, e.g. policy maker, practitioner, civil society partner, community representative) who can attest to the candidate's ability to work in a transdisciplinary and stakeholder-engaged manner.*

Application process step-by-step

Step 1 – Registering

To apply for AXA Foundation for Human Progress grants, academic institutions must be registered on our platform (<https://institution.axa-research.org/>). You can check if your Institution is already registered in the database via the above link. If your Institution is already on our database, you can omit the registration and your institution's operational contact can log in directly using the login details they defined.

Institutions should appoint a single point of contact ("Operational Contact") who will handle relations with the AXA Foundation for Human Progress.

Step 2 – Expression of interest [\(VIA OUR ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM\)](#)

The expression of interest provides initial information on the candidate and on the program submitted in the aim of accessing rights to the full application process.

To submit an online expression of interest, please follow the steps below:

- 1/ Log onto our online application platform: <https://institution.axa-research.org/>
- 2/ Go to the "Application" tab and click the "Chair" link to go to the "expression of interest" page
- 3/ Click "New" and fill in the online expression of interest form. Attach a short CV (3 pages maximum)
- 4/ Click Submit.



You will receive an email confirming that your expression of interest has been submitted. If you don't receive the email, please check your spam folder, and contact axachairs@axa.com if you did not receive the confirmation email.

As long as you have not clicked on "Submit" you will be able to edit your expression of interest. Click on "Submit" for your expression of interest to be considered. Once submitted, your expression of Interest can no longer be edited.

Please ensure you are working on one and only draft until submission of your final expression of interest. Indeed, in case of different drafts created, you will not be able to submit your application.

All expressions of interest will be reviewed by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress Team and the shortlist for full applications will be selected based on the relevance of the topics (refer to the list page 3) and the scientific CVs of the applicants. You will be informed of the decision pertaining to your expression of interest by email. Shortlisted candidates only will be invited to submit a full application.

Step 3 – Full Application [\(VIA OUR ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM\)](#)

Candidates who are invited to submit a full application will receive an email to create their own account on the AXA Foundation for Human Progress application platform.

Candidates will be able to download the full application template, complete it and upload it along with other requested supporting documents (see list page 7).

Step 4 – Scientific assessment

Each application is reviewed by at least three independent experts who will assess the candidate's excellence and the research program's scientific quality.

Please note that the AXA Foundation for Human Progress neither interferes in the experts' assessments nor modifies the submitted reviews (apart from formatting when needed) as these are independent based on the Fund's values.

Step 5 – Rebuttal

Candidates will have to reply to the peer reviewers who assessed their applications through a "rebuttal". The main purpose of the rebuttal is to provide applicants with the possibility to comment on any potential misinterpretation or misunderstanding in the assessment of their proposals. This step is mandatory.

Step 6 – Shortlist

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress experts assess the relevance of the projects based on the existing portfolio and on the scientific peer-review assessment. They define a final shortlist.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress Team will inform all applicants of the status of their application, shortlisted or not. However, no feedback will be given on the reasons for shortlisting or not.

Step 7 – Online Q&A Interview – ONLY FOR SHORTLISTED PROPOSALS

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a 10-minute online Q&A interview with members of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress' Scientific Committee. The purpose of this interview is to assess the candidate's ability to clearly and concisely present their research program to a non-specialist scientific audience, to explain the relevance, originality, and potential impact of their work, and to



engage in a structured scientific discussion. The interview will typically begin with a short oral overview of the research program (without slides or visual support), followed by questions from Scientific Committee members. It will be held via videoconference, and candidates will receive the connection details and time slots by email. They are expected to ensure a stable internet connection, a quiet environment, and to conduct the interview in English. The Scientific Committee will use this step to further evaluate communication skills, clarity, and the alignment of the candidate's research with the objectives of the Foundation, and to inform its funding recommendations to the Board of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress.

Step 8 – Selection & Results Publication

The Scientific Committee of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress will issue funding recommendations to the Board of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress based on the complete application file, the assessments provided by independent external reviewers, the candidate's rebuttal where applicable, and the outcome of the online Q&A interview. The Scientific Committee is committed to a fair, transparent, and merit-based scientific evaluation grounded in academic excellence. In line with the Foundation's philosophy, Committee members use their expertise and experience to identify researchers who combine high scientific quality and originality, strong transformative potential in their field, and alignment with the Foundation's strategic priorities.

The Board of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress, as the legal governance body of the Foundation, takes the final funding decisions on the basis of these recommendations and the strategic considerations of the Foundation. Final results will be communicated to all candidates by email once the selection process is completed.

Once the Board of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress has made its decision, the Foundation will inform the Institution and the candidate through the institutional contact. **The Board's decision is final and cannot be appealed.**

PLEASE NOTE

We are not able to provide any feedback on our selection process and decisions.

7. Grant and agreement terms and conditions

Each selected project is a combination of a candidate, a proposal (including the submitted budget) and a host institution. The proposed candidate, and no other, is expected to carry out the project as described in the proposal and the grant agreement¹.

The host institution will receive an official letter via email specifying the proposed grant amount & duration and conditions of said grant. Upon written acceptance of the grant offer by the selected institution and the new Chairholder, the AXA Foundation for Human Progress will liaise with the institution to launch the contracting process and agree on a joint communication. Grantees should be kept updated by their Institution throughout the process.

¹ A legal agreement signed between the AXA Foundation for Human Progress and the host institution will specify the terms and conditions whereby AXA will lend financial support to the institution by providing funding to enable it to finance the AXA Chair.



The grant offer is effective for a period of 2 weeks. The AXA Chair will be officially announced once the agreement is signed. The institution and the Chairholder can however jointly with the AXA Foundation for Human Progress, communicate on the selection.

Please note that the communication should be done in close coordination and agreement with the AXA Foundation for Human Progress.

It is expected that the Chairholder take their position **no later than 6 months upon receipt of the grant offer**. The AXA Foundation for Human Progress reserves the right to cancel a grant if the proposed start date goes beyond this limit.

Should the Institution fail to recruit the Chairholder proposed in the application, the AXA Foundation for Human Progress will cancel the grant and the agreement process will be terminated.

Should the Chairholder leave the Institution during the duration of the tenure, said Institution must immediately inform the AXA Foundation for Human Progress to explore alternative options as stated in the agreement.

Payment terms and conditions

The grant will be paid in **yearly installments**, following the Institution's **submission of calls for funds**. The funds will be processed in accordance with a payment schedule stipulated in the agreement.

The first transfer of funds is triggered by the signature of the agreement, the Chairholder's official acceptance of the AXA Chair, and the receipt of an official project start letter (to be sent via email) confirming that the research program has begun.

In case of early termination on behalf of the researcher, the Institution shall provide AXA with a statement of expenses. The remaining funds will be retained by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress.

Use of grant

Any amount awarded by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress is expected to primarily cover the Chairholder's salary, the research environment – e.g., Research staff salaries – and any expenses directly connected to the Chair Research Program.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress does not cover expenses that are not directly connected to the Chair Research Program. Therefore, **the AXA Foundation for Human Progress grant cannot be used for administrative and infrastructural expenses.**



Eligible costs are:

- AXA Chairholder expenses (incl. annual gross salary, travel & accommodation costs, etc.);
- Post-Doctoral, PhD expenses (incl. selection process costs, Junior Research Fellows Grants, etc.);
- Purchase of scientific equipment and resources (databases, survey costs, consumables, etc.); and
- Costs associated with the organization of academic and public engagement activities.
- Costs associated with stakeholder engagement and co-creation activities, including:
 - organization of co-design workshops, living labs, deliberative forums;
 - travel and accommodation for non-academic partners participating in project activities;
 - facilitation, translation and communication materials to support participation of diverse stakeholders;
 - where permitted by local regulations and institutional policies, modest compensation for time and expertise contributed by community or civil society partners, provided it is clearly justified, transparent, and directly linked to activities under the Chair Research Program.
- Costs for dedicated boundary-spanning roles critical to network functioning (e.g. network coordinators, knowledge brokers, engagement officers), provided these positions serve the Chair Research Program and are clearly described in the budget.

The budget should be designed to **maximize the scientific and societal impact** of the Chair. The balance between PI salary, research staff, engagement activities and coordination roles must be explicitly justified in the proposal. Excessive concentration of the budget on a single cost category without clear justification may be considered less competitive.

Institution support to the Chairholder

It is the remit of the institution to provide the Chairholder with a research environment (at minimum) aligned with the conditions described in the Chair application (resources, equipment, budget, etc.).

Host institutions will be expected to participate in the Chair's general funding with studentships, post-doctoral support and material resources related to the research program. The institution shall demonstrate this participation in the application.

The host institution is expected to support the transdisciplinary nature of the Chair by:

- facilitating collaboration across relevant departments, faculties or units;
- providing access to platforms or units dedicated to stakeholder engagement (e.g. living labs, innovation hubs, policy liaison offices);
- recognizing transdisciplinary and stakeholder-engaged activities (e.g. co-production workshops, policy briefs, community engagement) as valued components of the Chairholder's academic role.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress has signed the Charter for European Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. As such, it is particularly important that institutions demonstrate their commitment to providing an attractive, supportive, and stimulating environment in which the Chairholder will carry out the research program. The institution should commit to providing its researchers with the means to be internationally and inter-sectorally competitive and mobile.



Monitoring of grant and obligations of Chairholder/Institution

Each year, the institution will provide a report composed of 2 separate documents:

A. An Activity Report:

This activity report will provide the highlights of the Research Program, progress, achievements, and outputs versus objectives, impacts of the AXA Grant, and research related activities. It is to be submitted on the AXA Foundation for Human Progress' online portal. The Chairholder will receive dedicated and secure access credentials upon signature of the agreement.

B. A Financial Report:

This financial report must include the annual expenditures explaining how the grant has been allocated. This report is to be submitted on the AXA Foundation for Human Progress' online institution portal by the operational contact.

Intellectual property

The Chairholder remains fully independent to conduct their Research project. AXA will not claim any right to the ownership or use of the results coming from the Research Program, and the institution and/or the Chairholder and members or their team keep full ownership of their results, in accordance with the legal and/or contractual provisions.

Publicity on the grant

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress is a philanthropic initiative and any publicity or communication on the grant will aim at enabling AXA to promote its general interest purpose. For communication purposes, **the Chair title should include "AXA"** and **the Chairholder title should include "AXA Professor"**. When communicating about the AXA Chair, the institution, the Chairholder and the member of their team will **mention the support of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress**. Grantees must acknowledge the AXA Foundation for Human Progress support in all research publications even if they are not the leading author. Acknowledgements must be included in the funding and **acknowledgement sections**, and/or in any other relevant section in the publication with the following sentence **"this work benefitted from funding by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress"**.

Open access policy

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress believes that providing free and unrestricted access to the scientific outputs of the research projects it supports to be a fundamental part of its mission. Since July 1st, 2016, an Open Access policy is effective for all new agreements and granted funding. To build on best existing practices in this area, this policy closely follows the guidelines instituted by the European Research Council.

Considering the fast evolution of current debates and the diversity of approaches between disciplines, no binding commitment to this policy will be requested from the Chairholder.

To comply with the open access policy, the AXA Foundation for Human Progress:



- Requests that an electronic copy of any research article, monograph or other research publication that is supported by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress be deposited in a suitable repository immediately upon publication. Open access should be provided as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than six months after the official publication date. For publications in the Social Sciences and Humanities domain a delay of up to twelve months is acceptable.
- Strongly encourages funded researchers to use publishing venues and discipline relevant repositories for their publications that ensure that the publications are publicly discoverable and accessible as soon as possible, and in places that enable long term preservation. If there is no appropriate repository, researchers should make their publications available in institutional repositories or in centralized ones.
- Reminds researchers supported by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress that open access fees are eligible costs that can be charged against AXA RF grants, provided they are incurred during the duration of the project.
- Asks host institutions to cover open access fees of any research publications supported by the AXA Foundation for Human Progress arising after the end of the project

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress furthermore strongly encourages its researchers to:

- Retain files of all the research data they have produced and used during their work, and that they be prepared to share these data with other researchers whenever they are not bound by copyright restrictions, confidentiality requirements, or contractual clauses.
- Use discipline-specific repositories for their research data. If there is no appropriate discipline specific repository, researchers should make their research data available in institutional repositories or in centralized ones.
- Establish good research data management in accordance with the current best practices in their respective fields and to share their data with other researchers in a responsible way.

Participation in the call for applications implies acceptance of the above-mentioned rules.

8. F.A.Q

1. THE AXA FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN PROGRESS AND THE AXA CHAIR

Who are we?

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress is AXA's global philanthropy initiative. Throughout its initiative AXA is dedicated to supporting research and action around key societal issues and risks that shape the future of people, societies, and the planet. Our work is guided by values of transparency, excellence, relevance, diversity, and the support of a community of researchers and partners committed to building solutions for a more resilient, inclusive, and just future.

What is an AXA Chair in this scheme?

The AXA Chair is a 5-year, up to 1.5M€ grant awarded to a senior researcher (the Chairholder / PI) hosted by an academic institution. It is designed as a transdisciplinary research network grant:

- It supports the Chairholder's research program,
- It funds a network of academic and non-academic partners, and
- It aims to build durable collaborations that continue beyond the end of AXA funding.

Why does the AXA Foundation for Human Progress support science in this way?

To navigate increasingly complex and interconnected risks (climate, health, social cohesion, technological disruption), societies need robust scientific knowledge that is integrated across disciplines and co-produced with societal actors. By funding transdisciplinary research networks, the AXA Foundation for Human Progress aims to:

- anticipate and better understand emerging risks,
- support the development of actionable solutions and pilots,
- inform policies and practices, and
- foster long-term capacity, collaboration, and human progress.

What do we expect from supported researchers and their networks?

Chairholders and their host institutions are expected to:

- fully commit to the 5-year research program,
- develop and coordinate a transdisciplinary network of partners,
- ensure meaningful co-production with at least one non-academic partner,
- produce both high-quality scientific outputs and concrete, societally relevant results, and
- submit annual activity and financial reports in due time.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply as host institution?

Eligible host institutions are academic institutions and public research organizations (e.g. universities, public research institutes).

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress does not fund as hosts: associations, foundations, NGOs, private companies, governmental bodies, hospitals, independent research centers, museums, or other cultural institutions.

Can non-academic organizations be part of the project?



Yes. Each AXA Chair must involve at least one non-academic partner as a co-design and co-implementation partner (for example: public authorities, municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, public hospitals, professional associations). These partners:

- cannot be the host institution,
- may receive funds via the host institution (e.g. subcontracts, small grants, honoraria) for clearly defined, project-related activities, and
- must be clearly identified with defined roles in the proposal.

Can private for-profit companies be partners?

No. Private for-profit companies are not eligible as project partners under this call. They may be consulted informally if relevant, but they cannot be formal partners in the AXA Chair network or receive funding from the grant.

Who can be an AXA Chairholder (PI)?

The Chairholder must:

- hold a PhD awarded at least 10 years before the application deadline;
- have a strong track record of academic excellence;
- demonstrate experience in transdisciplinary research and co-production with non-academic stakeholders;
- be able to take or already hold a full-time academic position at the host institution for the duration of the Chair.

Can the Chairholder already be employed at the host institution?

Yes. Both internal and external candidates are eligible. At equal level of excellence and transformational potential, mobility (hiring from another institution) will be given preference, provided it aligns with the host institution's strategy and the candidate's track record. The AXA Chair is not intended as a simple internal promotion.

Can an institution host several AXA Chairs or apply multiple times?

Yes. Institutions can host several AXA Chairs, provided they are not carried by the same department or laboratory.

However:

- Each institution may submit only one application as host per campaign.
- Institutions may not re-apply with the same candidate or the same research program/network in subsequent campaigns if it has been rejected.

3. SCOPE OF PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

What types of research topics are eligible?

Projects must clearly fall within at least one of the three main areas:

- Risks to People Health and Human Well-Being,
- Risks to Societies,
- Risks to the Planet.

Details and example topics are provided in Section 2 of the guidelines. Projects must clearly articulate how they address risk-related societal challenges and how they contribute to human progress.



What are the transdisciplinarity requirements?

Each project must:

- involve at least two academic disciplines, including at least one from social sciences / humanities / economics and at least one from natural sciences / engineering / technology;
- show how these disciplines will be integrated (not just placed side by side);
- involve at least one non-academic partner in co-design, co-production and co-implementation of the research and its applications.
- Projects that are mono-disciplinary or that involve stakeholders only in a superficial or consultative way are unlikely to be competitive.

Is there a minimum number of partners or countries?

There is no fixed minimum number of academic partners or countries. Projects may have a national, regional or global scope.

However, proposals should demonstrate that:

- the network composition is appropriate to the research and impact goals, and
- collaborations (including international and Global North–Global South collaborations where relevant) are structured to maximize impact and long-term sustainability.

4. BUDGET, DURATION AND USE OF FUNDS

What is the amount and duration of an AXA Chair?

An AXA Chair provides up to 1.5M€ over 5 years. The grant is paid in yearly instalments, subject to the signature of the agreement and satisfactory annual reporting.

What can the grant be used for?

Eligible costs include, in particular:

- Chairholder-related costs (e.g. salary support, travel and accommodation, where permitted by institutional rules);
- Research staff (postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, research assistants);
- Scientific equipment and resources (e.g. databases, surveys, consumables);
- Costs associated with transdisciplinary network management (e.g. coordinator roles, knowledge brokers, engagement officers) when clearly tied to the project;

Costs associated with stakeholder engagement and co-creation, such as:

- co-design workshops, living labs, deliberative forums,
- travel and accommodation for non-academic partners participating in project activities,
- facilitation, translation, and communication materials;
- where allowed by local regulations and institutional policies, modest compensation for time and expertise of community or civil society partners, strictly for project-related activities.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress does not cover general administrative or infrastructural costs that are not directly related to the Chair Research Program.

Are there strict budget percentages (e.g. for management or engagement)?



No fixed percentages are imposed, but as a general recommendation, applicants are encouraged to allocate roughly 25–30% of the budget to stakeholder engagement, facilitation, partner compensation, and communication, and to justify any major deviation from this benchmark. The budget must be clearly justified and designed to maximize the scientific and societal impact of the project. An unbalanced budget (e.g. concentrating most resources on one category without clear justification) may be considered less competitive during evaluation.

5. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

What is an Expression of Interest (EOI)?

The Expression of Interest is a short, preliminary application submitted by the host institution through the AXA online platform. It presents:

- the prospective Chairholder;
- the core idea and long-term vision of the research and network;
- initial academic and non-academic partners;
- the intended transdisciplinary and stakeholder co-production approach.

Only EOIs selected after internal screening are invited to submit a full application.

Who can submit an Expression of Interest?

Only the Operational Contact of an eligible host institution can submit an EOI via the AXA Foundation for Human Progress platform. Candidates cannot submit EOIs independently.

What is included in the full application?

The full application includes:

- the detailed research program,
- the Chairholder's CV and publication list,
- a Transdisciplinary & Stakeholder Engagement Plan,
- a Network Governance Plan and a Data and Knowledge Sharing Plan,
- letters of support (including at least one from a non-academic stakeholder),

a detailed budget and justification.

How are proposals evaluated?

Full applications are evaluated through an independent peer-review process. Each proposal is reviewed by several external experts, who assess:

- scientific excellence and originality,
- quality of the transdisciplinary integration,
- depth and quality of stakeholder co-production,
- robustness and feasibility of the network and governance,
- potential for long-term impact on science, policy and practice in support of human progress.

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress does not interfere with or modify the scientific assessments of reviewers.

What is the rebuttal phase?

After receiving the external reviews, candidates are required to submit a rebuttal. This is an opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings, address specific comments, and provide additional explanations. It is mandatory.



Who makes the final funding decision?

The Scientific Committee of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress, composed of top-tier scientists from diverse fields, conducts an independent scientific evaluation of all eligible proposals. It considers:

- the full application,
- external peer reviews,
- the rebuttal,
- and the strategic fit with the AXA Foundation for Human Progress's portfolio.

On this basis, the Scientific Committee formulates funding recommendations to the Board of the AXA Foundation for Human Progress. The Board, as the Foundation's legal governance body, takes the final funding decisions, taking into account the Committee's recommendations and the overall strategic and fiduciary considerations of the Foundation. The Board's decision is final and cannot be appealed.

Will I receive feedback if my project is not selected?

All applicants are informed of the outcome by email. Given the number of applications, the AXA Foundation for Human Progress is not able to provide detailed feedback on individual proposals or decisions.

6. AFTER SELECTION AND DURING THE CHAIR

How long do we have to accept the grant offer?

The grant offer is valid for 2 weeks after the announcement of results. The institution and the Chairholder must confirm acceptance in writing within this period.

When should the project start?

Projects are expected to start no later than 6 months after the results are announced. The AXA Foundation for Human Progress reserves the right to cancel the grant if the start date is delayed beyond this limit.

What are the reporting obligations?

Each year, the host institution must submit:

- an Activity Report (by the Chairholder), summarizing progress, achievements, outputs, network development, and impacts;
- a Financial Report, detailing expenditures and allocation of the AXA grant.

Continuation of funding is conditional on the reception of the reports.

What happens if the Chairholder leaves the host institution?

If the Chairholder leaves the host institution during the Chair tenure, the institution must inform the AXA Foundation for Human Progress immediately. Together, they will explore possible options as specified in the grant agreement. In some cases, the grant may be terminated.

What happens if the host institution cannot appoint the proposed Chairholder?

If the institution fails to recruit the Chairholder named in the application, the AXA Foundation for Human Progress will cancel the grant, and the agreement process will be terminated.

7. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, OPEN ACCESS, AND ETHICS



Who owns the results of the research?

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress does not claim any ownership of the results. Intellectual property rights belong to the host institution and/or the Chairholder and their team members, in accordance with applicable legal and contractual provisions.

What are the expectations regarding Open Access?

The AXA Foundation for Human Progress strongly encourages open access to publications and open sharing of research data where appropriate.

An electronic copy of research outputs should be deposited in a suitable repository as soon as possible and no later than 6 months after publication (12 months for Social Sciences and Humanities).

Open access publication fees are eligible costs during the lifetime of the project.

Are there ethical or political boundaries for projects?

Yes. Proposals must comply with the AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide and all relevant laws and regulations. Projects involving, for example, direct military use, gain-of-function research, research violating human rights, or unethical data practices are not eligible.

In addition, projects that could place community or civil society partners at significant physical, legal, or political risk are not eligible under this scheme.