



BAOSTEEL-AUSTRALIA
JOINT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

BAJC BAOSTEEL FUNDING 2024

**CALL FOR
EXPRESSION OF INTREST (EOI)**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Closing date: Friday 28 June 2024

EOIs must be submitted to BAJC in WORD FORMAT to admin@bajc.org.au

by COB Friday 28 June 2024.

**EOIs submitted after the deadline or not following the prescribed format
may be declined.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Baosteel Australia Joint Research and Development Centre (BAJC) is a joint venture between Baoshan Iron and Steel Co., Ltd., also known as Baosteel, and five Australian universities - The University of Queensland, The University of New South Wales, Monash University and University of Wollongong and Deakin University. Baosteel, a core subsidiary of China Baowu Steel Group Corporation, is one of the most competitive steel manufacturers in the world. BAJC is located in the University of Queensland and has been renewed recently for another 5 years starting from April 2024. Baosteel provides funding for BAJC to conduct fundamental research and joint industrial technology research, aiming to develop innovative science and technologies in areas of interest to Baosteel and aligned with the research capacities of the participant universities.

BAJC has been successfully operated over 13 years since 2011. BAJC manages the Baosteel funded projects, including organizing the project application. In 2024, Baosteel will provide funding support up to \$2,000,000 for research projects on a competitive basis. The approved projects in 2024 will be commenced on 1 January 2025.

RESEARCH PRIORITY THEMES

Baosteel Funding Program 2024 will address research areas that deliver the highest R&D impact for Baosteel to reduce the commercial risk and validate environmental and technical performance in the innovative science and technologies. BAJC aims to support research strengths of participant universities through the collaborative research work, to meet the sustainable and strategic needs of both Baosteel and participant universities.

The priority themes for projects to be commenced on 1 January 2025, are:

1. Advanced Steel Materials and Processes
 - Basic sciences and technologies for the design, characterization, surface engineering and application of advanced steels.
 - Advanced technologies to reduce costs, improve quality of products and enhance energy efficiency for ironmaking, steelmaking, hot rolling and other associated processes.

2. Novel Green Steel Technologies
 - The green and efficient utilization of fossil fuels for decarbonization in steel industry.
 - Application of hydrogen and biomass for replacement of fossil fuels in ironmaking and steelmaking.

- Novel technologies of energy transition replacing carbon and/or carbon associated chemical energy with electric and other renewable energies.
 - Other energy-saving and environment-friendly technologies for steel production.
3. Digital and Smart Controlling and Optimizing Technologies for Steel Industry
- Novel and advanced numerical simulation and modelling of metallurgical processes.
 - Digital design of materials (e.g., alloys, light metals etc.) and intelligent prediction and characterization of the mechanical properties of the materials.
 - Smart industrial software and programmable logic controller (PLC) used for steel industry.
4. Non-steel Materials
- Design and processing technologies for light metals (Al, Ti, Mg).
 - Other advanced non-steel materials.

The projects will be funded by the Baosteel Funding Program 2024 in two streams:

- The first stream comprises research projects that are driven by the existing or future opportunities and challenges identified by Baosteel (or the parent companies of China Baowu Group).
- The second stream comprises seed funding of up to \$50k for one year for exploratory projects to test early-stage concepts in the priority areas. There may be opportunities for such exploratory projects to be adopted as a research project in future funding rounds of BAJC, subject to the outcomes from the exploratory projects.

RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

The selection of application follows a two-stage application process - Expression of Interest (EOI) and Full Proposal.

The EOIs are expected to be developed based on built ties between research teams in Baosteel and participant universities. EOI submission to BAJC must follow the prescribed format (to be issued separately) and should be as concise as possible.

Deadline for submission of EOIs is on Monday **28 June Friday**, following below procedures:

1. The EOIs must be prepared and submitted by leading (or the first-named) Chief Investigator (CI) from participant universities:
 - a) CIs from participant universities who have previous experience of BAJC projects may receive invitations from PIs in Baosteel to initiate a new or extended project;

- b) CIs from participant universities who have discussed their initiatives with PIs in Baosteel may ask the PIs to join the preparation of EOIs;
 - c) CIs from participant universities who have new initiatives but have yet discussed and/or have no contacts in Baosteel should seek support for their ideas with potential PIs in Baosteel or seek assistance from BAJC to find suitable Baosteel contacts for discussion on potential collaboration.
 - d) The EOIs that have been discussed with Baosteel PI(s) and jointly developed by the leading CI and Baosteel PI(s) will be prioritized in assessment.
2. The EOIs may be subject to preliminary screening by the initiating institution through BAJC Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) member of their institution and/or experts whom Baosteel nominated.
 3. The selection committee in Baosteel will rank the EOIs and only highly ranked EOIs will be invited to submit Full Proposals for due diligence examination and further evaluation processes.
 4. The selection committee in Baosteel will evaluate the Full Proposals. If necessary, Baosteel will seek comments from the independent external reviewers recommended by TAP. Baosteel may arrange interview with the team consisting of CIs and PIs through BAJC.
 5. When the project proposal is selected and a project scope with budget is agreed with Baosteel, the proposal will be recommended to BAJC Board for funding approval.

Projects will be funded up to three years, which are expected to start from 1 January 2025.

Eligibility for BAJC project funding requires that:

- Proposals must be submitted by a leading (first-named) CI from participant universities.
- A leading (first-named) CI can only submit ONE EOI proposal.
- A leading (first-named) CI can only hold ONE on-going BAJC project at any time.
- Leading CIs of current BAJC projects may join proposals as Associate Investigators (AIs).
- Both CI(s) and AI(s) must be from the participant universities of the BAJC.

BUDGET OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- The amount of funding support available from Baosteel Funding Program for an individual research project can be around AUD \$50k ~ \$150k per year.
- Uncommitted Baosteel funding of the project, if the project is approved, may be used for additional potential funding opportunities from Australia funding bodies, such as applying the ARC Linkage grant.

- The Baosteel funding must be applied in accordance with the project budgets for carrying out the project.
- The Baosteel funding must NOT be applied to the purchase or upgrade of capital equipment without prior written approval of the Centre Board.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROJECT TOTAL COST

Baosteel will provide project funding to the approved projects via BAJC. Participant universities may make cash or more commonly in-kind contributions towards to the total cost of the project. The cash contributions from any participant universities, if applicable, must be committed to BAJC firstly and then 100% redistributed to projects at the university with the approved Baosteel funding in funding allocations.

Baosteel encourages funding match including scholarships to the project by participant universities. The scholarships funded by the participant universities (with any funds other than the Baosteel funding) to the students who are involved in the project will be counted as an in-kind contribution by the participant universities to the relevant Project.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of project proposals is mainly undertaken by Baosteel. Baosteel may seek comments from Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) and/or Independent Expert Reviewers recommended by TAP and invited through BAJC. If necessary, Baosteel may arrange an interview with CIs and PIs together if there are special concerns to be clarified before they make decision on funding. Baosteel and BAJC make recommendations to the Board through following evaluations:

- outstanding proven performance
- evidence of active cooperation
- availability of the state-of-the-art facilities
- stability of the research team

The assessment criteria are:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Weight
Topics were pre-discussed and EOI is jointly prepared with Partner Investigator(s) in Baosteel.	Prioritized
a) The extent to which the proposed research is innovative and strategically aligned, and maximizes complementary capacities of proposed research teams in Baosteel and from participating institutions.	40%
b) The extent to which the project is proposed with a solid theoretical and technical base	20%

c) The extent to which the application is well planned with clear milestones and will deliver clear and achievable outcomes	20%
d) The relevance and quality of the track record of the project leader, chief/partner/Associate investigator(s), particularly outcomes made from past BAJC project if applicable.	20%

POST-SELECTION FEEDBACK

Unsuccessful applicants may seek feedback from Baosteel via BAJC management.

Assessment scores is NOT to be disclosed. BAJC may provide quality feedback on why a project proposal is not successful in terms of major assessment bands (position relative to other applications).

Unsuccessful applicants may re-submit their proposals in subsequent funding calls.

PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Ownership

Applicants acknowledge that physical title in all project applications (EOIs, Project Proposals and approved Projects) become the property of BAJC once the application is lodged. BAJC may copy, amend, extract, otherwise handle all or any part of a submission for the purpose of conducting the processes associated with project selection including preparation, evaluation or execution processes and any other management processes.

Innovative research ideas contained in EOI or Project Proposal remain the property of the applicants until the project is approved for funding. The submission of a proposal does not entitle the Centre or other recipient of the proposal any right to exploit the content of the proposal.

Acknowledgment and disclaimer

BAJC, its officers, employees, advisors and agents:

- make no express or implied representation or warranty as to the currency, reliability or completeness of the information contained in the calls;
- make no express or implied representation or warranty that any estimate or forecast will be achieved or that any statement as to future matters will prove correct; and
- to the extent permitted by law, expressly disclaim all liability arising from the project application process (including, without limitation, due to information contained in or omitted from calls for project proposals, or otherwise provided to an applicant).

It is the responsibility of applicants to obtain all information necessary or convenient for the preparation of their submissions. In lodging a submission, each applicant acknowledges that it has not relied on any express or implied statement, representation or warranty as to the truth, accuracy or completeness of the information contained in a call for project proposal submissions, or otherwise provided to an applicant by BAJC.

Applicant's costs

All expenses and costs incurred by an applicant in connection with a project application submission, including (without limitation) preparing and lodging a submission, providing BAJC with further information, attending interviews and participating in any subsequent negotiations, are the sole responsibility of the applicants.

No contract

Nothing in a Call for EOIs submission or the lodgment of a submission in response to it can be construed to give rise to any contract or associated obligations or rights, whether express or implied. No contract will be created until a formal written contract is executed between the relevant parties and the applicant.

Reservation of BAJC's rights

The BAJC reserves the right, at any time:

- to alter, amend or vary a project proposal call and the process outlined in a project proposal call;
- to suspend or terminate a project proposal process or any part of it for the public interest;
- to require additional information or clarification from any applicant or anyone else, or provide additional information or clarification to any applicant or anyone else;
- to negotiate or not negotiate with any one or more applicants, and discontinue negotiations at any time;
- to allow, or not allow, the successful applicant to enter into the proposed contract in the name of a different legal entity from that which provided a response to the call for project proposals;
- to select and negotiate with more than one applicant; and
- to add to, alter, delete, or exclude any of the requirements to be provided by the preferred applicant under the call for project proposals.

For the avoidance of doubt, the BAJC may exercise its rights under this clause and elsewhere in a Call for Project Proposals at any time and in its absolute discretion.

AMENDMENTS TO THIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

This Call-for-EOIs Guidelines may be amended by BAJC from time to time, subject to the Baosteel approval.