ENACT AI Cluster
Call for External Chairs

Version : October 16th 2025

*[**Important** : the udpdated version is available at : https://cluster-ia-enact.ai/appels-a-projets/. A Q&A is also available]*

1 Context

The ENACT AI Cluster is a program jointly led by the University of Lorraine, the University of Strasbourg, and their partners: CNRS, Inria, Inserm, CHRU Nancy, and the Strasbourg University Hospitals.

Its ambition is to position the Grand Est region as a European leader in education, research, and innovation in Artificial Intelligence by 2030.

To achieve this, ENACT develops an ambitious set of initiatives across three areas of excellence: Natural Language Processing and Large Language Models (LLMs), AI for engineering and scientific discovery, and Digital Health.

The ENACT AI Cluster is funded by the French State through the National Research Agency (ANR) under the France 2030 program, with additional support from Région Grand Est, Métropole du Grand Nancy, Eurométropole de Strasbourg, and Eurométropole de Metz.

ENACT also benefits from the support of companies and industrial partners who actively share and strengthen its ambitions.

2 Objectives

ENACT's main objective is to drive major breakthroughs in AI, both methodologically and technologically—for example, through the distribution of large, open, multimodal language models—thus laying the foundation for the innovations of tomorrow.

Another key goal is to establish a recognized reference framework for responsible research and innovation, bringing together AI researchers and faculty members, experts from other disciplines (linguistics, chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, law, economics, philosophy, education sciences, etc.), as well as businesses, institutions, and citizens.

ENACT aims at creating nine chairs, each funded from the date of appointment until the end of the ENACT AI Cluster program on December 31, 2029. Chairs may subsequently be extended through additional funding secured from external partners.

3 Support Modalities

ENACT will fund the positions of chair holders and provide financial support for the research and innovation activities carried out within these chairs. Eligible expenses include staff, operational costs, infrastructure, and services, in line with the funding rules of the "AI Cluster" action of the France 2030 program.

Each chair will receive:

- **The salary** of the chair holder, from the date of appointment until the end of the program (December 31, 2029). (~€50,000 gross per year)
- **€235,000 for staffing costs**, which may be used to recruit a PhD student, postdoctoral researcher, or research engineer.
    - If the chair holder does not have the habilitation (HDR), and recruits a PhD student, the doctoral work must be co-supervised by an HDR-holder, typically a member of a laboratory affiliated with the AI Cluster (see Annex 1). This co-supervisor does not need to be identified at submission.
- **€17,500 for operating costs**.

In addition, chair holders will benefit from priority access to computing resources developed within ENACT and to the cluster's dedicated engineering team.

Chair holders will benefit from support from ENACT to secure additional resources, develop partnerships with regional ecosystem stakeholders, and ensure long-term establishment in the territory.

Access to the full range of services provided by the University of Lorraine and the University of Strasbourg (e.g., relocation assistance) will be granted.

Permanent academic positions (associate professor or professor) in AI-related disciplines, will be opened through national competitions by the end of the PROGRAM (depending on the partners 'resources). Chair holders will be strongly encouraged to apply.

4 Priority Research Areas

ENACT intends to prioritize the recruitment of chairs in the following fields, aligned with its areas of excellence:

- Digital Humanities
- E-Education
- Structural and Developmental Biology
- Optimal Control and AI
- Data-driven Engineering
- Liver Diseases
- Cancer
- Medical Imaging and Robotics
- Application of LLMs to Health Data Warehouses
- Patient Journey and Clinical Data Systems
- AI Law

Nonetheless, the call is open to any outstanding AI project directly linked to the three core ENACT themes:

- Language processing and multimodal LLMs
- AI for engineering and scientific discovery
- Digital Heath

Selected chairs will be hosted preferably in one of the AI Cluster's laboratories (see Annex 1).

Projects may also include industrial, institutional, or nonprofit partners, in which case candidates should detail the proposed modes of collaboration. Candidates are encouraged to contact prospective host laboratories prior to submission to ensure their project's coherence with the lab's current work. Laboratories may provide additional resources or access to existing/ongoing industrial partnerships.

5 Types of Projects

This call is open to two categories of projects:

- **Academic Chairs**
  Designed to generate major methodological and technological advances in AI that form the basis for future innovations. They serve as a bridge between fundamental research, teaching, and innovation by combining multiple disciplines and partners.
- **"Partnership" Chairs (with industrial support)**
  Designed to align research with the practical needs of industry and the clinical sector. They involve one or more companies (ENACT partners or others) that substantially cofund the chair (e.g., extension of the duration, additional PhD fundings, etc.).

"Academic" chairs can only be led by researchers that do not hold a permanent position with one of the partners of the project.

"**Partnership**" Chairs may be led or co-led by researchers already employed by one of the partners of the project.

6 Application File

Applications must include three parts:

1. Cover page
2. Scientific project synopsis (max. 5 pages)
3. Teaching project synopsis (1 page)
4. Curriculum Vitae (max. 4 pages)

Applications may be submitted in French or in English.

Required information is listed in Annex 3.

7 Eligibility

The call is open to any candidate holding a PhD (French or international) at the time of submission. The ideal profile is a candidate with several years of postdoctoral experience.

The call primarily targets external candidates not already affiliated with the ENACT AI Cluster.

Local candidates—those whose PhD was completed in the host laboratory—are eligible, but the evaluation committee will carefully assess the candidate's ability to lead an independent project.

The Chair cannot be combined with another academic or research position in France or abroad (e.g., associate professor, research fellow).

However, "Partnership Chairs" may be led or co-led by a researcher already employed by of the partners; in such cases, ENACT will not fund the salary of the Chair holder.

The Chair is compatible with external activities in industry.

Depending on the host laboratory, the chair may be located in a restricted area (Zone à Régime Restrictif, ZRR) as defined by French regulations (Decree n°2011-1425, PPST). Access to such zones is delivered by the University's Management after receiving ministerial approval, as defined by French regulations (arrêté from July 3rd 2012).

A negative ministerial opinion for a position located in a ZRR would invalidate the recruitment.

8 Selection Process

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact host laboratories as early as possible. The recommended process is as follows:

1. The applicant reviews the call for proposals.
2. The applicant contacts one or more prospective host laboratories with their project idea.
3. The applicant develops the proposal with the support from the host laboratory.
4. The full application is submitted to ENACT.
5. Evaluation, interviews, and final decision.

Applications must be submitted to ENACT Office dgs-enact-dir@univ-lorraine.fr The deadline is January 7th 2026

9 Indicative Timeline (final and updated version available on our website)

- Submission deadline: **January 7th 2026**
- Application review: **January- February** 2026
- Candidate interviews: **March 2026**
- Notification of results: **April 2026**
- Chair start date: **from June 2026**

10 Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria, in line with ENACT's objectives :

- Scientific excellence and/or technological innovation, and contribution to higher education.
- Quality of project design and feasibility.
- Excellence of the applicant.
- Overall impact of the project (scientific, technological, societal).
- Quality of public–private partnerships (if relevant).

11 Chair's Contribution to ENACT's activities

In addition to their research works, chair holders are expected to actively contribute to ENACT's **Education** and **Innovation** programs/axis. In particular:

1. Each chair must include a teaching component and an innovation component, which will be highlighted equally alongside research. The innovation component may involve industrial collaborations (e.g., CIFRE PhD, startup, industrial contract), planned or active in the chair's field of work.
2. Doctoral or postdoctoral fellows recruited under the chair should be co-supervised with another UL/Unistra laboratory or with an international partner.
3. Chair holders are expected to teach **64 hours per year**.

Education :

The Chair holder will contribute their expertise to expand the AI teaching offer within their host institution and department. They may participate in the future joint AI Master's program, and teach courses in ENACT's core areas.

They may also engage in pedagogical activities such as project supervision and Master's internships. Ideally, teaching should be possible both in French and English.

Innovation

The chair holder may be part of the different events and projects planned throughout the PROGRAM.

They will contribute in the dissemination of ENACT's innovations and products. They may also be invited to share experiences, give talks, or represent ENACT in various events hosted by the Cluster's partners.

Annex 1 : list of ENACT labs

- AHP
- ATILF
- BETA
- Laboratoire de recherche du CEIPI
- CMC
- CRAN
- DRES
- IADI
- ICube
- IECL
- IRMA
- IGBMC
- IJL
- ITM
- LEMTA
- LISEC (excepté LISEC-UHA)
- LORIA
- LPCT

3 autres entités (en tant qu'établissement employeur, quel que soit le laboratoire d'affectation) :

- CHRU Nancy
- Hôpitaux Universitaires de Strasbourg
- IHU de Strasbourg

Cette liste correspond aux entités de recherche mentionnées dans le dossier soumis à l'appel IA Clusters et validé par un jury international d'experts en IA et dans le dossier final accepté par l'État. Elle pourra évoluer en cours de réalisation d'ENACT sur avis du comité scientifique et après validation par le comité de pilotage.

3 other entities (as employer, regardless of the laboratory): Nancy University Hospital, Strasbourg University Hospitals, IHU Strasbourg.

This list corresponds to the research entities mentioned in the application submitted to the AI Clusters call and validated by an international committee of AI experts and in the final application accepted by the government. It may evolve during the implementation of ENACT based on advice by the scientific committee and after validation by the steering committee.

Annex 2. Main research fields

Natural Language Processing and LLMs

- Natural language processing and multimodal LLMs
- Natural language data in a broad sense: text, knowledge bases, speech, videos, etc.
- Training, updating or tuning large AI models on these data or other data in industry (sensors, discrete flows, robots, etc.), healthcare (imaging, omics, etc.), education (learning traces, etc.) or another sector
- Collection, annotation and generation of corpora for these purposes, with focus on regional or low-resourced languages/cultures, toxic content removal, and personal/confidential attribute protection (anonymization, disentanglement, etc.)
- Training, updating, tuning and inference methods, with focus on the correction of residual biases (preference optimization, output filtering, etc.), the protection of personal/confidential attributes (differential confidentiality, federated learning, etc.), factuality, security and interpretability (formal verification, explainability, neurosymbolic architectures, etc.) and the reduction of the computational footprint (data selection, use of pre-learned models, pruning, quantification, etc.)
- New model architectures exploiting multimodality or surpassing Transformer
- Study of the theoretical and linguistic properties of models (scaling laws, probing, etc.) and their use for various applications
- Ethical and legal framework and associated psychological, sociological, anthropological and economic considerations.

AI for engineering and scientific discovery

- Includes both the design of new AI methods adapted to engineering and scientific discovery problems and new uses of already available AI methods
- AI for the discovery of biological pathways and molecules for therapeutic purposes
- AI for the discovery of molecules and materials for the decarbonization of industry, energy, buildings, etc.
- AI for the analysis of scientific literature, the formulation of hypotheses, the planning and analysis of experimental results and other research tasks in any discipline (history, geography, management, etc.)
- AI for the design and optimization of industrial products and processes, taking into account speed, cost, logistics, maintenance, customer needs, etc.
- New model architectures ensuring the realism, precision, stability, robustness, interpretability and explainability of results: symbolic regression, integration of physical models, optimization algorithms, etc.
- Holistic AI integrating all research, engineering, innovation, production, and application
- Ethical and legal framework and psychological, sociological, anthropological and economic considerations associated with the deployment of AI in industry.

Digital Health

- Federated learning that is computationally efficient, robust to non-i.i.d. data, and customizable
- Integration of biophysical models or knowledge on disease progression, anatomy deformation, or interactions between robotic tools and biological tissues
- Use for various tasks at different stages of the patient journey (interactive discussion on symptoms, risk stratification, image recording, design of patient-specific prostheses, diagnosis, preoperative planning, minimally invasive treatment, postoperative follow-up, etc.) and for clinical research (discovery of new relationships between factors and symptoms, between treatments and results…)
- Evaluation of clinical benefits, particularly for cardiorespiratory and digestive pathologies and inflammatory bowel diseases
- Evaluation of ease of use: saving time and knowledge, cognitive assistance, etc.
- Ethical and legal framework and psychological, sociological, anthropological and economic considerations associated with the deployment of AI in healthcare.

Annex 3 : Application file

Please respect the following formatting constraints: Times New Roman, Arial or similar, at least font size 11, margin sizes (2.0 cm side and 1.5 cm top and bottom), single line spacing

Cover page:

- Name of the applicant:
- Name of the host laboratory for the chair (see list in Annex 1):
- Title of the project:
- Summary of the research proposal (2000 characters):
- Theme or axis of the project (see list in Annex 3)
- Type of the chair (Academic or Industrial partnership)

1. Section a: Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal (max. 5 pages, references do not count towards the page limit)

[The Extended Synopsis should give a concise presentation of the scientific proposal, with particular attention to the ground-breaking nature of the research project. Describe the proposed work in the context of the state of the art of the field. Please make the contribution of the PhD student (if there is one planned) and post-doc funded by the chair explicit. If the project takes place in the same team as the applicant's PhD, describe how the proposed project is independent from PhD advisor. Please describe summarily how the money will be used and, if the chair includes additional support (e.g., from a company), describe the support.]

Section b: Teaching (max 1 page)

[This section should indicate (1) the teaching experience, with a table that summarizes the number of teaching hours, the academic level of the students, and the academic institution, and (2) a short description of the classes that the applicant wishes to teach and how this connects to their research project.

Section c: Curriculum vitae and Track Record (max. 4 pages)

[You may modify the below template if necessary.]

2. PERSONAL DETAILS

[Provide your personal details, your education and key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions you have held.]

Family name, First name:
Researcher unique identifier(s) (such as ORCID, Research ID, etc. ....):
URL for web site:

• Education and key qualifications

DD/MM/YYYY PhD
Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution, Country
Name of PhD Supervisor

YYYY Master
Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution, Country

- Current position(s)

YYYY - YYYY Current Position
YYYY - YYYY Current Position

Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/
Country Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/
Institution/ Country

- Previous position(s)

YYYY - YYYY Position held
Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/
Country YYYY - YYYY Position held
Name of Faculty/ Department, Name of University/ Institution/ Country

3. RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS AND PEER RECOGNITION

a. Research achievements

[*Provide a list of up to ten research outputs that demonstrate how you have advanced knowledge in your field with an emphasis on more recent achievements, such as publications, articles deposited in a publicly available preprint server, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, datasets, software, patents, licenses, standards, start-up businesses or any other research outputs you deem relevant in relation to your research field and your project.*

You may include a short, factual explanation of the significance of the selected outputs, your role in producing each of them, and how they demonstrate your capacity to successfully carry out your proposed project. Research productions that do not involve the PhD advisor(s) will be appreciated.]

b. Peer recognition

[Provide a list of selected examples of significant recognition by your peers if applicable, such as prizes, awards, fellowships, elected academy memberships, invited presentations to major conferences or any other examples of significant recognition you deem relevant in relation to your research field and project.

You may include a short explanation of the significance of the listed examples.]

c. Additional information

You may provide relevant additional information on your research career to provide context to the evaluation panels when assessing your research achievements and peer recognition as described above.

d. Career breaks, diverse career paths and major life events

[You may include a short factual explanation of career breaks or diverse career paths such as secondments, volunteering, part-time work, time spent in different sectors or the effects of major life events such as long-term illness as well as the effects of pandemic restrictions on research productivity.]

e. Other contributions to the research community

[You may include a list of particularly noteworthy contributions to the research community you have made other than research achievements and peer recognition and a short explanation of these contributions. The purpose of this section is to allow the panels to take a more rounded view of your career and achievements and to ensure that any additional responsibilities, commitments and

leadership roles that you have taken on beyond your individual research activities are recognised and taken into account.]