

DESCRIPT PROGRAM

ANR-24-RSHS-0002

CALL FOR RESEARCH AND TRANSFER PROJECTS

2025 Edition

Publication date: December 1, 2025

Deadline for submitting proposals: January 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (GMT+1)

Before submitting a research project proposal, it is necessary to read this document carefully in its entirety.

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1. Context and partners

The [DECRIPT program](#) (« Dispositif d'Études des Crises et Récits civilisationnels par la Pluridisciplinarité et les Terrains » in French, which can be translated as « Decrypting crises and civilizational narratives through pluridisciplinarity and fieldwork » in English), funded by the national call for "Research Programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences," a France 2030 initiative, is a multidisciplinary scientific program at the crossroads of global and area studies.

Focusing on the analysis of the interactions between civilizational narratives, universalism, and conflicting logics on a global scale and in four key areas (Indo-Pacific, Africa, Europe-Eurasia, Near East, and Middle East), DECRIPT aims to develop original research, as well as research tools and mechanisms for transferring research to society and public policy. The program approaches civilizational narratives as socially, strategically, and ideologically constructed discourses, articulating specific interpretations of historical trajectories, cultural values, and collective roles in the world order.

Led by INALCO, DECRIPT is a consortium of universities (Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne University, Paris Panthéon-Assas University, Paris Sciences & Lettres University (PSL), Sorbonne Nouvelle University (USN), Paris 8 University, Bordeaux Montaigne University (UBM), University of Strasbourg (UNISTRA), Sciences Po Paris, Sciences Po Bordeaux, Sciences Po Lille), research organizations (CNRS, IRD), and leading institutions in the field of international relations and the transfer of research to public policy (AFD, IFRI). DECRIPT also draws on a network of more than 50 stakeholders, including international actors chosen to reinforce the program's scientific excellence and regional roots, as well as societal or institutional actors enabling its impact and the transfer of its results to public policy and society.

The detailed list of program partners is available on the following page: <https://www.inalco.fr/en/consortium-and-stakeholders>

2. Objectives and Features of the Call for Proposals

Projects must demonstrate their relevance to the scientific issues explored by the DÉCRIPT program and target on one of the five thematic areas (see description below):

1. **Transversal Work Package:** civilizational narratives, universalisms, and multilateral governance
2. **Indo-Pacific Work Package**
3. **Africa Work Package**
4. **Middle and Near East Work Package**
5. **Europe-Eurasia Work Package**

Methodological and/or transversal proposals covering several areas are also eligible and may be allocated dedicated funding.

Purpose of the financing

- Support research and knowledge transfer related to the theme of the DÉCRIPT program
- Encourage multi-disciplinary collaborations between consortium members and stakeholders
- Produce concrete and shareable outputs grounded in original and innovative research (database, serious game, collective volume, documentary, educational tools...)
- The funding allocated may be used to initiate more ambitious projects (such as ANR or ERC projects) or to supplement existing funding

Budget

- Up to €90,000 per Work Package, spread across at least five projects
- €5,000 to €20,000 per project
- Up to an additional €30,000 dedicated to transversal projects

3. Team composition

Each project must:

- be led by **at least two researchers from two member institutions** of the consortium
- include **at least one stakeholder**, either international or involved in the transfer to public policy or society

4. Selection criteria

Main criteria

- Relevance to the thematic focus and scientific agenda of the DÉCRIPT program
- Scientific quality and the multidisciplinary nature of the project
- Complementarity of the research team and adequacy of partnerships
- Technical and financial feasibility within the given timeframe
- Expected concrete results and transfer potential

Evaluation

- Scientific quality & multidisciplinary: **40 %**
- Alignement with the program's thematic focus: **20 %**
- Relevance from a public policy perspective: **20 %**
- Deliverables, transfer potential, and societal impact: **20 %**

5. How to apply

Applications must be submitted no later than 30 January 2026 at 18:00 (GMT+1) via the online form: <https://framaforms.org/programme-decrypt-appel-a-projets-de-recherche-et-de-transfert-decrypt-program-call-for-research-and>

The application must include:

- Scientific statement (max. 1,000 words): research question, methodology, connection with DÉCRIPT's theme and research agenda
- Statement on the project's potential for public policy and/or society transfer (max. 500 words)
- Expected concrete outcomes and achievements
- Possible co-funding and prospects for continuation
- List of team members (belonging to at least 2 consortium members + 1 stakeholder)
- Curriculum vitae of the Principal Investigator
- Detailed budget (operating costs only)¹
- Timeline and work plan

For any questions: decrypt@inalco.fr

6. Timeline

- **1 December 2025:** Submission opens
- **30 January 2026 at 17:00 P.M. (Paris time):** Submission deadline
- **End of February 2026:** Announcement of results
- **April 2026 – January 2028:** Project implementation

7. Description of the program's thematic Work Packages

Cross-functional Program on Multilateral Governance and Civilizational Narratives (WP3)

WP3 serves as DECRIPT's backbone. It examines macro-level changes in the international system and compares the political and institutional effects of specific civilizational narratives on the world stage. Led by Inalco in collaboration with Paris Panthéon-Assas and Sciences Po Paris, WP3 brings together scholars from fields including political science, international relations, law, history, economics and communication studies to develop a typology of contestations against the international system and universal norms, moving beyond simplistic "Global South" vs. "West" categorisations; to assess the evolution of civilizational narratives within various international arenas (UN-system institutions, OIC, BRICS, etc.) to highlight how

1. For eligible operating costs, see the AMI SHS financial regulations:
<https://anr.fr/fileadmin/aap/2024/france2030-ami-shs-2024-RF-03052024.pdf>

contestations of universalism impact collective efforts to address global challenges such as conflict resolution, weapons control, development, climate change, natural resources management, and migration; and to examine North American and European actors' projection of values, exploring how it faces increasing criticism on the ground of neo-imperialism and investigating Western actors's shift from universalist to more civilizational narratives.

Indo-Pacific program (WP4)

WP4 examines the Indo-Pacific region as a crucible of competing worldviews. It explores the spectrum of civilizational narratives underpinning conflicting geopolitical agendas, from those presented as compatible with the current world order while drawing on reinvented "local" references (e.g. India's incorporation of Hindu concepts in foreign policy) to more differentialist perspectives (e.g. China's use of historical references to reshape regional and global order). The program investigates how such narratives legitimize emerging nations' reformist claims on global governance structures, concrete geopolitical objectives, and political or economic models. This work package places a particular emphasis on China as a key actor in shaping civilizational discourse in international relations.

Africa program (WP5)

WP5 explores how civilizational narratives actualize post-colonial divides in political discourse, considering their interplay with resurging sovereignty claims in African societies and international relations, local conflict dynamics, and governance models. It pays attention to the role of religious beliefs and local institutions in shaping these narratives, and how they are also fueled both by local and external actors, notably China and Russia, to challenge Western-led development and presence, and to legitimize non-democratic governance practices. This work package focuses particularly on the Sahel region as a focal point for competing narratives and external influences, while examining their broader continental and international implications.

Middle and Near East Program (WP6)

WP6 studies the Middle East as a juncture of multilevel tensions, involving civilizational narratives that have also influenced global imaginaries. It examines the changing and contested nature of civilizational and identity politics on a regional scale, from pan-Arabism and (neo)Ottomanism to pan-Islamist and apoist perspectives, as well as on a national or local scale. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its neighboring developments, notably in Lebanon, as well as the Syrian conflict, serve as a focal point for analyzing how regional issues have generated transnational solidarities, shaped discourses of justice and legitimacy, and influenced mobilization practices in the region and beyond.

Europe-Eurasia Program (WP7)

WP7 covers a region marked by a shared past of multinational empires, socialist experimentation, and challenging integration into the liberal international order. It examines the development of contrasting civilizational narratives across States, reflecting a spectrum of worldviews that range from embracing European identity and political liberalism (e.g. Baltic states, Ukraine) to a wide range of anti-liberal postures (e.g., Hungary, Poland, Russia, Serbia). The program explores how civilizationism has been weaponized in regional conflicts, notably in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but also in tensions such as Armenia-Azerbaijan, Georgia-Russia, or Serbia-Kosovo-Albania. Placing a particular emphasis on Ukraine, this WP also investigates how these narratives bridge contestations of the liberal world order from the Global South with internal challenges to liberal democracy in Western societies, blending left-wing and right-wing anticolonial traditions.

Methodologies, tools, and training for research (WP2)

DECRIP combines a set of qualitative and mixed methods common to the social sciences, including discourse analysis, lexicometry, genealogy of concepts, ethnographic fieldwork, and semi-structured interviews. In a context of growing tensions surrounding data collection and management in many of the areas covered by the project, DECRIP aims to develop the capacity to analyze data from regions that have become inaccessible or difficult to access. This approach is based in particular on a combination of expertise in automatic processing of written and spoken language, enabling the analysis of discourse or emotions; the geopolitics of cyber data flows; the use of databases combined with the storage of essential or sensitive digital data; and the development of data visualization skills to map the representations of the world conveyed by the various civilizational narratives studied within the program.