

DECRIP PROGRAM

ANR-24-RSHS-0002

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS – INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH RESIDENCY PROGRAM

2025 Edition

Publication date: December 1, 2025

Deadline for submitting: February 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (GMT+1)

Before submitting an application for the International Research Residency Program, please read this document carefully in its entirety.

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1. Context et partners

The [DESCRIPT 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), DESCRIPT 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, DESCRIPT 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). DESCRIPT 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 characteristics of the research residency program

DESCRIPT will fund up to 20 one-month research residencies per year to conduct research in collaboration with the program's teams and consortium member institutions and to participate in exchanges with its partners.

During their stay, researchers must propose to conduct or formalize high-level academic research related to the program's core scientific question on civilizational narratives and/or civilizationism, in connection with one of its five thematic areas and/or its methodological area (see description below). During their stay, participants will be expected to contribute to the program's publications, conferences, and/or public events.

Residency terms and conditions:

- **Length** : 1 month (minimum 4 weeks, possibility of staying for longer periods with additional funding)
- **Compensation**: €3,400 (covering transportation and living expenses)
- **Candidates**: researchers and research professors employed at an international (non-French) university; applications from members of the DÉCRIPT network will be given priority, but the call is open to academics from all international universities
- **Location**: Paris, Bordeaux, Lille
- **Organization**: the program will provide an official letter of invitation to facilitate visa application procedures for candidates residing outside the Schengen area. In collaboration with its partners, the program may also help identify possible accommodation solutions. However, researchers remain responsible for organizing and managing their own accommodation

Expected contributions:

- 1 article or note to be published in the DECRIPT scientific series
- 1 public lecture and/or Chatham House-style seminar
- 1 podcast episode or thematic video module on the research conducted during the residency (to be defined in consultation with program managers)

3. How to apply

- Applications must be submitted no later than 28 February 2026 at 6:00 PM (GMT+1) via the online form: <https://framaforms.org/programme-decrypt-programme-dinvitation-de-chercheurs-internationaux-decrypt-program-call-for>

Applications must include:

- Cover letter specifying the researchers' objectives during the residency
- 2-page scientific statement outlining the theme, methodology, and how the proposed research project aligns with the DÉCRIPT program
- Academic CV
- Letter from the employer approving the application to a one-month residency scheme, and specifying which additional costs may be covered (if applicable)
- Copy of an official ID
- Contact information of two academic referees

4. Selection criteria

- Relevance to DECRIPT's theme and scientific objectives
- Academic excellence and originality of the project
- Commitment to knowledge dissemination and collaborative work

5. Timeline

- **Submission opens**: 1 December 2025

- **Submission deadline:** 28 February 2026, 6:00 PM (GMT+1)
- **Review of applications:** March 2026
- **Annoncement of results:** End of March 2026
- **Start of residencies:** From April 2026

For any questions: decript@inalco.fr

6. Description of the program's thematic Wok Packages

Cross-functional Work package 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 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 Work package (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 Work package (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 Work package (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 Work package (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 Work package (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.