

Carbon Recycling Fund Institute (CRF)
FY2025 Application Guidelines for Research Grant Activities
(General Category / Startup Category)

Objectives of the Research Grant Program

- ✓ CRF focuses on the importance of promotion of innovation in carbon recycling and will begin a call for proposals through the CRF research grant activities.
- ✓ Individual researchers (or teams), regardless of the organization they belong to, are eligible to apply. The program expects research results that contribute to the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050 and is open to a wide range of fields ranging from chemistry, fuels, and mineralization to negative emissions such as biomass.
- ✓ In collaboration with New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) and other organizations, the program has already produced achievements in the past that were conducive to state-sponsored projects. CRF also provides support in commercialization of research achievements.
- ✓ International efforts are important in achieving carbon neutrality. Therefore, CRF expects research collaboration with overseas companies and research institutions.
- ✓ CRF has been putting efforts into developing human resources such as launching the Carbon Recycle University (workshop-style training program) and expects many young researchers to take this opportunity.
- ✓ Under the same objectives, CRF establishes a startup category with a simplified application form.

1. Purpose of Research Grant Activities

The Carbon Recycling Fund Institute (hereinafter the “Institute”) establishes the research grant for research on carbon recycling and provides the grant for the achievement of the sustainable carbon society according to 1) Article 131 of the Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations; 2) Articles 29 through 32 of its Articles of Incorporation; and 3) Article 2, item (1) of its Rules on Donations.

In general, carbon recycling refers to the use of CO₂ as a resource and its conversion into mainly chemicals, fuels, minerals, etc., but our idea of carbon recycling refers to the realization of a carbon recycling society as follows (Figure 1):

- Considering CO₂ as a resource, generating and utilizing valuable compounds.
(So-called dark reaction of artificial photosynthesis)
- Utilize CO₂ sinks from agriculture, forestry and fisheries and other industries.
- Make good use of the global carbon cycle, including the recycling of carbon-containing materials.

In Japan, the "Basic Policy for Realization of GX" decided by the Cabinet in February 2023 set the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 46% in 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality in 2050. Additionally, in June 2023, the “Act on Promotion of a Smooth Transition to a Decarbonized Growth-Oriented Economic Structure” (commonly known as the GX Promotion Act) will be enforced, and new investment support policies to promote GX will be implemented.

Under these circumstances, the research grant activities are aimed at contributing to the development of carbon recycling innovation through grants and support for research designed to reduce the cost of carbon recycling technologies or to solve issues hindering the introduction of carbon recycling practices into society.

We believe it is important to work globally to achieve carbon neutrality. Therefore, we would like to actively support researchers who are collaborating with overseas companies and research institutions in this research grant activity.

Recognizing the importance of developing young researchers in efforts to reach the long-term goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, the Institute launched the Carbon Recycle University, a workshop-style training program targeting young human resources, in FY2021. The Institute intends to **proactively help young researchers** in these research grant activities as well.

In Europe and the U.S., a number of startups holding technologies related to carbon recycling have been founded, resulting in the development of innovation. Also in Japan, the government has declared its full support for startups and been shifting its focus to nurture startups. Under the same objectives, the Institute has established a new startup category with a simplified application form in order to help startups grow and produce innovations.

In collaboration with public projects of the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) and other organizations, the program has already produced achievements in the past that were conducive to state-sponsored projects. CRF also provides support in commercialization of research achievements.

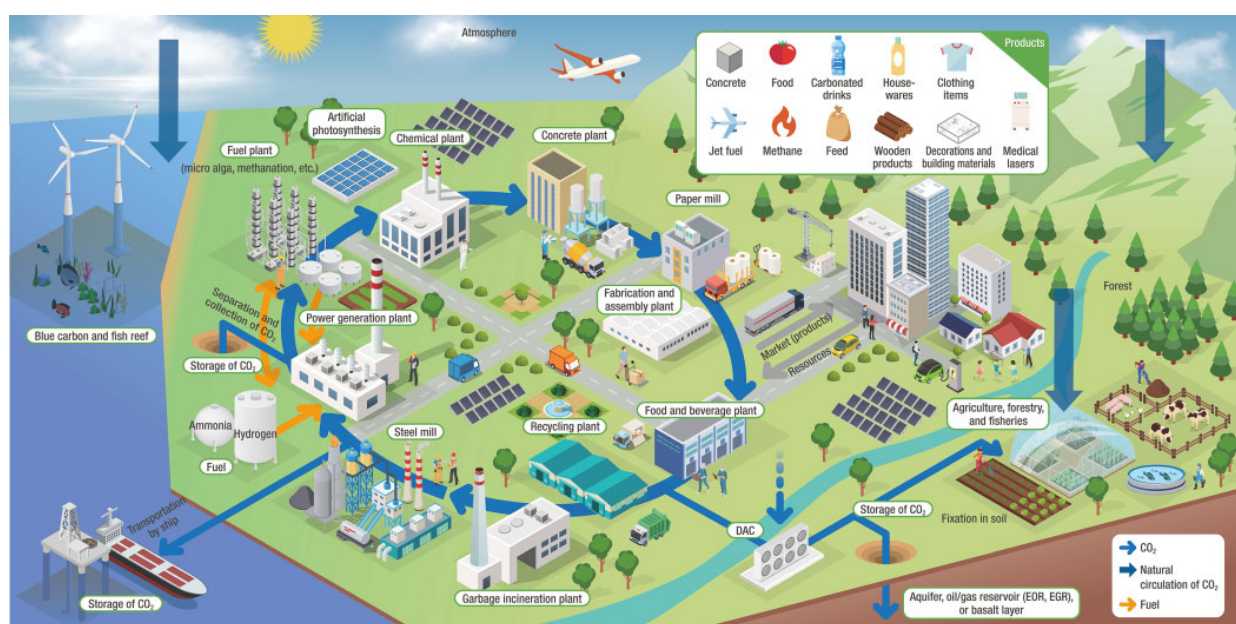


Figure 1. Image of the sustainable carbon society

2. Overview

To this end, the general category and the startup category have been established as part of this research grant activities. For information on the documents required and place of submission, check the website designated separately. Applicants may submit application for both the startup category and the general category.

- * Startups companies, small and medium businesses, and corporations especially in their seed/early stage and researchers planning to start business are encouraged to apply for the startup category.
- * As for the startup category, the grant will be awarded to several individuals/teams.
- * The amount of the grant will be up to 10 million yen for each recipient, and the term of the grant is expected within two years.

3. Application Guidelines

(1) Research Grant Targets

A) Research on carbon recycling and related technologies for using CO₂ (or materials containing carbon atoms or carbon) as a resource to solve social issues; and B) research in the fields of social science and institutional design intended for achieving carbon recycling and technologies contributing to mitigation of climate change.

(2) Research Fields (Specific Examples)

- CO₂ recycling and utilization field
 - ✓ Chemicals (production of olefins, BTX, biodegradable plastics, etc.)
 - ✓ Fuels (methanation, biofuel production, use of enhanced oil recovery (EOR), etc.)
 - ✓ Mineralization (concrete products, mineral carbonation, etc.)
 - ✓ Utilization of living organisms (utilization of germs and bacteria, improvement of photosynthesis efficiency through genetic manipulation or breed improvement, etc.)
 - ✓ Utilization of CO₂ sink (green or blue carbon, etc.)
 - ✓ Functional materials (production of carbon nanotube, graphene, etc.)
 - ✓ Biomimetics (artificial photosynthesis, etc.)
- Fields relating to the separation and capture of CO₂ and H₂ that are necessary for carbon recycling
 - ✓ Efficient hydrogen production (water electrolysis technology, bacteria that boost hydrogen production, etc.), efficient synthesis and decomposition of ammonia
 - ✓ Technologies for the efficient separation and capture of CO₂ associated with CCS^{*1}, DACCS^{*2}, BECCS^{*3}, and other approaches (absorption solvent, solid sorbent, membranes, direct air capture, etc.)

Notes: *1. CCS : Carbon dioxide Capture and Storage

*2. DACCS : Direct Air Capture with Carbon Storage

*3. BECCS : Bio-energy with Carbon Capture and Storage

- Direct use of CO₂
 - ✓ Medical field (utilization of carbonic acid effect, etc.)
 - ✓ Fields of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (forcing culture using plastic greenhouses, soil fixation, forestation, fast-growing trees, etc.)
- Social science and other fields (CO₂ reduction scenario, carbon recycling introduction promotion scenario, institutional design to promote carbon recycling, study on attachment of value to CO₂, etc.)
- Technologies related to circulation of carbon resources (including plastics)
- Technologies related to the enhancement of value of carbon recycling (including CO₂ visualization supported by AI and IoT technologies, conversion to high added-value materials using CO₂)
- Other fields (technologies contributing to mitigation of climate change)

(3) Scope of Applicants

An applicant(s) must be a researcher(s) or research team affiliated with a university, company, incorporated association/foundation, etc. (hereinafter referred to as the “affiliated institution”). An application should be submitted after obtaining approval from the affiliated institution. The principal investigator may be of any nationality but must belong to Japanese affiliated institution. He/she is not required to hold the CRF membership.

In particular, young researchers who work to help achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 are encouraged to apply.

The startup category is mainly for seed-stage and early-stage start-up companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, corporations, and researchers who plan to start a business. Compared to the general application category, the selection process considers business potential and the enthusiasm of the applicant.

(4) Amount of Grant

The amount of the grant will be up to 10 million yen per application.

Approx. 10 in general category / several in startup category applications will be awarded.

(The average amount of the past programs were approx. 7 million yen per recipient.)

(5) Period of Grant

The research period subject to the grant shall be until July 31, 2027, from the date when grant decision is made.

However, the grant is provided on the conditions that, after one year passes from the date when grant decision is made, the recipients are to give a presentation at the progress report meeting and submit the interim report.

(6) Application Method

(i) Documents to be submitted

<General Category>

Applicants must submit application documents from 1) to 3) and 4) below in electronic data to the address given under item (11) below.

1) Form 1: Research Grant Application Form Cover Sheet

2) Form 2: Research Grant Application Form

3) Form 2 (Appendix 1): Research Grant Application Form (PowerPoint)

<Startup Category>

Applicants must submit application documents 1) and 4) below in electronic data to the address given under item (11) below.

1) Explanatory materials for projects and research (regardless of format)

Be sure to include the following in your description:

- Vision of the business
- Explanation of novelty, originality, superiority over existing technology, etc.
- Issues and solutions for practical application and commercialization
- Division of roles with universities and companies that plan to collaborate in research and development
(In the case of independent implementation, it is not necessary)
- Profile of Affiliated Institution and Principal Investigator

<Category Common>

4) video clip (optional):

An applicant may use a camera on a smartphone or PC to create a self-promotion video that is not longer than three minutes, covering self-introduction, the gist of the research, his/her enthusiasm, and so on. The video must be less than 5 minutes and file size less than 100MB.

(ii) Application Period

From Wednesday, May 7, 2025, to 17:00, Friday, June 6, 2025.

No public briefing for researchers will be held. If you have any questions, please contact us at the address given under item (11) below.

<General Category>

In the event that the affiliated institution's seal cannot be obtained on the application form by the submission deadline, the application form will be accepted without a seal. In such case, however, a sealed application form must be submitted by Friday, July 4.

(7) Selection Method

<General Category>

- (i) Applications will be screened by the screening committee.
- (ii) The program will be conducted in two stages: the first and second rounds. Depending on the status of the application, the first selection may be omitted.
- (iii) In the first round of selection, based on Form 2 (Appendix 1), the research content will be evaluated mainly for its innovation, originality, superiority over conventional research, and social applicability related to carbon recycling.
- (iv) In the second screening, based on all submissions, the research content will be evaluated for its innovation, originality, superiority over conventional research, and social implementation of carbon recycling, as well as the appropriateness of the research plan and system.

<Startup Category>

- (v) After selection by the secretariat, the selection committee will recommend the candidates.
- (vi) Applications will be screened by the screening committee.

<Category Common>

- (vii) Selection will be based on submitted documents (including optional videos), and there will be no interviews or hearings. However, the secretariat may ask questions via email, etc. at the request of the screening committee.
- (viii) The results of the selection will be notified to applicants in about early August.
- (ix) Successful applicant(s) will receive the Grant Decision Notice and documents describing procedures for receiving the grant.
- (x) Applicant information (name of principal investigator and affiliated organization) and the theme of research selected for the grant will be publicized on the Institute's website. In addition, the same information may be announced at seminars hosted by the Institute, as well as at seminars and academic conferences hosted by other organizations.

(8) Awarding of grant

- (i) The Institute will deposit the grant into the account designated by the affiliated institution without delay after deciding to award the grant. When necessary, at the time of the decision being made to award the grant, the Institute will consult with the applicant to determine the timing and method of the grant payment.
- (ii) When the grant is awarded, the applicant must submit an acknowledgement that he/she adheres to the conditions specified under item (9) below.
- (iii) If you violate under item (9), you may be required to return part or all of the grant.

(9) Points to Note for Awarded Grant

There are the following three points to note for awarded grant. For other details, see the Guidelines for Research Grant Program posted on the website.

- (i) No particular restrictions have been set for the use of the grant, as long as the expense is truly necessary for the research. For details about item names, see the Guidelines for Research Grant Program. However, the grant may not be used for indirect expenses of the affiliated institution.
- (ii) When the research is completed, the Results Report outlining the research results shall be submitted to the Institute. The Final Progress Report shall also be submitted to the Institute within 30 days after the completion.

- (iii) If the research period exceeds one year, in addition to (ii) above, the Interim Report shall also be submitted to the Institute one year after the start of the grant project.
- (iv) Approximately one year after the start of the grant, you should attend a research report meeting (held in Tokyo) organized by the Institute and report on the progress of your research and (interim) results.
- (v) The grant will be awarded in accordance with the descriptions in the Research Grant Application Form.

(10) Handling of Information

Unless otherwise required by law, etc., the Institute will not provide any third party with the information provided in the submitted documents without prior consent of the individual.

Our Institute's privacy policy is stated on our web page (<https://carbon-recycling-fund.com/policy/>), and personal information entered in submitted documents will be handled in accordance with this policy.

(11) Application Submission Address

Please enter the basic information in the application Microsoft Form below and post the set of submissions in the submission Box. Please add "[Affiliated institution's name]_[Principal Investigator's name]" to the beginning of the file name of the submission.

application Microsoft Forms:

<General Category>

<https://forms.office.com/r/whMCu6J2A5>

<Startup Category>

<https://forms.office.com/r/6X8Fc5BLF0>

submission Box:

Please post from the link of the final question of the application form.

(12) Schedule

	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Nov.
Researcher		May. 7 Application	17:00 on Jun. 6		Start to research (until Jul. 7, 2027)		
Committee			Screening		Notification about result of selection Early Aug.		

(13) The Secretariat (Contact Information)

Address: Daiichi Misu Building 3F, 2-34-7, Nishi-shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 105-0003 JAPAN

Innovation Group, Carbon Recycling Fund Institute (CRF)

Person in charge: Sasaki (Mr.)

Phone: +81-(3)-6432-0011

(14) Others

The Institute will provide various types of support (e.g., the Institute will offer services such as matching applicants with member companies.) to rejected applicants, so feel free to contact us.