

Application Guidelines for the 2026 Japan International Award for Young Agricultural Researchers (Japan Award)

1. Purpose and Outline of the Award

This annual award is organized by the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council (AFFRC), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan, and supported by Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS). Its purpose is to increase motivation among young researchers contributing to research and development in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related industries in developing regions. Young researchers who show outstanding performance and research achievements that may lead to future innovation will be commended with the Japan Award.

2. Research Fields

The award covers research areas in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related industries in developing regions, including the food industry and environmental fields.

3. Candidates

Candidates should be researchers who have the nationality of a developing country or territory, are under 40 years old as of January 01, 2026, belong to a non-Japanese research institute or a non-Japanese university, are engaged in research and development in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and related industries in developing regions, and fall under any of the following criteria (Note: Those who have applied for and missed the award in previous years are eligible to re-apply).

- (a) Those who have shown outstanding performance in research and development in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, or related industries in developing regions, and who show great promise.
- (b) Those who have shown outstanding achievements in research and development that will lead to future technological innovation in agriculture, forestry, fisheries or related industries in developing regions, and who show great promise.

The winning candidates, in principle, must be able to attend the commendation ceremony and deliver a lecture in Japan.

4. Number of Awardees

Up to three award winners will be named.

5. Award

The award winners will be invited to Japan to receive their awards in person and present their research results and achievements. The winners will be bestowed a testimonial by the Chairman of the AFFRC during the commendation ceremony and will also receive a cash prize of US\$5,000 each from JIRCAS (MOTAI-JIRCAS Award*).

* Mr. Shigeru MOTAI is a former Chairman of the AFFRC and the donor of this award. This award is supported by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS).

6. How to apply

- Applications must be prepared according to the “Instructions in the Preparation of Application Forms” and submitted by the recommending research institute by post. Moreover, electronic files of each form must be submitted by the recommending research institute via e-mail as they will be used for the preparation of a short-list.
- Only one researcher can be recommended from each institute, including its branches.
- If a research institute recommends two candidates or more, the Secretariat will request the institute to choose one. If the research institute does not respond by the deadline, all applications from that institute will be excluded.
- The application must include supporting materials that substantiate the candidate’s achievements, such as the applicant’s three most important research papers, technical handbooks, patent applications or utility models, newspaper articles etc., and the entire publication list directly related to the applicant’s research.
- Applications that are insufficient or incorrect will be excluded from the evaluation.

7. Determination of Winners

The award winners will be decided from among the eligible applicants by the Chairman of AFFRC based on the outcome of evaluation and selection carried out by the Selection Committee.

8. Criteria for Selection

The Selection Committee will give consideration to the following perspectives in evaluating and judging the applicants’ performance and research achievements for this award:

- The research and development has shown abundant originality.
- Achievements in the research and development have been objectively evaluated, e.g., by being published in academic or technical journals.
- The research and development has shown consideration for the development of agriculture, forestry, fisheries or related industries in developing countries in terms of dissemination and commercialization.
- The research and development has shown potential for great development and for leading to future technological and methodological innovations, even when it might not be fully completed or not diffused enough at the present time.

9. Schedule

Due date for submission of application: May 15, 2026

Determination of award winners: August or September 2026 (tentative)

Date of Awarding Ceremony: October or November 2026(tentative)

For information:

Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS)

https://www.jircas.go.jp/en/young_award/2026

E-mail address: japanaward@jircas.go.jp

Submit applications by post to:

Secretariat of the Japan International Award for Young Agricultural Researchers

Information and Public Relations Office

Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS)

1-1 Ohwashi, Tsukuba City, Ibaraki

305-8686 Japan