



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale
GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR COUNTRY PROMOTION
ITALIAN REPUBLIC

Call for Proposals for the institution of a Joint Italian - Israeli Laboratories **Submission by Monday 19th November, 2018**

A. Areas of Cooperation

Within the framework of the Agreement on Industrial, Scientific and Technological Research and Development Cooperation between Italy and Israel (hereinafter called the "Agreement"), the Directorate General for Country Promotion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (hereafter referred to as "MFAIC") is providing financial support for a joint Italian-Israeli Laboratory project, established and carried out jointly by research institutes and scientists from both countries. Italian-Israeli research teams are hereby invited to submit joint Laboratory proposals in the following area:

- Artificial Intelligence

B. Mode of Cooperation

The proposals must include a cooperation program between "Research Groups" of the two countries, whose main activity is the development and promotion of cutting-edge scientific and technological knowledge, which possesses appropriate infrastructure and equipment, and employ researchers who, inter alia, publish articles related to their field of research in leading scientific journals and present their research at international symposia. In addition:

- The Italian "Research Group" must belong to one of the following institutions of Italian law: a public or private University or a public or private Research Institute University;
- The Israeli "Research Group" must belong to one of the following institutions: accredited institution of University Education, according to the provisions of the 1958 University Teaching Act or public research institute with experience in the relevant fields.

Each cooperating "Research Group" must be led by a Coordinator affiliated to the respective institution. The Joint Laboratory is open to the participation of other Italian and Israeli Institutions and Institutions of research and / or industries, which will be able to participate in the establishment of the laboratory itself with its own personnel and / or funding.

The proposals must correspond to the participation requirements indicated in this announcement. In relation to the further necessary requisites for participation and the discipline applicable to the relationship between Italian Partners and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, participants must follow the "*Norme Integrative per la costituzione di Laboratori congiunti - Anno 2018 - Legge n. 154/2002*", which constitute an integral and substantial part of this call for proposals. Each institution undertakes to keep the "Research Group" participating in the Joint Laboratory operational for at least three years.

The proposals must explicitly contain the description of the structures where the research will be carried out, as well as a detailed research plan to be carried out during the three years of activity. The main structure, of reference of the joint Laboratory, will be located in Italy to the Italian "Research Group".

The Institution to which the Coordinator of the Italian "Research Group" is involved is responsible, in relation to the MFAIC, for the correct execution of the research program of the Joint Laboratory. The Italian institution awarding the financing must comply with the Italian and EU legislation of reference.

C. Funding and Project Duration

The MFAIC will provide the selected Laboratory with a maximum total funding up to 200.000 Euro for the three-year start-up phase, according to the program and the budget plan submitted.

The budget plan will have to show the financing plan for the expenses of establishment, management and development of the Laboratory. The financing plan must include the following items:

- own contribution from the Italian proponent "Research Group" (self-financing);
- possible contribution from the Israeli partner institution;
- contribution requested from the MFAIC;
- any other sources of financing.

Proposals of Joint Laboratory projects will have to include a perspective of financial self-sustainability allowing the continuation of the Joint Laboratory's activities even after the end of the three-year grant received.

Participation in the Joint Laboratory by new Italian and foreign Institutions and Institutions of research and / or industries may take place one year after the launch of the Laboratory itself. In this case, participation from a third country will also be possible. This participation can take place with a direct agreement between the new organization and the institutions that formed the Laboratory, subject to authorization by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

D. Eligibility

The Coordinator of the Italian "Research Group" will have to ensure its commitment to carrying out the activities envisaged by the Joint Laboratory proposal for the entire three-year period: its eventual

replacement must be approved by the MFAIC and the participating Italian and Israeli institutions. Changes to the submitted program must be authorized by the MFAIC, after hearing the Italian and Israeli institutions participating.

In Israel, proposals of Laboratories that include experiments on animals, application for approval must be submitted to the relevant *Council for Animal Experiments* before experimentation starts. In Italy, they will refer to the relevant Italian and EU laws. Proposals for which funding is approved involving human beings, must submit a request in Israel to the relevant Helsinki Committee before the project starts. In Italy, they will refer to the relevant Italian and EU law.

E. Additional Provisions

The Coordinator of the Italian "Research Group" (Italian citizen or EU citizen resident in Italy) must belong to a University or Research Organization under Italian law.

The "Research Groups" that will collaborate in the Joint Laboratory will have to sign a "Cooperation Agreement" regulating the intellectual property rights that may derive from the research activity carried out by the Joint Laboratory as well as all aspects of greatest importance (technical-scientific, financial, use and exchange of human resources, investments for research) related to the project. The project will not be eligible for funding if the signed "Cooperation Agreement" is not sent before the term set out in the letter by which the MFAIC will inform the project coordinator of the Joint Laboratory selection.

F. Submission of Research Proposals

The proposal must be written in English and must be shared and signed by the Italian and Israeli Coordinators, who - with their signature - will share both the scientific approach and the cost estimate, and by the legal representatives of the Italian and Israeli institutions. The proposal must also contain an indication of the sources of funding envisaged for the Joint Laboratory.

The attached Application Form called Annex 1 is the mandatory form to present the Project Application.

The application must be sent before 12 PM CET of **Monday, November 19th, 2018** exclusively by certified electronic mail to the following address: dqsp09.pec@cert.esteri.it. Only the documents indicated in the "*Norme Integrative per la costituzione di Laboratori congiunti - Anno 2018*" must be sent, according to the check list in Annex A. If one of the requested documents is not present, the application will not be valid.

If by the deadline of this notice it is not possible to acquire the project's signature from the Israeli counterpart, it will be possible to integrate this procedural aspect later no later than December 7, 2018. This document must detail the scientific, technological and possibly of the Israeli "Research Group" to the Joint Laboratory program and must be signed by the Israeli Coordinator and the legal representative of the Israeli institution.

G. Funded Expenses

All budget items and expenditures must conform to the national rules relevant for each applicant. Funding provided by this Call is aimed to enhance the capacity of the applicants to collaborate. It will therefore be provided mainly to support and integrate the financial, technical and human resources mobilized for the cooperation with the counterpart.

H. Mutual Visits

Researchers affiliated to the "Research Groups" promoters of the Joint Laboratory are encouraged to spend a significant period in the institutions of the other party. As long as the visits are an integral part of the joint research, international travel and in-country living expenses of visiting scientists should be included in the project's budget. Travel to destinations other than Italy and Israel must be motivated and authorized in advance by MFAIC.

I. Evaluation Criteria

The projects will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

1. Conformity with the definition of the program research topics of this Call;
2. Scientific Qualification of the Principal Investigators (one for each country per research project): The Principal Investigator should have experience, appropriate expertise and ability to manage the collaboration and carry out the Laboratory goals within the project's time frame;
3. Relevance of the research topics and innovation impact of the methodology adopted.
4. Clarity and quality of the research proposal itself – presentation of the topic, definition of research objectives, presentation of research methodology and detailed work plan, to be assessed also taking in account the financial impact of the project;
5. Ability to develop research and growth of the existing research centers and their capacity to access to further sources of funding.
6. Added value of the bilateral scientific cooperation
7. Involvement of young researchers;

In case of a same result of different proposals after their evaluation, preference will be given to those from consortia of several partners. The presence within the consortium of one or more Italian companies and the evident intent of transferring the results of the research to them, constitute a reason for preference. The evaluation procedure will be directly carried out by the MFAIC, taking into due consideration the guidelines expressed by the Israeli authorities regarding the quality of the project.

L. Notification of the Results

Project partners whose Joint Laboratory project has been selected will be informed of the results by letters. In Italy, the list of selected projects will furthermore be published on the website of the MFAIC.

M. Awarding Procedure and Payment

Joint Laboratories must be activated within 6 months from the formal acceptance of the grant.

For the Italian part, after the approval of the joint laboratory proposal, the MFAIC will communicate to the Italian Association of the Coordinator of the Italian "Research Group" the amount of the contribution and the conditions for its delivery. Following formal acceptance by this institution, the MFAIC will issue a provision for the granting of co-financing.

Both Coordinators will present at the MFAIC annual reports and a joint final report (in English with an Italian translation) on the results of the Joint Laboratory and on its financial management. Even outside of what is expressly provided for by this Call, by the Supplementary Rules and by the concession provision, the Coordinator of the Italian "Research Group" will have to present specific scientific and / or accounting reports at the simple request of the MFAIC, to be produced within 30 days from the request.

The payment of the contribution will be made by the MFAIC to the Institution to which the Coordinator of the Italian "Research Group" belongs according to the regulations in force. In particular, payment will be made according to the terms and conditions established by the Supplementary Rules and the act of granting the grant, in three tranches: the first one within 3 months from the activation of the Laboratory; the second upon request by the Italian partner when the first instalment has been completely spent; the third at the ending of the Laboratory's activities within a maximum of 36 months from the activation.

N. Royalties

Anyone who obtains profits thanks to the results of the research activities carried out by the Laboratory must gradually return to the MAECI the contribution through the payment of royalties, according to the procedures set forth in art. 5 of the Agreement. No refund is due if the patents obtained through the laboratory do not reach the marketing stage.

INFORMATION

For further information:

Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale

D.G.S.P. - Direzione Generale per la Promozione del Sistema Paese – Ufficio IX

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- accordo.italiaisraele@esteri.it (for general information)
- scienza.telaviv@esteri.it Scientific Attaché Office - Embassy of Italy in Israel (for scientific information)