



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC
PROMOTION AND INNOVATION
ITALIAN REPUBLIC**



**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY OF THE
STATE OF ISRAEL**

**CALL FOR THE SELECTION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EoIs) FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A ITALY-ISRAEL JOINT LABORATORY IN**

PRECISION AGRICULTURE

CLOSING DATE: Monday September 16, 2019

1. Objective of the Call

Within the framework of the Agreement between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of the State of Israel on Industrial, Scientific and Technological Research and Development Cooperation, the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation - Office IX of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC), and the Israeli Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), hereinafter referred to as the "Parties", are willing to collect Expressions of Interest (EoIs) from the scientific community in their respective countries to develop joint laboratories in any research area of mutual interest, with the aim of strengthening scientific & technological collaborations between the two countries. For the year 2020, the Parties have decided to invite their respective scientific communities to submit EoIs for the establishment of one Italy-Israel joint laboratory on the theme "Precision Agriculture".

The joint laboratory will be financed for a duration of three years. Partners of the joint laboratory will be requested to present plans for external financial support to prolong the activities of the laboratory beyond the three year term.

2. Requirements for participation

- 1.** Only Italian and Israeli research groups with an established cooperation track can apply (i.e. documented track of joint publications, exchange of researchers, participation to joint projects or research consortia).
- 2.** The applicants can be either single research groups led by a PI, or research consortia led by a Coordinator.
- 3.** The Italian PI/Coordinator must be affiliated to a public or private University, or to a Consortium recognized by MIUR (please refer to the following link: <http://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/consorzi-interuniversitari>); or with a public or private research institution whose main activity is the promotion of advanced scientific knowledge, endowed with adequate infrastructure and equipment. The list of authorized public and private research institutions can be found at <https://loginmiur.cineca.it/elencoistituti/front.php/autorizzati.html>.
- 4.** In all cases, the Italian PI/coordinator must hold a permanent contract, or a fixed-term contract lasting for the entire duration of the proposed project.
- 5.** The Israeli PI/Coordinator must be affiliated with a Research Institution.
- 6.** In Israel, a "Research Institution" must be an accredited institution of Higher Learning in Israel, according to the Council for Higher Education Law, 1958; or, a public Research Institute with experience in the relevant sectors; or, a Research Institute recognized as such by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF); or, a Research Institute which is a nonprofit organization; or, a Research Institute which is a government company or a governmental unit.

3. Submission procedure

For the purpose of the present call, the two collaborating partners from Italy and Israel will have to produce a unique EoI written in English, and submit identical copies of it to their respective Authorities.

The EoI, drafted according to the template provided in Annex 1, including the Information on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data must be completely filled in and signed, according to the instructions specified therein. The forms must be submitted to MFAIC by the Italian PI/Coordinator and to MOST by the Israeli PI/Coordinator.

- **Submission to MFAIC:** The applications (in "pdf" format duly signed by the PI, along with a working copy in "doc" format without signatures) must be submitted exclusively by certified electronic mail (PEC) to the following address: dgsp09.accordoisraele@cert.esteri.it Applications must reach the above PEC address by Monday 16 September 2019 at 17:00 hr (Italian time) and will not be accepted under any circumstances after the specified date and time. The PEC Object must be: "*Expression of interest to participate in the Joint Laboratory call – Year 2020*". Any other form of transmission will not be considered, leading to exclusion of the EoI from the evaluation process.

- **Submission to MOST:** The EoI (in "pdf" format duly signed, along with a working copy in "doc" format without signatures), must be submitted by e-mail to the following address: italy@most.gov.il. The EoIs should actually reach the above-mentioned email address by Monday 16 September 2019 at 23:59 (local Israel time), and will not be accepted under any circumstances after the specified date and hour. Proposers are hereby advised that that only automatic replies will be available after 15:30 of the said day. Because of technical constraints, an e-mail over 20 Megabytes will not be received. If the e-mail and its attachments exceed 20 MB, it must be split. Shortly after submitting the e-mail the applicants should receive an automatic reply acknowledging its receipt. If an e-mail confirming receipt is not received, the applicant must approach MOST contact persons detailed below to make sure the e-mail was duly received. It is solely the sender's responsibility to receive confirmation that the e-mail was

received, whether by automatic reply or personal confirmation. As technical problems are possible, it is strongly recommended to submit the application well in advance of the deadline.

4. Evaluation procedure

Evaluation of the applications aiming at establishing Italy-Israel joint laboratory projects of Scientific and Technological cooperation will follow a two-step procedure:

Phase 1: The submitted EoIs will be checked for eligibility requirements. Eligible applications validly submitted to both Parties will then move on to the selection process, which will be carried out independently in the two countries on the basis of the following criteria:

- Scientific relevance of the proposed research
- Expertise of the research teams and outcomes of their previous collaboration
- Impact on bilateral cooperation

At the end of this first stage evaluation, the Parties will reach consensus on a short list of EoIs, whose PIs will be invited to submit a more detailed full proposal. The EoIs selected to proceed to Phase 2 will receive detailed information on the modalities for submission of full proposals. Communications will be sent to the Italian PI/Coordinator via certified (PEC) mail, and to the Israeli PI/Coordinator via email to the relevant Research Authority, copied to the PI/Coordinator.

Phase 2: Eligible full proposals validly submitted to both Parties will be independently evaluated at the national level, according to the following criteria:

- Clarity and quality of the research proposal
- Originality and novelty of the proposed research
- Feasibility of the proposed research and access to relevant resources
- Added value of the bilateral scientific cooperation
- Involvement of young researchers
- Justification of the requested budget

At the end of second stage evaluation, each Party will elaborate a short list of priority projects. On the basis of these shortlists of selected proposals, final consensus on the project to be jointly funded will be reached by the Parties.

5. Funding scheme

Financial requests should not exceed a total of 200.000 € for each side.

Funding of selected projects will be as follows:

Italian side:

The selected project can be financed up to 50% of the estimated costs.

Within 6 months from the start of project activities, MFAIC will transfer an initial tranche of up to 50% of the approved costs upon submission of a technical report by the Italian PI. 18 months after formal acceptance of the contribution, a second tranche of 40% of the approved costs will be transferred upon submission of a technical/scientific report and a financial statement on the initial expenditures. The remaining 10% of the approved funds will be settled after the end of project activities, upon submission of a technical and financial report by the PI/Coordinator.

Israeli side:

Upon the approval of the joint project, a contract will be signed between MOST and the Israeli PI/Coordinator's university/research institution. Payments will be made to the research institution in keeping with the provisions of the contract referred to above, according to the regulations and practices in force in Israel. The Israeli team will submit the annual scientific and financial reports and applications for a second and third year in accordance with the contract signed with MOST.

Funding for the approved projects will depend on the availability of funds and on the approval of the Israeli State Budget and the Italian State Budget.

6. Special Provisions regarding the Israeli applicants

All procedures and activities under this Call or the projects approved hereunder, including the eligibility of institutions via which applications must be filed, are subject to the standard MOST

Procedures Regarding Scientific Projects and Scholarships Funded by MOST and to the MOST Standard Contract for Scientific Projects (both documents referred to hereinafter as "the standard terms").

Applicants are required to familiarize themselves with the standard terms before filing an application under this Call; filing an application constitutes a declaration that the applicant has done so and agrees to be bound by the provisions thereof.

Sabbatical Leave:

Israeli researchers who intend a sabbatical leave in the first year of the project cannot be approved as a PI of the research proposal. A PI who intends a vacation or absence longer than three months should request permission from MOST in advance through the relevant R&D Authority. A substitute to the PI will not be approved in the course of the first year.

7. Call information

Additional information can be obtained from the following contacts:

ISRAEL

On administrative matters:

Mr. Avi Anati

Deputy Director-General for Planning & Control

Tel: 02-5411170/173/800

Fax: 02-5823030

E-mail: avi@most.gov.il

Mrs. Claire Levaton

Division for International Relations

E-mail: claire@most.gov.il

ITALY

On administrative and scientific matters:

Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale

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

accordo.italiaisraele@esteri.it

(for general information)

Certified electronic mail

(for official submission):

dgsp09.accordoisraele@cert.esteri.it

On scientific matters:

Dr. Moshe Ben Sasson

Director for Water, Agriculture, Environment

[Tel:02-5411862](tel:02-5411862)

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MOST website: www.most.gov.il

In Israel:

Scientific Attaché Office

Embassy of Italy in Israel

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