



ITALY – EGYPT
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION
CALL FOR JOINT PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR THE YEARS 2023-2025

CLOSING DATE: [October 27, 2022]

Italy: at [12.00] - Egypt: at 23:59

BACKGROUND

Within the framework of the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Italy and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, signed in Cairo on April 29, 1975, the Directorate General for Country Promotion – Office IX of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Scientific Research of Egypt, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”, are opening a call for proposals for the Executive Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the years 2023-2025.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 FUNDING SCHEME

With regard to the present call the available funding scheme is:

- **“Joint Research Projects”**: this funding scheme is aimed at supporting joint research activities. The expenses are co-funded by both Parties. Inclusion of early career scientists in the research team will be positively evaluated.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Project proposals:

- must be written in English;
- must have the same duration of the Executive Programme: 3 years;
- each Principal Investigator (P.I.) can submit only one proposal.

Proposals must be jointly submitted to both Parties. Proposals submitted to only one of the two Parties will not be considered.

National regulations:

Italian Party:

- The call is open to public or private (no-profit) research institutions.
- The PI must have Italian or any other EU nationality, legal residence in Italy and a permanent position within a public or private (no-profit) Italian research institution, or a temporary position covering at least the entire duration of the proposed project.

Egyptian Party:

- The call is open to coordinators with Egyptian nationality
- The Principal Investigator (PI) must be affiliated to a research entity (university, research institution/center, etc.) which has an Egyptian legal identity.
- PI must be a PhD holder.
- The PI & one of the Co-PI(s) should be affiliated to the same institute.
- Travel is limited to 6 months in the whole project for young scientists (MSc or PhD students).
- The PI and Co-PI are allowed to travel for short visits that do not exceed 15 days per visit. The number of short visits does not exceed 3 visits in the whole project.
- The Egyptian PI and Co-PI cannot charge less than 40% of their time in the project. In addition, all Egyptian team members (including those who are not the PI or Co-PI) cannot charge more than 80% of their time to all of their submitted/pending STDF proposals and ongoing STDF-funded projects.

1.3 REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

- Lack of any one of the eligibility requirements listed above;
- Incomplete application (including additional documents where applicable - see point 3 below);
- Proposals submitted in different priority research areas by the collaborating PIs in the two countries or in a research area that is not listed below;
- Proposals submitted in only one of the two countries;
- Proposals fail to pass plagiarism and similarity checks performed by either of the countries.
- Proposals that are not aligned with the national strategic agendas for science, technology and innovation in either of the countries.

2. PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

Project proposals must be submitted in one of the following priority research areas

1. Renewable and sustainable Energy
2. Material Science and Engineering
3. Water management, agriculture and food technology
4. Smart cities and big data management (e.g., health data and Covid-19 modelling, service industry, and

technology management)

5. New Technologies applied to Cultural and Natural Heritage

Proposals submitted in other research areas will not be considered for evaluation.

Only some of the above listed research areas may be funded, depending on the scientific quality of the submitted proposals.

3. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Italian Party:

- Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, by filling the dedicated forms at the following link: <http://web.esteri.it/pgr/>. For any inquiry concerning the present call, please contact the following email address: dgsp-09bandi3@esteri.it
- Italian applications must be accompanied by an endorsement letter, written in Italian and signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution or by her/his officially authorized delegate, certifying the acceptance of all conditions listed in the call text, including institutional co-funding. A template is provided within the call documents. The signed letter must be uploaded in the indicated section of the submission portal (<http://web.esteri.it/pgr/>).
- **Ethics:** For projects involving experiments with animals, the status of ethics approval by the competent Ethics Committee must be provided when submitting the proposal. Please note that formal authorization by the competent Ministry of Health is mandatory to start the activities (D.Lgs 26_04/03/2014 and Directive 2010/63 EU). Proof of submission to the institutional OPBA (Organismo Preposto al Benessere degli Animali) is acceptable at the proposal submission stage. Projects involving experiments with human beings must be performed in accordance with the Directive 536/2014/EC. The Italian Principal Investigator should include a self-declaration of adhesion to the above cited rules in the Methods section of the proposal.
- **Data treatment compliance:** The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will process personal data requested for applying to this call based on the principles of lawfulness, fairness and transparency to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons. In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (UE) 2016/679, an explicit consent to data treatment is being requested during the application procedure.

Egyptian Party:

- The Egyptian coordinator shall submit the proposal exclusively through the online platform: www.stdf.org.eg

- In case of any inquiries, please check the STDF website for the e-mail address of the program STDF coordinator.
- All applications must be uploaded to STDF website (www.stdf.org.eg) to which registration is required. Applicants are invited to submit proposals in the specified research areas of this call. The detailed proposal should be drafted according to the template and guidelines for preparing STDF proposals.
- An endorsement letter from the PI institution must be submitted, stamped and signed by the president of institution (legal representative). Include the project title, as well as the name, position and affiliation of the PI in charge of the proposal. It should clearly state that the project idea was not funded or submitted to another agency (national or international), or otherwise declare, and that the institution approves the project proposal and the project budget.
- The Egyptian PI, should read carefully and adhere to STDF general conditions and guidelines, IPR rules, code of ethics, etc.
- A plagiarism check will be applied to all proposals submitted to this grant. Accordingly, the proposal must be submitted in a readable PDF format (i.e. not scanned), to facilitate plagiarism checks.
- **Ethics:** STDF expects all research activities involving human subjects to strictly follow the bio-ethical guidelines. Breaching the rules of research integrity will result in halting all research funding activities to the involved parties after thorough investigation and judgment by a specialized STDF committee.

4. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AND SELECTION AT NATIONAL AND BILATERAL LEVEL

4.1 Evaluation process

After the call closure, all submitted proposals will undergo formal eligibility check before moving to the two-step evaluation process. The first step will be performed at the national level to identify a shortlist of proposals. The second step of the evaluation process will be performed at the bilateral level. The two Parties will reach consensus on the final list of projects eligible for funding during the meeting of the Joint Commission, which includes representatives from both countries. Selected projects are considered candidates to receive project funding pending the completion of the contracting procedure in compliance with the regulations of the funding agencies in both countries. The selected projects will be included in the text of the Executive Programme at the end of the process (see point 4.2 below).

Project proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Scientific relevance of the proposed research
- Methodology and documentation
- Qualification and expertise of the research teams
- Added value of the bilateral cooperation
- Involvement of early career scientists

- Exploitation and dissemination of the results
- Budget adequacy

4.2 Outcome of the evaluation

Italian Party:

The official text of the Executive Protocol, including the list of selected projects, will be published in the MAECI website at the following link:

https://www.esteri.it/it/diplomazia-culturale-e-diplomazia-scientifica/cooperscientificatecnologica/programmiesecutivi/accordi_programmi_culturali_tecnologici/

Only the PIs of the selected projects will be directly informed by e-mail of the outcomes of the selection process.

Egyptian Party

Based on the evaluation process; the PIs will be notified with STDF final decision. The final decision will be published to the PI account on the on Science, Technology and Innovation Funding Authority STDF portal:

www.stdf.eg.

Both parties commit not to provide information on selected/excluded projects (including the outcomes of the formal eligibility check mentioned in point 4.1) until the end of the process, with the signature of the Executive Programme.

5. FUNDING PROCEDURES

Funding will be granted to the projects listed in the Executive Programme within the limits of the available annual resources of each Party.

5.1 Funding scheme “Joint Research Projects”

Italian Party: Funding for projects selected and listed in the Executive Programme will be provided on a yearly basis. In particular, according to Italian law Nr. 401/90, and in accordance with the specific call issued by Office IX of the Directorate General for Country Promotion of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the PIs of the projects listed in the Executive Programme will be invited to submit a request for funding at the beginning of each year of project activity.

The coordinating Institution is expected to anticipate all project expenses and will be reimbursed on a yearly basis, upon submission of the financial documents and positive evaluation of the corresponding scientific report.

The contribution granted by MAECI to “Joint Research Projects” is intended as **co-funding support for the project**, and therefore **co-funding by the coordinating Italian Institution of approximately 50% of the total costs** of the

project is mandatory. Co-funding can include **salaries of the involved personnel and indirect costs**. Any other financial contribution from public or private, Italian or Egyptian Institutions, will be positively evaluated.

The average cost of a projects is approximately 60-70 K€/year, including co-funding by the applying institution.

Egyptian Party:

When a project is approved (i.e., successfully completed all the contracting requirements by STDF), a contract agreement will be signed between STDF, the principle investigator (PI), and the host institute. The budget will be disbursed as installments. The number of installments depends on the duration of the project. The first installment will be disbursed at the beginning of the project. The other installments will be paid after the receipt and approval of the progress reports.

The disbursement of the final installment of the project is conditioned upon the delivery of the outputs specified in the proposal in the scheduled time (such as high-impact publications, submission of articles to international journal, student theses based on the work specified in the proposal, presentations in renowned international conferences, organizing meetings...etc.) which should be highlighted in the final report. The payment of the final installment is subject to the internal rules and regulations of STDF and can cover only the indirect costs as well as the remaining incentives.

The maximum budget requested for the Egyptian PI should not exceed 3,000,000 Egyptian pounds per project with an average cost of 1,000,000 Egyptian pounds/ year.

As per STDF regulations eligible project expenditures shall include: equipment, expendable supplies and materials, publication costs, workshops as well as salaries and travel costs for the team. Salaries shall not to exceed 25% or up to 400,000 LE, whichever is less. Travel costs shall not to exceed 20% or up to 400,000 LE, whichever is less. Indirect costs shall not to exceed 10% of the amount (Total Direct Cost – Total Equipment Cost) or up to 150,000 LE/project, whichever is less.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information on the present call, applicants can refer to the following contacts:

<p>In Italy: Office IX - Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) E-mail: dgsp-09bandi3@esteri.it</p>	<p>In Egypt: Eng. Marwa Alaa Program Coordinator E-mail: marwa.alaa@stdf.eg Website: www.stdf.eg</p>
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