



**ITALY – CHINA**  
**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION**  
**CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF JOINT PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR THE YEARS 2023-2024**

**CLOSING DATE: December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**in Italy at: 12 p.m. CEST – in P.R. China at: 7 p.m. CST**

**1. BACKGROUND**

In the framework of the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Italy and the Government of the People's Republic of China, signed in Rome on June 9th, 1998, the Directorate General for Country Promotion – Office IX of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Department of International Cooperation of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”, initiate herewith the procedures for the drafting of the Executive Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the years 2023-2024. To this end, the Parties issue the present call for the submission of joint proposals for projects of “Great Relevance”. Proposals must concern activities which exhibit strong bilateral impact aiming at concrete industrial impacts or targeting relevant scientific objectives.

**2. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**2.1 FUNDING SCHEME**

Joint research projects where research activities are co-funded by both Parties. In this scheme a significant funding contribution by the applying proponent is mandatory. Financing will be granted within the limits of the available annual resources of each Party.

**2.3 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Each proposal must be submitted, by the Italian and Chinese Principal Investigators (PI), to their respective Parties. Proposals submitted to only one Party will not be considered for evaluation.

**For the Italian Party**

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

For the Chinese Party, the call is open to the legal entities based in China, including universities, research institutes, and enterprises (preferably SMEs). Entities and PI should meet the requirements of the Special Project on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation of National Key Research and Development Plan.

## 2.2 PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

Projects must be submitted in one of the following priority research areas:

1. Agriculture and Food Sciences
2. Artificial Intelligence applied to Cultural Heritage
3. Astrophysics and Physics
4. Green Energy related research
5. Biomedicine

*The parties are considering to co-fund 10 projects from the different areas.*

### 3. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES.

- Project proposals must be jointly submitted to both Parties. Proposals submitted to only one of the two Parties will not be considered.
- The Italian and Chinese PIs must cooperate on the elaboration of their counterparts' application.
- Projects must have the same duration of the Executive Programme (i.e., two-years )
- Each PI can submit one project proposal only.
- Scientific and technological results and any other information derived from cooperation activities under this call will not be shared, announced, published or commercially exploited without the written consent of both project partners and in accordance with the agreement concerning intellectual and industrial property rights (IPR). The agreement about ownership of IPR will have to be signed between joint project partners after the project is selected. The said agreement will be executed in compliance with the Participants respective regulations. The PIs have to submit the Annex on the IPR, written in English, signed by both PI by e-mail at: dgsp-09bandi1@esteri.it.

#### Italian Party

- Project proposals must be drafted in English.
- 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-09bandi1@esteri.it](mailto:dgsp-09bandi1@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, providing official acceptance of all conditions listed in the call text, including institutional co-funding. The strategic significance of the bilateral cooperation can also be included. 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/>)
- 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.

Any inquiry about the present call can be sent to: [dgsp-09bandi1@esteri.it](mailto:dgsp-09bandi1@esteri.it)

#### Chinese Party

- projects must be drafted in Chinese and English.
- The Chinese PI must submit the full proposal exclusively through the dedicated online platform: <http://service.most.gov.cn>, which must contain the objectives and targets of the project, the innovative points, the technical line and research foundation, the list of participants from the two sides, a copy of a letter of intent signed by the sides including a statement regarding the intellectual property. A joint agreement among all participants is required if there are more than one partner in the Chinese consortium that apply for the same project.

Please contact: [86-10-68598010](tel:86-10-68598010), [86-10-58882999](tel:86-10-58882999), (technical) or write to: [program@istic.ac.cn](mailto:program@istic.ac.cn) (technical) [hzs\\_ozc@most.cn](mailto:hzs_ozc@most.cn) (policy) for any inquire concerning the present call.

#### REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

- lack of any one of the eligibility requirements;
- incomplete application (including additional documents where applicable);
- proposals submitted in different priority research areas by the collaborating PIs in the two countries;
- proposals submitted in only one of the two countries.

#### 4. SELECTION PROCEDURES

At the closure of the call, all applications received will be checked for eligibility requirements before moving to the evaluation process. Eligible projects will be independently evaluated by the two Parties according to the following criteria:

- Scientific relevance
- Methodology and documentation
- Competence and expertise of the research teams
- Added value of the bilateral cooperation
- Involvement of early career researchers
- Appropriateness of the budget requested with respect to methods and expected results.

Preference will be furthermore given to:

- Projects involving more than one national public/private research organization;
- Initiatives having a potential industrial impacts and/or involving industrial partners.

At the end of the peer review process, each Party will elaborate a short list of priority projects. In the framework of the Joint Commission, defined in Article 4 of the aforementioned Agreement, the Parties will reach consensus on a short list of projects eligible for funding. Selected projects will be proposed for funding and will be included in the Executive Programme.

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

## **5. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

For the Italian Party, the list of the selected projects and funding procedures will be posted exclusively on the website of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation at the following address:  
[http://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica\\_estera/cooperscientificatecnologica/programmiesecutivi/accordi\\_programmi\\_culturali\\_tecnologici.html](http://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica_estera/cooperscientificatecnologica/programmiesecutivi/accordi_programmi_culturali_tecnologici.html)

For the Chinese Party, the contact persons of the selected projects will be directly informed.

## **6. 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.

- Funding for projects selected and listed in the EP 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 Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation 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 Chinese Institutions, will be positively evaluated.

The contribution of the Italian Side to Joint Research Projects is up to € 1,400,000 (one million four hundred thousand euros).

The Chinese Party will also granting up to ¥ 20,000,000 RMB (twenty million yuan) of financial contribution for the joint research projects.