



ITALIAN REPUBLIC – The KINGDOM of SWEDEN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF JOINT RESEARCH PROPOSALS FOR THE YEARS 2024-2026

CLOSING DATE: October 10 2023

Italy: at 14:00 – The Kingdom of Sweden: at 14:00

BACKGROUND

Within the framework of the Agreement on Cultural, Educational, Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Italian Republic and the Kingdom of Sweden, signed in Rome on November 29th, 2001 and entered into force on January 23rd, 2007, the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation - Office IX - of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) and the Director General of the Swedish Research Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”, are opening **a call for proposals toward the renewal of the Executive Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the years 2024 - 2026.**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 FUNDING SCHEMES

With regard to the present call, the funding scheme available is “**Joint Research Projects**”. This funding scheme aims at supporting joint research activities of collaborating Italian and Swedish research groups. Inclusion of early career scientists in the research teams will be positively evaluated. The expenses for research activities are co-funded by both Parties.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Project proposals:

- must be written in English;
- the project plan and title must be identical in the application to both Parties.
- must have the same duration of the Executive Programme (EP): three (3) years, 2024-2026;
- each Principal Investigator must submit only one proposal.

Italian Party:

- the call is open to public or private (no-profit) research institutions;
- the Italian PI must 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 a temporary position covering at least the entire first year of project activities.

Swedish Party:

- the Swedish PI must hold a Swedish doctoral degree or an equivalent foreign degree, awarded no later than the deadline for the call,
- the Swedish PI must be employed at a Swedish higher education institution (HEI) or another Swedish organisation that meets the criteria for administrating organisations for Swedish Research Council grants at the time of the start of and throughout the grant period and any further additional availability period.

1.3 REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

- Lack of any one of the eligibility requirements listed above;
- incomplete application, according to criteria specified in the call text (including additional documents where applicable - see point 3 below);

- proposals submitted in different priority research areas by the collaborating PIs in the two countries;
- proposals eligible in only one of the two countries.

2. PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

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

1. Life sciences (molecular medicine, e-health & medical technologies; pharmaceutical chemistry & technology)
2. Physics, accelerator technologies, Synchrotron Radiation and Neutron scattering researches with accelerators
3. Polar Sciences (Arctic and sub-Arctic regions)
4. Information and Communication Technologies

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

Joint proposals must be submitted by the Italian PI to the Italian Party and by the Swedish PI to the Swedish Party.

Italian Party

- Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, by filling the dedicated forms at the following link: <https://web.esteri.it/pgr/>. For any inquiry concerning the present call, please contact the following email address: dgsp-09bandi2@esteri.it
- For projects involving experiments with animals, the status of ethics approval by the competent Ethics Committee must be provided when submitting the proposal. A declaration of submission to the institutional OPBA (*Organismo Preposto al Benessere degli Animali*) in the project description from the PI is acceptable at the proposal submission stage. 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). 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 adherence to the above cited rules in the Methods section of the proposal.**
- Applications for the Joint Research Projects funding scheme must be accompanied by an **endorsement letter** signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution or her/his delegate duly authorized by formal provision. The letter, which must be written in Italian using the template available for download at the same URL of the present call, should acknowledge the submission and provide official acceptance of all conditions listed in the call text, including the institutional co-funding listed in the provisional budget section of the proposal. Moreover, if the PI holds a temporary position, the endorsement letter must also certify that, should the contract be terminated before the end of the project, the Institution will replace the PI with another member of the research team, thus ensuring that research activities are carried out without any interruption. The endorsement letter must be uploaded using the dedicated tab of the submission form.
- A copy of the identity document of the person signing the endorsement letter must be uploaded to the submission site.

Swedish Party

- Project proposals shall be submitted by the Swedish Principal Investigator to the Swedish Party through the online platform Prisma, in accordance with specific instructions in the call text published at vr.se.

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

4.1 Evaluation process

After the closure of the call, all submitted proposals will undergo formal eligibility check before proceeding to the two-step evaluation process. The first step will be performed by the funding agencies in order to identify a shortlist of proposals. The second step of the evaluation process will be performed at the bilateral level, during a meeting

between representatives from both Parties in which they will reach consensus on the final list of projects eligible for funding. The selected projects will be included in the text of the Executive Programme that will be posted at the websites of both Parties at the end of the process (see point 4.2 below).

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 Programme, including the list of selected projects, will be published at 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 notified by e-mail of the outcomes of the selection process.

Swedish Party The list of selected proposals will be published at the website <https://vr.se>.

Both parties commit not to provide information on selected/excluded projects (including the outcomes of the formal eligibility check mentioned in the point 4.1 above) until the end of the evaluation process, with the signature of the Executive Programme, unless the Swedish party is required to disclose the beforementioned Information in order to comply with applicable laws or regulations or with a court or administrative order.

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.

Italian 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 Swedish Institutions will be positively evaluated.

The funding contribution by MAECI to each project is approximately 30 K€/year, excluding 50% co-funding by the coordinating institution.

Swedish Party: The maximum total funding contribution from the Swedish Research Council for the Executive Programme (for all projects funded in the programme, including project overhead costs), is 2 000 000 SEK per year.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

In Italy

*Office IX - Directorate General for Cultural and
Economic Promotion and Innovation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International
Cooperation (MAECI)
E-mail: dgsp-09bandi2@esteri.it*

In Sweden

*For the Government of
the Kingdom of Sweden*