



ITALIAN REPUBLIC – The KINGDOM of SWEDEN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF JOINT RESEARCH PROPOSALS FOR THE YEARS 2027-2029

CLOSING DATE: September 8 2026

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 Growth and Export Promotion - Office XI - 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 2027 - 2029.**

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 young 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, 2027-2029;
- each Principal Investigator must submit only one proposal;
- must be coherent respect to the call requirements, both for scientific and financial side.

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 (the termination date of the contract shall be declared in the CV);
- the Italian PI must have been awarded their PhD degree no more than 8 years prior to the call deadline. For maternity, the effective elapsed time since the award of the first PhD will be considered reduced by 18 months for each child born after the award of the PhD. For paternity, parental leave, long-term illness, clinical training, or national service, the effective elapsed time since the award of the PhD will be reduced by the documented amount of leave actually taken. This provision is adopted in compliance with Italian legislation on equal opportunities and protection of maternity and parenthood, including Legislative Decree No. 151/2001 and Legislative Decree No. 198/2006.

- The total amount requested to MAECI must be approximately the same for each of the three years (approximately 33% per year). If a project is selected for financial contribution, the original budget proposal will be valid throughout the duration of the EP. Minor adjustments are permitted upon approval.

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.
- The Swedish PI must have been awarded their PhD degree no more than 8 years prior to the call deadline. The Swedish Research Council's approved grounds for deductible time, such as parental leave, are applied to the calculation of time since PhD degree.

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. *Quantum Technology, e.g., quantum computing, quantum optics and quantum metrology;*
2. *Solar Science - research on solar physics, solar thermal energy and solar based technologies.*

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

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://pgr.esteri.it/>. For any inquiry concerning the present call, please contact the following email address: dgce11.bandis3@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 both parties/countries have checked the formal requirements and discarded applications that are not eligible, the Italian side may apply a pre-screening of the applications and make a first selection based on relevance to the call. The Swedish side may hold a sifting meeting with the review panel one week before the review meeting to reduce the number of applications to be discussed and reviewed in detail. Both the pre-screening procedure on the Italian side, and the sifting meeting on the Swedish side are optional and will not be applied in the case that the number of applications is lower than expected.

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 parameters:

- *Scientific relevance of the proposed research*
- *Novelty and originality 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*
- *Technology Readiness Level (TRL) expected increase (starting and ending TRLs).*

In the event of a tie-in score, priority shall be given to applicants who have not been part of research groups previously funded by MAECI.

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

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.

The average cost of a project is approximately 100 K€/year, including co-funding by the applying institution.

The contribution granted by MAECI will be based on the 3-year original budget proposal.

- A **first** instalment, amounting to 100% of the first year MAECI co-funding (and approximately to 33% of the total MAECI co-funding) will be provided in advance, upon presentation of a letter certifying the beginning of project activities. Any unspent amount must be refunded to MAECI or can be used in the second year and deducted from the total contribution.
- The expenses for the **second year** (approximately amounting to 33% of the total MAECI co-funding) will be anticipated by the coordinating institution and reimbursed by MAECI during the third year, upon submission and positive evaluation of scientific reports and financial reporting documents.
- Similarly, the expenses for the **third year** (approximately amounting to 33% of the total MAECI co-funding) will be anticipated by the coordinating institution and reimbursed by MAECI after the end of the project, upon submission and positive evaluation of scientific reports and financial reporting documents.

Funding procedures timeline

First year Beginning of the project – 31 st December	Second year 1 st January – 31 st December	Third and last year 1 st January – 31 st December	The year after the end of the project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of the first year MAECI co-funding in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second year expenses anticipated by the coordinating institution • Check of expenses incurred during the first year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third year expenses anticipated by the coordinating institution • Refund of expenses incurred between 1st January and 31st December of the second year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refund of expenses incurred between 1st January and 31st December of the third and last year

Budget examples

	MAECI co-funding	Percentage	or		MAECI co-funding	Percentage
First year	50.000€	33,3%		First year	48.000€	32%
Second year	50.000€	33,3%		Second year	53.000€	35,3%
Third year	50.000€	33,3%		Third year	49.000€	32,6%
TOTAL	150.000€	100%		TOTAL	150.000€	100%

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 XI - Directorate General for Growth and Export Promotion of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)

E-mail dgce11.band3@esteri.it

In Sweden

Katarina Bjelke
Director General
Swedish Research Council