

ITALY – CHINA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION
CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF JOINT PROJECT PROPOSAL (2019-2021)

CLOSING DATE: December 12nd, 2018 - Time 12:00 CET

1. OBJECTIVE

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 (Economy, Culture and Science) – 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 2019-2021.

To this end, the Parties issue the present call for the submission of joint proposals for projects of “Particular Relevance”.

Proposals must concern activities which exhibit strong bilateral impact either by strengthening existing or creating new Joint Laboratories, aiming at concrete industrial impacts or targeting relevant scientific objectives.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 FUNDING SCHEME

Projects of “Particular Relevance”, namely 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.

2.2 SELECTION PROCEDURES

The selection *of the joint proposals will be carried out in two phases:*

STEP 1: Submission of the expression of interest

STEP 2: Submission of full project proposals selected out from the ones received in step 1

2.3 AREAS OF COOPERATION

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

1. Artificial Intelligence (Brain-inspired Artificial Intelligence, Intelligent City)
2. Technologies related to astrophysics
3. Innovative biomedical devices (medical robots, tissue engineering, new therapeutics, neurodegenerative diseases and personalized medicine)
4. Innovative processes for biomass conversion into energy and other added value products

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

2.4 ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

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 research organizations
- Enterprises (preferably SMEs) that can carry out scientific or industrial research activities
- PI who have Italian or any other EU nationality, provided he/she is legally resident in Italy
- PI, who comply with the previous condition and have a permanent working contract with one of the entities described above. or a temporary position covering at least the time extent of the project in the Organization they belong.

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.

2.5 PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Projects must be drafted in English
- Projects must have the same duration of the Executive Programme (three-year 2019-2021)
- Projects must be jointly submitted to both Parties. Proposals submitted to only one of the two Parties will not be considered.
- Each PI can submit one project proposal only.
- For the Italian Party, an endorsement letter, signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution, must be provided by email to the address: progetti.st@esteri.it

For projects involving living organisms and humans, it is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that all facets of animal care and use meet the requirements of the International Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. This includes a responsibility to protect and promote the welfare of animals used. Institutional ethics committee approval and informed consent are obligatory parts in all interventional studies (human or animal).

3. PROCEDURES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST.

The proposal must be jointly submitted to both Parties. In particular:

STEP 1

In order to submit the expression of interest, the Italian PI must submit a short proposal to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to the certified e-mail address: dgsp09.pec@cert.esteri.it

Any inquire about the present call can be sent to: dgsp-09bandi2@esteri.it

The Chinese PI must submit the short proposal exclusively through the dedicated online platform: <http://service.most.gov.cn>

Please dial to: 86-10-68598010 for any inquire concerning the present call.

STEP 2

The jointly selected proposals only will be invited to submit a full description of the project

4. PROJECT EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The evaluation will be done in a **two-step procedure**:

STEP 1

Both the Italian and Chinese PIs are requested to submit the expression of interest (Annex I) presenting a short proposal containing the objectives of the project, the innovative aspects, the scientific background and technical approach, the list of participants in both countries. Contextually, it shall be submitted a copy of a letter of intent, written in English, signed by both partner Institutions, including a statement regarding intellectual property (see requirements in Annex II).

For the Chinese Party: Submission of a short proposal (max three pages-about 3000 Chinese characters) 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 (see requirements in Annex II). For the Chinese Party, 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.

For the Italian Party: Submission by certified e-mail of a short proposal in English language (no more than 8500 characters) 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 the letter of intent (see Annex II) signed by the sides including a statement regarding the intellectual property.

At the closure of the call, all short applications received will be checked for eligibility requirements.

Eligible applications will then move on to the selection process.

Projects will be evaluated at the national level according to the following criteria:

- Scientific relevance
- Methodology and documentation

- Competence and expertise of the research teams

Preference will be given to:

- Projects involving more than one national public/private research organization;
- Initiatives having a potential industrial impacts and/or involving industrial partners;
- Structured mobility programmes, with staying periods of up to 3 months, to the benefit of existing Sino-Italian Joint Laboratories.

At the end of this first stage evaluation, 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 through diplomatic channels on a short list of projects, whose PIs will be invited to submit a more detailed and comprehensive proposal for second stage evaluation, within 30 days from the official invitation.

STEP 2

Full proposals submitted by the fixed deadline 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;
- Structured mobility programmes, with staying periods of up to 3 months, to the benefit of existing Sino-Italian Joint Laboratories.

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.

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

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

FINANCING OF THE PROJECTS

For the Italian Party, the contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to bilateral projects of “Particular Relevance” is intended as a co-funding, therefore the applying Institution must finance the remaining part on the basis of salary of involved personnel and indirect costs of the project. The applying Institution must anticipate the project expenses and will be co-financed at the final balance yearly. According to the Italian law Nr.401/90, at the beginning of each year of activity, the coordinators of the projects listed in the Executive Programme will be invited to submit a request for funding, in accordance with the specific call issued by Office IX of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Call details will be available, in due time, at the following link:

http://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica_estera/cooperscientificatecnologica/avvisiincaricobandi.html

The contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to bilateral projects of “Particular Relevance” is up to € 1,500,000 (one million and five hundred thousand euros).

The Chinese Party will also consider granting ¥ 20,000,000 RMB (twenty million yuan) of financial contribution for the projects of “Particular Relevance”.