



CALL FOR JOINT ACTIONS AND PROGRAMMES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION IN FIELDS OF SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION 2025-2027

BETWEEN  
ITALY – UZBEKISTAN

**JOINT CALL 2025**

OPENING DATE: **January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

CLOSING DATE: **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Universities and Research of the Italian Republic and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, hereinafter referred to as the “Participants”, recognise the significance of science and technology in the development of the national economy and the socio-economic standards of life.

Considering the positive collaboration developed over the course of the last decades, the abovementioned Ministries intend to **further strengthen cooperation** in science, technology and innovation between Italy and Uzbekistan.

The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in fields of science, technology and innovation, signed on 10 November 2023 in Tashkent, aims at further strengthening cooperation in science, technology and innovation between the Participants through the **implementation of joint activities** aimed at supporting **scientific and industrial research projects, mobility of researchers and innovative research infrastructures**.

Within the framework of the aforementioned MoU and the Management Plan signed on 17 September ‘24 between the Directorate General for Internationalization and Communication of the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan are opening a call for proposals in fields of science, technology and innovation for the years 2025-2027.

For further information, please contact representatives of the national funding organizations (see contact details in Section 5.3).

## 2. AREAS OF ACTIVITY

The call aims to support **excellent, collaborative, bilateral, transdisciplinary, fundamental, or applied research and innovation initiatives** focused on the priority activity areas described below. These initiatives will be based on the principles of mutual benefit and aim to strengthen knowledge and share applications.

The purpose of the call is the establishment of more effective relationships in science, technology and innovation between Italy and Uzbekistan. Within the call, the Participants aim to facilitate the exchange of good practices, strategic planning, and the design of joint initiatives.

Therefore, the proposals provide prospects for long-term cooperation between respective national universities, research and innovation institutions and private companies. In particular, the following areas of cooperation of common interest will be considering:

- Agriculture and Food Science and Technology;
- Engineering Sciences;
- Life Sciences and Biotechnology;
- Energy, water, and natural resources
- Climate change and natural disasters

- Information and Communication Technology, Applied Mathematics, and Data Science and Technology;
- Health and Medical Technology;
- Materials Sciences;
- Physics and Astrophysics;
- Advanced manufacturing;
- Digital economy;
- Quantum and advanced technologies;
- Social sciences.

The cooperation between the partners may include the following **activity areas**:

- Joint research and innovation projects

The objective of this activity area is to encourage cooperation and joint projects between national universities, research and innovation institutions and private companies in the fields of fundamental and applied research, technology and innovation, also with the aim to exchange of relevant S&T information and views on scientific and technological policy issues.

Priority shall be given to projects intended to result in the creation of new knowledge or invention of novel technologies that may be used for the development of new products and processes capable of being commercially exploited, or of broad social interest.

- Mobility of researchers and technical experts

This activity area aims to promote researchers' and technical experts' mobility among Italian and Uzbek universities and research institution, while cooperating in human resources development and facilitating the two-way sharing of access to research and technological innovation infrastructures.

- Dissemination and training activities

The purpose of this activity area is to facilitate the dissemination of research results, promote the participation in bilateral scientific conferences and support joint seminars, symposia and other scientific meetings, and develop advanced training programmes, including workshops, trainings, fellowships, internships.

- Innovation ecosystems

The aim of this activity area is to contribute to the development and deepening of joint activities including the establishment of joint research partnerships with the private sector. In particular, it aims at exchanging mutual learning pathways, sharing best practices for the creation, enhancement and promotion of innovation ecosystems and strengthening joint capacity building of national actors.

### **3. THE CALL FOR JOINT ACTIONS**

#### **3.1. Eligibility Requirements**

Project proposals:

- must be written in English;
- must have the following duration: 18-24 months;
- must address at least one of the activity areas mentioned above.

**Italian Party (MUR):**

The call is open to Italian public or private universities, research and innovation institutions and private companies.

For each proposal, the applicant entity may participate alone, cooperatively, with one or more co-applicant entities.

**Uzbek Party:**

The call is open to Uzbek public or private universities, research and innovation institutions and private companies.

For each proposal, the applicant entity may participate alone, cooperatively, with one or more co-applicant entities. How to apply

Joint proposals must be submitted to both Participants according to the following rules.

**Italian Party (MUR):**

Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online by filling out the dedicated forms through the following platform:

<https://banditransnazionali.mur.gov.it>

The application submitted through the above platform has to be signed by the legal representative of the applicant entity. For any inquiry concerning the present call, please contact the following email address:

[michele.mazzola@mur.gov.it](mailto:michele.mazzola@mur.gov.it)

[alessandro.boero@mur.gov.it](mailto:alessandro.boero@mur.gov.it)

**Uzbek Party:**

Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online by filling out the dedicated forms through the following platform:

<https://loviha.ilmiy.uz/>

The application submitted through the above platform has to be signed by the legal representative of the applicant entity. For any inquiry concerning the present call, please contact the following email address:

[nabijonholov@gmail.com](mailto:nabijonholov@gmail.com)

Applicants must fill out all mandatory fields on the form for their proposal to enter the selection process and to be considered for funding.

Projects involving experiments with human beings and animals, must be performed in accordance with the relevant national and international regulations on ethics.

Proposals will not be taken further into the evaluation in case the following occurs, and this cannot be corrected in a timely manner:

- do not meet the project requirements described in the sections below,
- and/or do not comply with the eligibility criteria of the Funding Organizations which they seek funding from,
- and/or are incomplete.

### 3.2. Call timeline and budget

This call consists of a one-stage submission and two-steps evaluation process, described in Section 4. Applications received after the submission deadline will not be allowed into the evaluation and selection process.

Publication of the Call: **January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Deadline for Proposal submission: **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Start of the projects' selection: **July 2025**

Kick off the project: **September 2025**

Length of the project: max **18/24 months**

Available budget:

**Italian Party (MUR): € 1.000.000,00**

**Uzbek Party (MHESI): € 1.000.000,00**

### 3.3. Proposal requirements

#### 3.3.1. General requirements

Uzbek and Italian partners must fill out all mandatory fields on the submission form for their proposal to enter the evaluation process and to be considered for funding. To be eligible, a proposal must include all mandatory information requested in the Proposal Form.

In filling out the online proposal form, it is expected that applicants consider the following:

- proposals should clearly describe how the proposed project will deliver on one, or more, of the chosen activities of the section 2;
- proposals should include well-justified budgets, partitioning of funds, and allocation of responsibilities and time. Proposals may include, where appropriate, well thought out data management, project stakeholder engagement, and communication management plans. Plans for providing broad public accessibility of data, results, and findings should be described;

- proposals should also detail the impact and dissemination strategy, external communications activities, planned social media activities as well as any other externally facing communication activities foreseen as a result of this work;

It will be positively considered:

- proposals involving more than one Uzbek and Italian public or private universities, research and innovation institutions and private companies;
- coherence and synergy within already existing initiatives;
- Priority shall be given to projects intended to result in the creation of new knowledge or invention of novel technologies that may be used for the development of new products and processes capable of being commercially exploited;
- initiatives with potential industrial impact.

### 3.3.2. Budget and eligible costs

Research partnerships are expected to include one overall project budget in the Proposal Form, expressed in euros (€ / EUR). The budget proposal of each Partner must meet the eligibility requirements of the national Funding Organization which it seeks funding from, including a potential budget limit per Partner.

A detailed budget justification is required in the Proposal Form. Applicants are also required to explain the source of any additional funding.

## 4. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

### 4.1. Evaluation Process

Evaluation of proposals will be performed in accordance with national legislation.

The Participants appoint a joint Call Management Committee which includes representatives from both countries on equal footing, in charge of evaluating the proposed projects, in accordance with national legislation. The joint Call Management Committee will also in charge of monitoring the project execution.

After the Call closure, all submitted proposals will undergo formal eligibility check before moving to the two-steps evaluation process:

- The first step will be performed at the national level to identify a shortlist of proposals.
- The second step will be performed by the joint Call Management Committee which will reach a consensus on the final list of projects eligible for funding.

The selected projects will be announced by the Ministries by publishing them in the websites of each Party at the end of the process.

### 4.2. Evaluation criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Compliance of project proposals outcomes with activity areas (See Section 2)

*Project proposals will be assessed on the basis of their coherence with the activities areas mentioned in Section 2, with particular reference to the abovementioned areas of cooperation of common interest.*

- **Quality of project proposals (up to 20 points)**

*The scientific relevance of the project objectives is assessed according to the following criteria:*

- *specificity, measurability and verifiability of results: the results must be clear, quantifiable and verifiable;*
- *clarity of presentation: activities and programmes must be well articulated, with valid justifications and proposed methodologies;*
- *consistency of objectives with expected results: alignment of project objectives with expected results;*
- *appropriate and coherent methodology: detailed, appropriate and structured methodological approach throughout the project.*

- **Quality of partners involved (up to 10 points)**

*The quality of the partners involved in the project will be assessed, considering their reputation, experience and specific expertise in the fields concerned. In addition, the nature of the proposed cooperation activities, the complementarity of expertise between the partners and the sustainability of the long-term relationship will also be examined. Key aspects include:*

- *Enhancement of bilateral cooperation: the scientific contributions of each partner should be clearly described and explained, emphasising the added value of their cooperation;*
- *Diversity and gender perspectives: the proposal must integrate diversity and gender perspectives within the partnership, the project plan and the desired results, where relevant.*

- **Impact and sustainability of the initiative, and dissemination of results (up to 10 points)**

*In evaluating the project's impact, the following aspects will be assessed:*

- *How its results uniquely contribute to the specific objectives of the call, with a particular focus on the long-term impact and sustainability of the initiatives.*
- *Plans for disseminating the generated knowledge in relevant scientific and public forums.*

- **Management and Budget (up to 10 points)**

*The proposed activities must be meticulously conceived and organized, supported by an operational plan that includes well-defined milestones and deliverables to facilitate effective project monitoring. Key aspects include:*

- *Well-Defined Milestones and Deliverables: The operational plan clearly outlines project results, ensuring structured progress and accountability;*
- *Justified and Cost-Efficient Funding: The total funding requested is well-justified and demonstrates cost-efficiency in relation to the expected outcomes.*

Preference will be awarded to:

- proposals involving more than one Uzbek and Italian public or private universities, research and innovation institutions and private companies;
- coherence and synergy within already existing initiatives;

- Priority shall be given to projects intended to result in the creation of new knowledge or invention of novel technologies that may be used for the development of new products and processes capable of being commercially exploited;
- initiatives with potential industrial impact.

## 5. FUNDING PROCEDURES

### 5.1. Funding decision and grant administration

The Funding Organizations will select at least ten (10) projects for funding based on the results of the joint evaluation process, considering the budgets made available by each Funding Organization. The joint Call Management Committee will ensure the fair and equitable nature of the evaluation and selection process.

#### **Italian Party (MUR):**

Funding for selected projects will be provided in two instalments, a pre-payment after the signature of the Grant Agreement, equal to 80% of the total funding, and the balance at the end of the project after verification of the final financial report.

The contribution granted by MUR is intended as co-funding support for the project, equal to 70% of the eligible costs. Therefore, co-funding by the coordinating Italian Institution of 30% of the total costs of the project is mandatory. Any other financial contribution from public or private, Italian or Uzbek Institutions, will be positively evaluated.

The maximum cost of the project activities of the Italian partner(s) is 100.000,00 euros, including co-funding by the applying institution.

#### **Uzbek Party:**

The same rules apply to the Uzbek Party.

### 5.2. Reporting

The applicant entity will submit an annual report on the progress of their project to the Funding Organisation. The reports are due each January 31st, as indicated in the Ministerial Decree establishing the projects selected for funding. The first annual report is not required if the Project's lifespan is less than 6 months as of January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### 5.3. Contact Information

Specific questions about eligibility and additional information on the present call, applicants can refer to the Contact Points listed in the table below.

In Italy	In Uzbekistan
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Office III - Directorate General of Internationalization and Communication (MUR)	Department for the Development of Science and Innovative Activities, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan
michele.mazzola@mur.gov.it alessandro.boero@mur.gov.it	nabijonholov@gmail.com

## 6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 6.1. Data Management and open access

Proposals must have a reasonable and credible Data Management Plan<sup>1</sup> for open data access.

Applicants will be requested to describe their Data Management Plan in their proposal. The plan should include information about types of data, information, models, software, workflows and code, or other digital products being generated by the project. It should outline the accessible archives or other open repository where these products and accompanying metadata will be housed.

The funded projects are expected to make their best efforts to ensure open access to data as soon as possible.

### 6.2. Intellectual Property Policy

In the event that Intellectual Property has been jointly created by Italian and Uzbek beneficiary(ies), the joint owners shall enter into an Intellectual Property Management Agreement, which shall govern how the jointly owned results will be protected, managed, and exploited.

### 6.3. Data Protection

Data are expected to be securely shared between Italy and Uzbekistan to enable the secure and efficient processing of full proposals for the Italy and Uzbekistan funding opportunity. Data shared may include anonymized reviews and panel summaries. Italy and Uzbekistan are committed to maintaining data confidentiality, protection, and privacy and intend to fully abide by their own applicable laws and policies concerning the sharing of data in collaborative activities.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/open-access-data-management/data-management\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/open-access-data-management/data-management_en.htm)

#### 6.4. **San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**

Funding Organizations of this Call are dedicated to applying the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

DORA is a global initiative that aims to improve the assessment of research and researchers, with the primary goal of discouraging the use of exclusionary metrics that are used for journals and publishers. In embracing DORA, the Parties furthermore acknowledge that there is not one ideal type of researcher, and that talent can mean a broad range of approaches in the context of scientific or scholarly research. In this Call the Parties therefore enable assessment focused on quality and context.

The evaluators will be asked to focus on the strength of the proposed research's scientific content and the strength of its related research outputs, rather than on any publication metrics or any research journals in which past research has been published or where research is expected to be published. Journal-based metrics, such as the Journal Impact Factor, will not be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals.