

**ITALY – SOUTH KOREA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION
CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF JOINT RESEARCH PROPOSALS FOR THE YEARS 2026-2028**

CLOSING DATE: August 4, 2025
Italy: at 17:00 hr - South Korea: at 18:00 hr (KST)

BACKGROUND

*Within the framework of the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Italy and the Government of the Republic of Korea, signed in Rome on February 16, 2007 and entered into force on September 18, 2019, 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 International Cooperation Bureau of the Korean Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) are opening **a call for proposals for the 14th Executive Programme (EP) of Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the years 2026 - 2028.***

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 FUNDING SCHEMES

The present call is for proposal following the ***“Joint Research Projects”*** funding scheme, which supports joint research activities co-funded by both Parties.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Project proposals:

- must be submitted to both Parties. Proposals submitted in only one Country will not be considered for evaluation;
- must be written in English;
- the project summary and title must be identical in the applications to both Parties;
- must refer to activities to be completed within the period of validity of the Executive Programme (E.P.), i.e. the project duration must be 3 years ;
- The call is open to public or private (no-profit) research institutions and universities;
- Each Principal Investigator (P.I.) and participating researcher must submit only one proposal, under penalty of exclusion for multiple submissions.

Italian Party:

- The PI must have a EU nationality, legal residence in Italy, and must be an affiliated staff member of a public or private (no-profit) Italian research institution with a permanent position or a temporary staff-like position;

Korean Party:

- The call is open to recognised researchers affiliated with Korean universities and research institutions eligible under Article 2, Paragraph 3 of “National R&D Innovation Act”.

1.3 REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

- Lack of any one of the eligibility requirements listed above;
- Incomplete application (including additional documents where applicable - see Section 3 - “Submission Procedure”);
- Proposals submitted in different priority research areas by the collaborating PIs in the two countries;
- Proposals submitted in only one of the two countries;
- Proposals written in languages other than English.

2. PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

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

1. Environmental sciences and energy transition
2. Physics and Quantum Science
3. Advanced Materials and Nanotechnologies
4. S&T applied to cultural heritage
5. Artificial Intelligence in Medicine and Biotechnology

Proposals submitted in other research areas will not be considered for evaluation. Depending on the scientific quality of submitted proposals, one or more of the above listed research areas may not be funded.

Research proposals involving technologies designed either for military, or for both civil and military applications (so called “dual use” technologies), will not be accepted under the present call due to their inherent risks and ethical implications.

3. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Joint proposals must be submitted to both Parties. The proposals must be written English and have the same duration of the E.P. (3 years: 2026-2028)

Italian Party:

- Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, by filling in the dedicated forms at: <https://pgr.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) within the project description 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 adhesion to the above cited rules in the Methods section of the proposal.
- Must be accompanied by an endorsement letter signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution or by his/her 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 digitally signed and uploaded using the dedicated tab of the submission form.
- Any changes in the composition of the two research teams, including the PIs, during the period of validity of the E.P., must be notified in advance by the Italian PI to MAECI via certified e-mail to dgsp09.pec@cert.esteri.it. Without this fulfilment, no further project activity will be funded.

Korean Party:

- Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, by filling the dedicated forms at: <https://www.iris.go.kr/>.
- Korean applicants are required to submit both the Korean and English proposals, as well as all other mandatory documents related to the application. For details on the required documents, please refer to the Korean announcement.
- Prior to deadline, proposals must be submitted by PI and authorized by the host organization.

4. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

After the call closure, all submitted proposals will undergo a formal eligibility check before moving to the two-step evaluation process. The first step will be performed at the national level to identify a shortlist of proposals. The second step of the evaluation process will be performed at the bilateral level: the two Parties will reach consensus on the final list of projects eligible for funding during the meeting of the Joint Commission, which includes representatives from both countries.

Project 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
- Exploitation and dissemination of the results

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:

- The average funding from MAECI is approximately 30 K€/year/project.
- The contribution granted by MAECI to “Joint Research Projects” is intended as co-funding support for the project, therefore co-funding by the coordinating Italian Institution matching that of MAECI (thus approximately 50% of the total costs of the project) is mandatory. Co-funding can include salaries of the involved personnel and overhead costs.
- 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 Country Promotion 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.

Korean Party:

- The maximum yearly funding for each project is 30,000,000 KRW including overhead costs.

6. PUBLICATION OF THE OUTCOME

The list of selected projects will be included in the text of the Executive Programme, to be posted on the websites of both Parties as indicated below.

Italian Party

The official text of the Executive Protocol will be published on the MAECI website:

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 informed by e-mail of the outcomes of the selection process.

Korean Party

The selection results will be announced on the following website: <https://www.nrf.re.kr/> rated R&D Information System (IRIS).

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information on the present call or inquiries on the submission procedure, applicants can refer to the following contacts:

In Italy

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International
Cooperation (MAECI)

Directorate General for Cultural and Economic
Promotion and Innovation - Office IX

e-mail: dgsp-09bandi2@esteri.it

In South Korea

Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT)

International Cooperation Bureau

e-mail: seonghui@nrf.re.kr