



**ITALY – SINGAPORE
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION
CALL FOR JOINT RESEARCH PROPOSALS FOR THE YEARS 2023-2025**

CLOSING DATE: November 30, 2022
In Italy: at 12:00 hr C.E.T. – In Singapore: at 19:00 SGT

BACKGROUND

*Within the framework of the Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Italy and the Government of Singapore, signed in Rome, Italy on 23rd May 2016 and entered into force on 26th June 2020, the Directorate General for Country Promotion - Office IX - of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) under the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) are opening **a call for proposals for the First Executive Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the years 2023 - 2025.***

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 FUNDING SCHEMES

With regard to the present call, one funding scheme is available:

- **“Joint Research Projects”**: the expenses for research activities are co-funded by both Parties. This funding scheme is aimed at supporting joint research activities. Inclusion of early career scientists in the research team will be positively evaluated.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Project proposals:

- must be written in English;
- must have the same duration of the Executive Programme (E.P.): 3 years, 2023-2025.

Each Principal Investigator (P.I.):

- must submit only one proposal

Italian Party:

- the call is open to public or private (no-profit) research institutions
- the 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 duration of the proposed project.

Singapore Party:

- Eligibility criteria for Singapore-based PI are as below:
 - PI must be an independent researcher from public sector research performers, namely the Institutes of Higher Learning (universities and polytechnics), A*STAR Research Institutes, as well as other non-defence-related public sector agencies (e.g., Ministries, Statutory Boards).
 - PI must hold a primary appointment of at least 75% in a local publicly funded institution and salaried by the institution

1.3 REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

- Lack of any one of the eligibility requirements listed above
- incomplete application (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 submitted in only one of the two countries.
- applications written in languages other than English

2. PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

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

- Foodtech
- Artificial Intelligence
- Health/Medical (Cancer, Immunology and Skin Research)
- Photonics
- Quantum Technology
- Robotics
- Hydrogen-related Research

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

Not all of the above listed research areas may be funded, depending on the scientific quality of submitted proposals.

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: 2023-2025)

Italian Party:

- Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, by filling in the dedicated forms at: <http://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. Please note that formal authorisation by the competent Ministry of Health is mandatory to start the activities (D.Lgs 26_04/03/2014 and Directive 2010/63 EU). Proof of submission to the institutional OPBA (Organismo Preposto al Benessere degli Animali) is acceptable at the proposal submission stage. 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.**
- Italian applications must be accompanied by an endorsement letter, written in Italian and signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution or by her/his officially authorised delegate, providing official acceptance of all conditions listed in the call text, including institutional co-funding. A template is provided within the call documents. The signed letter must be uploaded in the indicated section of the submission portal (<http://web.esteri.it/pgr/>).

Singapore Party:

- Grant call announcement will be posted on the A*STAR Website at the following link: <https://www.a-star.edu.sg/Research/funding-opportunities>.
- Interested applicants can download the 'Grant Call Proposal Template' and 'Template for Budget, Milestones, Work Contributions and KPIs' from the website.
- All applications must be submitted to A*STAR (as the Implementing Agency) electronically via the Integrated Grants Management System (iGrants) at the following link: <https://igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg/>
- Applications must be endorsed by the applicants' Host Institution(s), prior to submission.

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

4.1 Evaluation process

After the call closure, all submitted proposals will undergo formal eligibility checks before moving to the two-step evaluation process. The first step is performed at the national level to identify a shortlist of proposals to be considered for funding. The second step of the evaluation process is 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. The selected projects will be included in the text of the Executive Programme, to be posted on the websites of both Parties indicated below.

Project proposals will be rated according to the following criteria:

- Scientific relevance of the proposed research
- Methodology and documentation
- Qualifications 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

Preference will be awarded to:

- Proposals involving more than one national public/private research organisation
- Initiatives carrying potential industrial impact and/or involving industrial partners (a letter stating the Expression of Interest of the company can be included in this latter case)

4.2 Publication

Italian Party The list of selected projects will be included in the official text of the Executive Programme signed by both Parties, and will be published on the MAECI website:

https://www.esteri.it/it/diplomazia-culturale-e-diplomazia-scientifica/cooperscientificatecnologica/programmiesecutivi/accordi_programmi_culturali_tecnologici/

PIs of the selected projects will be directly informed by e-mail of the positive outcome of their submission.

Singapore Party The list of selected projects will be published on the A*STAR Website at the following link:

<https://www.a-star.edu.sg/Research/funding-opportunities>.

Additionally, PIs of the selected projects will be directly informed by e-mail of the positive outcome of their submission.

Both parties commit not to release information on the selected/excluded projects (including the outcomes of the formal eligibility check) until the process has ended with the signature of the Executive Programme.

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

overhead costs. Any additional financial contribution from public or private, Italian or Singaporean Institutions, will be positively evaluated.

- Funding for projects selected and listed in the E.P. 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.

Singapore Party:

Eligible projects from Singapore-based applicants can be supported, each with a budget of S\$150,000 per year (inclusive of 30% overhead cost), for a total project duration of 36 months.

Funding provided within this call is intended to enhance the capacity of Singapore-based applicants to collaborate with their Italian counterparts. Support include local research costs as well as expenses for travel and/or conducting seminars/symposia.

A list of non-fundable direct cost items is provided below:

Type of Expenses	Description
Salaries of Lead PI / Investigators / Visiting Professors & researchers/ Collaborators/ general administrative supportstaff	Not allowable.
Teaching buy outs	Not allowable for the hiring of substitutes to perform the Investigators' teaching duties.
Stipend top-up for existing post-graduate scholarship holders	Not allowable.
Undergraduate stipend and tuition support	Not allowable.
Costs related to general administration and management.	Not allowable.
Costs of office or laboratoryspace	Not allowable.
Personal productivity tools & communication expenses	Not allowable unless the use of mobile phones andother form of smart devices were included in the methodology for the Research.
Audit fees (Internal and external audit) and Legal fees	Not allowable.
Entertainment	No allowable.
Refreshment	Not allowable.
Fines and Penalties	Not allowable.
Patent Application	Not allowable. This includes patent application filing,maintenance and other related cost.
Professional Membership Fees	Not allowable.
Staff retreat and team-building activities.	Not allowable.

6. REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Annual Progress report to A*STAR

Each awarded project will be evaluated and assessed for progress to ensure that the proposed milestones and deliverables can be achieved. Successful applicants will be required to submit an annual progress report to A*STAR via the iGrants platform.

Final report to A*STAR

Singapore-based applicants are required to submit a final report on the results of the joint research within three (3) months following the end of the project term.

Additionally, the Institutions are required to submit a Final Claims / Final Statement of Account within six (6) months from the end of the project term.

Annual Progress report to MAECI

A progress report is requested at the end of each year of project activities. Funding for the following year will be granted after positive evaluation of the report.

Final report to MAECI

A final report together with the financial documents must be submitted by Italian PIs within three months following the end of the project term.

7. **Grant Call Timeline**

Event	Date
Launch of Call for Proposals	7 Oct 2022
Closing of Call for Proposals	30 Nov 2022
Review by each Party	1 Dec – 10 Mar 2023
Joint Review Meeting	20 Mar 2023
Funding Commencement	20 April 2023

8. 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 Singapore

Office of Grants Administration, Enterprise Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)
Tel: (65) 6419 6541
E-mail: oga_bilats@hq.a-star.edu.sg