

**Agreement on scientific cooperation between CNR in Italy and Ministry of Higher
Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) in Tunisia
Call for proposal of joint research Projects - activity time: 2025-2026**

In the framework of the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between the National Research Council of Italy (CNR) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Tunisia (MHESR) signed in Rome on June 11, 2019, and its Cooperative Program signed in Rome on August 29, 2019, the Parties aims to promote the cooperation between Tunisian and Italian researchers and between research centers from the two countries through preparation and implementation of joint research and development projects on common priority themes for two years 2025 and 2026.

Both Contracting Parties to the Agreement will fund the projects selected within this Call. The financing due to each of the winning projects' leaders, will be provided by the home Institution, in compliance with current national laws, regulations and procedures.

1. AREAS OF COOPERATION

As established by the Agreement/Cooperative Program, proposals for joint scientific cooperation should fit with the following subject areas:

- Cultural Heritage
- Water
- Agrifood
- Energy
- Smart cities and Artificial Intelligence
- Air pollution

2. PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Entitled to submit applications, in the role of Italian Project Manager (hereinafter referred to as "Responsible") are:

- a) CNR Institutes directors, research managers, CNR researchers and technologists (I-III level);
- b) Personnel holding an official decree of association with CNR, with an expiry date falling no later than 12/31/2025.

Should the Responsible of a financed Project be not a permanent CNR researcher, an extension of his/her association with CNR covering the entire duration of the Project, will be requested. In absence of this requirement, a new Manager will have to be appointed, under penalty of the Project's interruption.

On the Tunisian side, the call is open to Tunisian public research entities: institutes or centers and universities laboratory/units of research.

Principal Investigator (PI) must have a Tunisian nationality and a permanent position in the public research entity (research laboratory/research unit).

3. APPLICATIONS SUBMISSION

On the Italian side, the applications submission by the Responsible, must be carried out exclusively using the online procedure "Bilateral Agreements", <https://attivitainternazionali.cnr.it>

For CNR personnel, access is allowed entering the credentials used for SIPER. In the event the Responsible is a researcher associated to CNR, in order to obtain the credentials, it is necessary to proceed to a registration by the web officer of the CNR Institute in which the Responsible is temporarily associated, via <https://utenti.cnr.it> following the procedure path for "New User".

The application, written in Italian or English, must contain all the requested information, relevant to the assessment, such as methodology of the project and its innovativeness, the details of the program and the possible contribution of Italian Research Group. The application, furthermore, must contain the following documents:

- in case of a researcher associated to CNR, the association decree;
- the Italian Responsible résumé, and that of the Tunisian Manager, preferably in English, obligatorily duly signed;
- the Italian Responsible will have to declare, using the appropriate flag in the online application procedure, that he has read the information regarding the processing of personal data; the information regarding the processing of personal data must be, instead, duly signed by the Tunisian Manager for acknowledgment. These data will be processed by CNR pursuant to art. 6 letter c) e) of EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679;
- in case of renewal of an ongoing project, the final report filled in using the specific form available in the procedure, describing in detail the results obtained.

It is recommended not to insert graphics, images, tables and special characters that alter text formatting.

3.1 Limitations to the submission of applications

- a) It is not possible for the members of the Expert Committee responsible for the scientific assessment of the projects to submit a participation request;

- b) It is not possible for the same Responsible to submit more than one project proposal within a single Call for proposals;
- c) On the Italian side, the same Responsible cannot propose more than two projects in the framework of Calls open during 2024.

3.2 Application Closing

a. On the Italian Side

The application must be "closed" by the Responsible on June 04, 2024 by 12.00 (noon).

Following the administrative checking performed by this Office, the application must be "validated" by the Director of the CNR Institute where the Responsible is affiliated.

b. On the Tunisian Side

The deadline for submitting applications is June 04, 2024

- The Tunisian responsible must :
 1. Fill in the project submission form, accessible on the following link:
<https://forms.gle/iRfd3KTwiKyC3vpC6>
 2. Send the application file in PDF format, respecting **the submission form** attached to the call, to the following address: tunisia.italy.program@gmail.com accompanied by an endorsement letter, signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution (the head of the establishment and the supervisory authority (University President, IRESA President, Director General of the Research Center, etc.) and the director of the research structure). No paper version to submit to the MHESR (DGRS)

3.3 Reasons for applications ruling out

The application will be left out of the selection if:

- the project proposal is not submitted to both Parties, according to the procedures and in respect of the set deadlines;
- it has been forwarded to CNR in a way not complying with what prescribed by this Call;
- the files attached to the application (curricula, data processing authorization, possible association decrees and final reports) are not compliant or altered;
- the Italian responsible résumé and that of the Tunisian responsible are not duly signed;
- the Italian Responsible does not declare, using the appropriate flag in the online application procedure, that he has read the information regarding the processing of personal data;
- the information regarding the processing of personal data is not duly signed by the Tunisian responsible;
- the association decree does not comply with the requirements.

4. SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION

The Parties will proceed, independently, to the received applications' scientific assessment, which, for CNR, will be performed by an Expert Committee, whose appointment is published on CNR institutional website, <https://www.cnr.it/it/progetti-comuni-ricerca>.

For the Tunisian part, it will be performed by an Expert Committee designed by the MHESR.

The Committee will select the projects worth of financing by following the below-mentioned criteria:

1. Project Quality (maximum 5 points):

Scientific relevance (concept, innovative character with respect to the state of the art, quality of the goals); methodology, activities work plan; impact of project results, dissemination, use.

2. Quality of the Research Group (maximum 5 points):

Qualifications and expertise; complementarity in terms of content, methodology and equipment; justification for a collaboration necessity

3. Appropriateness and justification of the work plan (maximum 5 points).

4. Added value and a predictably wider impact, thanks to bilateral cooperation (maximum 5 points).

The applications scientific assessment's outcome will be notified to the Italian and Tunisian Responsible.

5. SELECTION AND PROJECTS FINANCING

The Parties will select the joint research projects to fund, taking into account the Italian and Tunisian scientific assessments, financial availability and the provisions of the Agreement/Cooperative Program (the list of funded projects will be made public on the official website of CNR).

The Agreement between CNR and MHESR provides for the financing of a maximum of 5 (five) projects, with a maximum annual contribution, per part, of Euro 6,000 for each project.

MHESR will regulate relations with Tunisian partners according to national forms and procedures,

Funding:

The release of the funds awarded to the selected Projects will be performed, on the Italian side, via a direct money-transfer from this Office to the CNR Institute where the Responsible is employed, and on the Tunisian side, from MHESR to the institution of the Tunisian responsible. The responsible will manage the assigned funds, reporting annually on the activities carried out and the expenses incurred. Terms and rules related to the above-mentioned financing, to its management and to the reports, will be specified in an official letter containing detailed information on said terms.

It must be taken into account that the research stays carried out exclusively in Tunisia or in Italy lasting no less than 3 (three) days.

6. CONTACT

Tunisian Contact Person

Hayet SOUAI

Director of Programs and Scientific Partnership
Directorate General of Scientific Research
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Tel.: +216 71 835 351

E-mail: souaihayet@gmail.com ; Hayet.Souai@mes.rnu.tn

Jihane MEKKI

Head of Service
Directorate General of Scientific Research
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Tel.: +216 71 835 351

E-mail: tunisia.italy.program@gmail.com

Italian Contact Person

Milena Riolo

Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
Unità Relazioni Europee e Internazionali

Tel. 06 4993 3987

Email: milena.riolo@cnr.it