

The Italy - Israel Cooperation in Agricultural Research Program 2011 (Italy-Israel program)

Call for Proposals

This Call for Proposals is issued by a framework program of cooperation established between the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forestry Policy of the Republic of Italy (MIPAAF) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the State of Israel (MOARD).

The purpose is to provide a framework to foster collaborative, mission-oriented research between agricultural scientists from Italy and Israel, based on scientists carrying out joint agricultural research in predetermined areas of high priority to both countries and to provide agricultural researchers and institutions with opportunities to exchange scientific information and to facilitate exchange of scientists.

The Italy-Israel program in 2011 will fund agricultural relevant research proposals with a focus on leading edge science in the following areas:

A) Genomic technologies applied to horticulture and fruit sectors

B) Sustainable agriculture and natural resources management (water, soil)

Guidelines for the preparation and submission of proposals

Eligibility

Eligible to apply for proposals are:

- from Italy, scientists affiliated with the national council of agricultural research (CRA). Italian scientists affiliated with other public or private non-profit research institutions (see Ministerial decree n. 6387 of 22/03/2010) can apply for funding but only under the coordination of CRA.
- from Israel, scientists affiliated with public or private non-profit research institutions (see MOARD Chief Scientist Call for Proposals 2011/12).

Proposals must be submitted by at least one scientist from a research center / unit of CRA and one scientist employed by an official research center / unit/ institute / university from Israel.

Contacts:

All documents should be sent to **both country contact focal point offices.**

Italy:

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Participants, project leader and coordinator are defined as follows:

Participants: all scientists involved in the project and responsible to carry out the identified tasks listed on the cover page

IT project leader: is that participant whose name appears first on the cover page of the proposal among the scientists from Italy. The IT project leader is responsible for the submission of scientific reports, financial reports, notification of changes in the work plan and maintaining contacts with both the Italian and Israeli participants and the Research Office of MIPAAF. That person must come from a research center / unit of the national council of agricultural research (CRA).

IL project leader: is that participant whose name appears first on the cover page of the proposal among the scientists from Israel. The IL project leader is responsible for the submission of scientific reports, notification of changes in the work plan and maintaining contacts with both the Italian and Israeli participants and the Chief Scientist Office of MOARD. That person must be a scientist / certified researcher employed by an official research center / unit/ institute / university from Israel.

The coordinator of the bilateral project: is one of the two project leader (either from Italy or from Israel) who **will be responsible** to communicate with both the Italian and the Israeli contact focal point offices on behalf of the joint team regarding the submission of joint scientific reports and any team or institutional changes. The project leader of the other country will be termed co-coordinator.

The IT project leader, being or not coordinator, will be responsible to produce financial and scientific reports on behalf of all Italian participants to the national focal point office, according to the IT rules.

The IL project leader, being or not coordinator, will be responsible to produce financial and scientific reports on behalf of all Israeli participants to the national focal point office, according to the IL rules.

Submission Deadline: June 27, 2011

Submission Process

- ⇒ One complete proposal, including the Abstract, has to be sent by the coordinator as a PDF file, to both Italian and Israeli country contact focal point. The Cover Page indicates: **"Submitted to the Italy-Israel Program 2011"**. By sending a proposal, the applicants agree that the information will be shared within both the IT and IL offices.
- ⇒ **The Cover Page and Budget tables** (see: "grant management guidelines") are to be incorporated into the proposal file. All sums will be in €, and will clearly indicate the contribution requested to MIPAAF and to MOARD.
- ⇒ In addition **the Abstract File** (rtf, doc, docx) has to be sent as a separate file.

- ⇒ **Disclosure of Additional/Pending Funding Resources** – both project leaders will complete this form and the coordinator will send it to both Italian and Israeli country contact focal point offices.
- ⇒ **Authorization (formerly Signature pages)** will be performed by the research authorities of the IT and IL project leaders. This program will accept a proposal for consideration ONLY following its authorization by the institution's authorizing officer.
- ⇒ **Two hardcopies, identical to the electronic version**, are to be hand delivered to or by courier, post marked no later than the submission date, to both Italian and Israeli country contact focal point offices.

The Proposal

Clearly indicate at the top of each section: "**Submitted to the Italy-Israel program 2011**"

Proposals that do not meet the following requirements **will not be considered**.

- 1. Layout Format:** English, line spacing of 1.0 line, Arial or David font 11-12, margins that allow photocopying (~ 2.5 cm all around). Number all pages. Staple the proposal, once only, in the upper left corner. Do not bind.
- 2. Technical Requirements** Include the following items and headings. (If the logic of your proposal so suggests, change the exact heading or order of the items):
 - ⇒ **Cover Page**
 - ⇒ **Table of Contents** – include page numbers and section headings.
 - ⇒ **Abstract** - Do not exceed one page. The abstract should clearly state the definition of the research problem, the objectives, the expected contribution to agriculture / environment and the proposed methodology.
 - ⇒ **List of Abbreviations** used in the proposal.
 - ⇒ **Detailed Description of the Research Plan - Limited to 15 pages (sections I to VI), including** figures, photos and any additional material. Adhere to general format requirements. Include the following items, numbered logically to suit the best presentation of your proposal.
 - I. Statement of the research problem and its general background.
 - II. Concise outline of specific, feasible research objectives.
 - III. Hypotheses and their rationale.
 - IV. Preliminary supporting results, if any.
 - V. Research plan.
 1. Strategies, procedures and methodologies used in addressing the questions asked.
 2. Specific experiments to be conducted and a discussion of their potential pitfalls and possible alternatives.
 3. Joint activities, exchange of knowledge, multi/interdisciplinary approaches
 - VI. Description of the expected results, the significance of their anticipated contributions to the agriculture/environment of Italy and Israel and the added value of the bilateral cooperation
 - ⇒ **Duration and Timetable of the Work Plan:** the project duration must not exceed 3 years. A timetable (milestones) of the work plan describing the division of the research tasks between

the Israeli and Italian participants for each year of the project must be provided together with a list of expected deliverables. A graphic or tabular presentation is recommended.

- ⇒ **Details of Cooperation** – The proposal, jointly prepared, should clearly indicate the anticipated cooperative endeavors between the partners, including the work to be done in each country and the responsibility of each collaborator. Explain how the cooperating scientists contribute their expertise to the joint effort and whether joint publications are planned.

The quality of cooperation is scored by reviewers and panels in their evaluation of the proposal. Types of cooperation are defined below. The highest value is given to synergistic cooperation.

Synergistic: Each scientist contributes a specific expertise, facility, or equipment that the other partner cannot contribute and without which the final realization of hypothesis testing could not be achieved.

Complementary: Each scientist performs essentially the same research using different (biological) systems or methods, thus, widening the scope and strengthening the validity of the results.

Supportive: Collaborators with essentially the same expertise divide the research tasks between the laboratories.

- ⇒ **Facilities** – briefly detail the facilities to be dedicated to the project.
- ⇒ **Relevant Bibliography** - include all authors, full title, date, journal name, volume and page numbers. When referencing citations in the text of the proposal, use author(s) names, not the number in the list.
- ⇒ **Curriculum Vitae:** Do not exceed one page for each investigator. Provide a *brief* professional biography. Include academic background, research experience, recent, relevant publications, inventions or patents, other achievements.
- ⇒ **Addenda to the proposal are not allowed.**
- ⇒ **In-press articles in reviewed journals:** pdf copies must be made available during the evaluation process, if asked for.
- ⇒ **Tables, figures, etc.** are counted in the 'Detailed Description of the Research Plan' (in the 15 page limit).

3. Budget (all sums in Euros)

Budget Summary Table: The total available budget for the 2011 program will not exceed 1.000.000 € (500.000 € per country). We recommend that the applicants carefully set their budget requests, taking into account that the funding bodies expect to award at least one project from each of the two research areas. Overhead expenses may not exceed 10% and 15% of the total direct costs for Italian and Israeli applicants, respectively.

Description of the Budget - The proposed budget requirements are different at MIPAAF and MOARD; the requested budget details must comply with the specific requirements of the respective granting agency.

The Italian grant recipient institutions must follow the requirements stated in the Ministerial Decree n.6387 of 22/03/2010, and the Israeli grant recipient institutions must follow the requirements stated in the updated regulatory procedures of the Chief Scientist of MOARD.

Regulatory Agency Requirements

Proposals and grants must adhere to policies and regulations as established by the regulatory agencies of the State, or Country in which the research is to be conducted. Exchange of genetically modified organism (GMO) and exotic plant materials between countries must require

special authorisation. The signature of the Authorised Officer of the Research Authority indicates to the administration office that these concerns have been met.

Intellectual Properties Rights (IPR)

IPR, if resulted from the current Italy-Israel program, are the property of the institutions of the participants. The relevant institutions are strongly recommended and encouraged to reach a consortium agreement regarding the distribution of the IPR, whenever a potential IPR is expected to be derived from the granted project.

Evaluation of research proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by disciplinary evaluation panels. Evaluations will take place simultaneously and independently by parallel panels in Italy and Israel. Panel members are scientists competent in the relevant area of research. If necessary, panel members will forward the application for outside (ad-hoc) reviewers for evaluation. Ad-hoc evaluations will be solicited by the program's administrations. Both the Italian and Israeli corresponding panels will receive all such reviewers' comments.

Both panels and ad-hoc reviewers rank the proposals. The panel prepares a written evaluation for each proposal (Strengths, Weaknesses) and a recommendation. Panel members score all proposals according to a common set of criteria and weighting grid for each criterion.

The following criteria will be scored:

- The scientific and technological merit of the proposal.
- The feasibility of the objectives.
- The quality of the cooperation and the suitability of the participants' teams and their facilities.
- The anticipated benefits to agriculture and or the environment and the uniqueness brought by the joint Italy-Israel collaboration.

A Program Management Committee, comprised of representatives from both funding bodies (MIPAAF and MOARD), will receive all relevant material needed to reach its funding recommendations. This Italy-Israel Program Management Committee will make the final funding decisions.

Notification of Awards

A joint notification will be sent to the project Coordinator and co-coordinator, who will be responsible to inform the other participants and their affiliated research authorities, in writing. Favourable decisions indicate the amount and duration of the grant and any conditions of support. The program's grants to Israeli institutions will be in NIS currency.