



Ministry of Innovation,
Science & Technology



Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères
Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur,
de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

France-Israel Scientific Research Program
CALL FOR JOINT PROJECT PROPOSALS
For 2024
Deadline for Submissions: Monday March 11 , 2024

INDEX

A.	MAIN AREAS OF COOPERATION
B.	MODE OF COOPERATION
C.	LEVEL OF FUNDING AND DURATION OF PROJECTS
D.	ELIGIBILITY
E.	SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS
F.	FUNDED EXPENSES
G.	RENEWAL OF FUNDING
H.	INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING JOINT PROPOSALS
I.	PROPOSALS REVIEW
J.	CONTRACTS, PAYMENTS AND REPORTS
K.	MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
L.	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



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Israeli French High Council for Scientific & Technological Cooperation

Call for Proposals 2024

Research Program "Maïmonide-Israel"

In the fields:

- 1. Food safety and nutrition**
- 2. Natural resource and ecosystem management**
- 3. Health**
- 4. Engineering and digital**

Within the framework of the Israeli French agreement on scientific cooperation, the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology (MOST) of the State of Israel, as well as the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and (MESR) of France (hereinafter referred together as the "parties") have decided to provide financial support for Research Network Projects carried out jointly by researchers from both countries.

The Research Program "Maimonide-Israel" is led by the French-Israel High Council for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (HCST). Created in 2003, the HCST defines the axes of French Israeli scientific cooperation.

The aim of this program is to support the development of scientific and technological cooperation between French and Israeli researchers and to strengthen the scientific partnership between research groups from both countries, by establishing bilateral research networks, enhancing research cooperation and promoting the exchange of knowledge between French and Israeli scientists.

The joint research shall focus on one of the main areas of cooperation and its subtopics as detailed in Section A and concentrate on applied research which could lead to technological applicability and the development of new products (Technology Readiness Level [TRL] 2-4).

Qualifying scientific applicants in this framework may receive research grants from MEAE and MESR and MOST, respectively, according to the applicable national funding procedures, regulations, and the requirements as detailed in this Call.

A. MAIN AREAS OF COOPERATION

French and Israeli research teams are hereby invited to submit joint proposals for applied research projects in any of the following fields:

- **Food safety and nutrition:** development of innovative technologies in food production, focusing on:
 - * Alternative proteins from the sea, plant and cell culture.
 - * Development of technologies for food processing and conservation to ensure healthy and balanced nutrition for all.
- **Natural resource and ecosystem management:** techniques for utilization of the sea for economic development such as: water desalination, energy production, isolation of chemicals, sea conservation and clean-up and sea agriculture (fish, sea food, seaweed, algae).
- **Health:** Innovative cell therapies, bioactive proteins and nucleic acid based bioactive agents.
- **Engineering and digital:** development of new materials for electronic applications.

B. MODE OF COOPERATION

Cooperation will take the form of planning and performing joint research as well as conducting mutual visits between laboratories for the purpose of facilitating the research. Each joint research team may submit only one project within this program.

Cooperation may also take the form of:

- a) Joint research activities in which interdependent subprojects of a single project are conducted in France and Israeli laboratories.
- b) Complementary methodological approaches to a common problem.
- c) Joint use of research facilities, materials, equipment and/or services by cooperating scientists.
- d) Mutual visits between laboratories for the purpose of facilitating the research.

C. LEVEL OF FUNDING AND DURATON OF PROJECTS

It is the intention of the Parties to fund research proposals selected hereunder for a term of **two years** and contracts will be signed accordingly. However, funding shall be approved annually, with the funding for each consecutive year to be approved in accordance with the provisions of the research contracts and protocols in each country.

The Parties intend to support up to **eight** joint projects. The final number of projects to be funded will be determined based on such factors as merits of the proposals upon scientific evaluation, and budgetary considerations.

The allocation for each approved research projects will be up to 80,000 Euro for the French side and 80,000 Euro (320,000 NIS) for Israeli side for the **two-years project period**. The total maximum project funding for all research projects approved under this Call is 640,000 Euro for the French side and 640,000 Euro (2,560,000 NIS based on the conversion rate of 4 NIS/ 1 Euro) for the Israeli side, over a two-year period.

In accordance, research projects should be planned on a **two-years basis** beginning approximately in December 2024. Contracts will be signed accordingly in each country.

Funding for the approved projects depends on the availability of funds and the approval of the State budget in each country.

D. ELIGIBILITY

Proposals must meet the following preconditions. Proposals that do not meet the preconditions will be automatically rejected and will not be passed on to the scientific committee for review and evaluation.

1. Projects must be conducted by collaborating French and Israeli scientific research teams.
2. Proposals must be for research projects in one of the main areas of cooperation and its subtopics as detailed in Section A, as well as meet the required Technology Readiness Level (TRL2-4).
3. Each joint research team must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) from each country.
4. The PI on each side must be affiliated with an academic institution or a research institute (Affiliated Institution") or be a professor emeritus who continues working on research in affiliation with the Affiliated Institution. An Affiliated Institution is determined in each country as follows:

In Israel:

- a. An accredited institution of higher education in Israel, according to the Council for Higher Education Act, 1958. or
- b. A Research Institute, which is a nonprofit organization, a government company or a governmental unit.

For the purposes of this Call a "research institute" means an institute whose main activity is the advancement of cutting-edge scientific knowledge, which possesses appropriate infrastructure and equipment, and which employs researchers who, inter alia, publish articles related to their research in leading scientific journals and who present their research at international symposia.

Special eligibility provisions for Israeli Researchers:

1. In compliance with the MOST's Procedures Regarding Scientific Projects Funded by MOST ("[MOST Regulations](#)") an Israeli PI that has or will have an active grant from any MOST's international cooperation programs whose funding will be concurrent to the funding of this program, is not eligible to apply. No parallel funding is allowed in the international cooperation program. A researcher who is not eligible to submit a proposal as PI due to an active grant may submit one additional proposal in the international cooperation program as Associated-PI, if he does not have an active grant in the international cooperation program in which he acts as Associated-PI.
2. A researcher who has submitted a proposal for any MOST international cooperation call for proposals in the calendar year of 2024, may not submit another proposal for any other MOST international cooperation call for proposals in 2024 year.
3. Researchers should be advised that after a proposal has been submitted, the status of the members of the research team as Principal Investigator-PI and/ or Associated-PI may not be changed for the purpose of compliance with the eligibility requirements listed above, It will be clarified that, the aforementioned limitations regarding changing the status of the members of the research team include the addition of a PI and/ or Associated-PI who, at the time of submission, was defined as an external consultant or were not listed in the proposal and/or research group.

Special eligibility provisions for Israeli Researchers:

E. SUBMISSION OF RESEARCHER PROPOSALS

Joint project proposals must be prepared and carried out jointly by the Israeli and the France project partners and should be submitted simultaneously by both the French and Israeli PIs, to MEAE/MESR in France and to MOST in Israel. Each joint proposal should be written in English and must be identical for both PIs.

Joint deadline for applications: Monday March 11, 2024, by 15:00. (local time).

Proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances after the specified date and hour.

Further submission instructions for Israeli research teams:

- a) The Israeli PI shall submit the proposal through the Science Forefront system, at <https://kf.most.gov.il>.

In order to apply for the first time, the applicant needs to fill an "account request" at the Science Forefront system. The request should be approved by the Research Authority of the Affiliated Institution. Once approved, the applicant will be notified by email that the account is active. The approval process may take time and therefore should be done well in advance of the application deadline.

- b) **Deadline for researchers' submission:** The PI must submit the proposal in English via the Science Forefront system by **Monday March 4, 2024 at 15:00 local time (Israel).** **The online system will be closed for submissions after the said date and hour and no researchers' submissions will be accepted after that time. Israeli researchers who have not submitted their proposals by Monday March 4, 2024, at 15:00 local time (Israel) will not be allowed to submit their proposal.**
- c) A proposal that has been submitted can be edited by the PI, in coordination with the Affiliated Institution, until the final joint submission deadline.
- d) The Affiliated Institution must submit the proposal not later than by the final deadline on, **Monday March 11, 2024, at 15:00 local time (Israel time).** Proposals that are not submitted by the Affiliated Institution through the Science Forefront system by this time, **will not be accepted.**
- e) Please be advised that as technical problems are possible, and the submission process may take a significant amount of time, therefore **it is strongly recommended to fulfil the above steps well in advance of the applications deadlines.**

Further submission instructions for French country research teams;

For both countries:

A valid project application consists of the appropriated application form **duly filled in and signed**, together with all the necessary application documents required from each side of a joint research team as detailed above, submitted respectively to the MEAE/MESR in France and to MOST in Israel. **If the applications are not duly received both in France and in Israel by the date and hour indicated above and in accordance with the submission instructions, the proposal will be rejected in both countries.**

F. FUNDED EXPENSES

Funding provided by this Call may be assigned to costs related to support of the collaboration vectors, such as costs incurred by the approved research projects (manpower, disposables, analytical services, publication costs, etc.) and costs related to the bilateral nature of the project (travel expenses of the researchers, scientific meetings, etc.).

In any case, each budget item or expenditure for which reimbursement is requested must conform to the respective national rules of each applicant.

Participating researchers are encouraged to plan visits to their counterparts' institutions and labs, given that such visits are an integral part of the research collaboration. International travel costs and in-country living expenses of visiting scientists, including accommodation, per diem and any other relevant expenses for each visiting scientist, should be included in their project's budget. In this regard, when preparing the budget for each team, please note that each side funds their own travel expenses and should be budgeted accordingly. Funding provided under this Call may only be used for visits taking place in France or Israel; visits to third countries are not eligible for financing by project funds.

Further funding provisions for the Israeli side:

Please see full funding provisions on MOST Procedures Regarding Scientific Projects Funded by MOST ("[MOST Regulations](#)"). All activities and funding pursuant to this Call must be in accordance with MOST Regulations unless otherwise specified.

Further funding provisions for the French side:

For the French side, project funds utilization is divided between the MESR and the MEAE, as follows:

- MESR finances materials and salaries up to a maximum of € 20,000 / year.

- MEAE finances travel (French researchers' travel to Israel) and hosting expenses (Israeli researchers' hosting in France and French researchers' hosting in Israel); a small part of this budget can also be used for some logistical expenses.

G. RENEWAL OF FUNDING

Renewal of project funding for a subsequent year is subject to the submission, of the relevant documents and reports, separately by the French and Israeli PIs. French and Israeli PIs must submit these documents to French Ministries and to MOST, respectively, two months before the end of the previous year's contract, according to each country's regulations.

H. INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING THE JOINT PROPOSALS

Each joint proposal should be written in English and must be identical in both countries. The proposal should be submitted using a unified form, available at each side's websites.

Font - Times New Roman 11, space between lines – 1.5.

1. Full proposal should be up to 10 pages, including figures (not including bibliography) and should include the following sections:

- Abstract (max 1500 characters including spaces)
- Scientific background and state of the art: Scientific background, including an overview of the field of research around the world, noting the relative advantage of the proposed research;
- Research objectives and specific aims: The purpose of the research.
- Detailed description of the proposed research: Working hypothesis, research program and methods, and preliminary results;
- Significance, importance, innovation, and potential benefits of the proposed research;
- Applicability: Expected uses and future technological development;
- Cooperation vectors between the research groups: Proposed modes of cooperation, their benefits and how they contribute to the research;
- Work plan and Gantt: The work plan will be summarized in a schedule diagram. A verbal description of the work steps must be included. Each stage will be defined by a start time and an end time.

2. **Bibliography:** A complete bibliographic list should be attached to the proposed research. The five most relevant items for the proposed research should be marked with an asterisk.
3. **CV:** A short CV for each researcher involved in the research of up to 2 pages each, including: personal statement (brief description of why the investigator is well-suited for the role on the proposed project); list of ongoing and completed research projects from the last three years that the investigator wishes to highlight; citation of up to five publications or research products that highlight the investigator's experience and qualifications for the proposed project; positions, scientific appointments, and honors.
4. **Letter of intent** from the research PIs in both countries affirming their intent to collaborate on the proposed research.
5. **Additional authorizations needed depending on the type of research** (e.g. Helsinki Committee, animal experiments) shall be submitted along with the proposal. In case the required authorization is still not available at the time of submission, a statement in free text should be attached including the researcher's commitment that if their proposal is approved, the required authorization will be submitted as soon as possible.
6. **In Israel only** (Additional data for the Science Forefront system):
 - a. Short abstract (up to 1500 characters in Hebrew and English).
 - b. Applicability up to 1000 characters in Hebrew.
 - c. Importance of the research up to 500 characters in Hebrew/English
 - d. **Budget request** - enter the requested budget in NIS.

The budget of the researcher from abroad must be entered in a general way in the section designated for this purpose.
 - e. Please specify 5 researchers from outside Israel with expertise in the field of the proposal, who could serve as potential external reviewers (with no conflict of interest: Joint research, from the same department or supervisor/student relationship).
7. Do not add additional documents beyond what is specified above and in the attached guidelines for submission to the Science Forefront system.

I. PROPOSAL REVIEW:

1. Each country will establish a Scientific Committee that will be composed of 3-7 expert scientists from the academia, depending on the number of applications.
2. In general, and depending on the number of applications, the evaluation will be performed in two steps. In the first step, all proposals will be screened by the Committee members so that each proposal is evaluated by at least two Committee members (one from each country). The proposals will be rated as A, B and C, where proposals with A : pass to full review process, B : to be discussed, and C : declined. The final list of proposals that are recommended for full review (category A and possibly B) will be reviewed by the Committee in a joint meeting. In general, the number of proposals that will pass to full review will be 3 times the number of approved proposals for funding.
3. In the second step, the selected proposals will be submitted for external review so that each proposal will have at least two external evaluations that will be added to the two evaluations of the Committee members. Each country will perform an evaluation of the proposals and the results will be compared. The best proposals recommended for funding will be chosen jointly by the two countries.
4. In case where only a small number of proposals is submitted, the evaluation will start with the second step.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Scientific level (20%): scientific and technological excellence, the scientific basis of research;
2. Innovation (20%): the degree of innovation and originality of the proposed research in comparison to the state of the art;
3. Methodology (20%): the extent to which the proposed method of conducting the research is qualitative, feasible and consistent with the proposed objectives;
4. Applicability potential (30%): the research contribution to the development of new applied scientific and technological advancement in the field;
5. Capability of the researcher and level of bi-national cooperation (10%): based on the experience, previous achievements and skills of the researchers and level of collaboration and compatible skills of partners

J. CONTRACTS, PAYMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Contracts

Upon approval of a particular project proposal, separate contracts will be signed in France and Israel, between French MESR/MEAE and the Affiliated Institution of the France PI and between MOST and the Affiliated Institution of the Israeli PI.

2. Payments

On the Israeli side, payments will be made by MOST to the PI's institution, in keeping with the provisions of the contracts referred to above.

On the French side, research funds will be managed by:

- The Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) of France through Campus France (in accordance with the rules of financial managements established by funders).
- The Ministry of Higher Education, Research (MESR) of France.

3. Final Reports

Within three months of the conclusion of the project, Israeli PIs must submit a final report in English to MOST at Reports@most.gov.il or through the Science Forefront system. It should include a final scientific and financial report covering the work and cooperation carried out during the entire **two-year project period**, in accordance with the contract's requirements.

French country's PIs must submit a final report via French country's provisions for reports submission:

https://www.campusfrance.org/sites/default/files/medias/documents/2017-11/rapport_final_phc.doc

and also send it to the Scientific Officer at the French Embassy in Israel:
nathalie.gilbert@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Each PI and each Affiliated Institution is accountable to MOST or French Ministries respectively, for the execution of the project.

K MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

For both sides:

It is strongly recommended that the French and Israeli research teams and their Institutions enter into an agreement regarding Intellectual Property rights from the output of the financed project prior to the commencement of the collaborative activities.

For Israeli Applicants:

All procedures and activities under this Call or the projects approved hereinafter, including the eligibility of Affiliated Institutions via which applications must be filed, and the eligibility of PI's are subject to MOST Regulations and to MOST Standard Contract for Scientific Projects ("[Standard Terms](#)").

Applicants are required to familiarize themselves with the Standard Terms before filing an application under this Call. Filing an application constitutes a declaration that the applicant has done so and agrees to be bound by the Standard Terms' provisions thereof.

Please note any updates made to the standard terms made before the final submission date will apply to proposals submitted to this Call.

L. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

IN FRANCE

Additional **scientific information** may be obtained from:

Pr. Christophe Delacourt,

Administrative Manager for Expertise and Cooperation Program Management,

Research and Innovation, DAEI, MESR

christophe.delacourt@recherche.gouv.fr

Additional administrative information may be obtained from the following:

Nathalie Gilbert

Scientific Officer

French Embassy in Israel, Tel-Aviv, ISRAEL

Tel: +972 (0)3 796 80 39

nathalie.gilbert@diplomatie.gouv.fr

IN ISRAEL:

Administrative information - Israeli researchers should consult administrative matters directly with the Research Authority at their Affiliated Institution. The Institution will contact the Ministry in case of necessity.

Scientific information on:

Food safety and nutrition:

Dr. Iris Eisenberg

Scientific Director of Life Science

Tel: + 972-2-5411835

• **Natural resource and ecosystem management:**

Dr. Moshe Ben Sasson

Scientific Director of Water, Agriculture and Environment

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• **Health:**

Dr. Sharon Yagur-Kroll

Scientific Director of Medical Science

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• **Engineering and digital:**

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