



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
Ministry of Science and  
Education

**Ministry of Science  
And Education (MZO)  
Republic of Croatia**



**Ministry of Innovation,  
Science & Technology**

**Ministry of Innovation, Science  
And Technology (MOST)  
State of Israel**

**Croatia - Israel Scientific Research Program  
CALL FOR JOINT PROJECT PROPOSALS  
For the Years 2023-2025**

**Deadline for Submissions: September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

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**Croatia - Israel Scientific Research Program  
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Within the framework of the Croatia-Israel agreement on scientific cooperation, the Ministry of Science and Education of Croatia (MZO), and the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology of the State of Israel (MOST) have decided to provide financial support and are glad to invite researchers and scientists to submit joint proposals for research projects carried out jointly by researchers from both countries.

The aim of this program is to support the development of scientific and technological cooperation between Croatian 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 Croatian and Israeli scientists.

The joint research shall focus on the main area 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 MZO and MOST, respectively, according to the applicable national funding procedures, regulations, and the requirements as detailed in this Call.

**A. AREA OF COOPERATION**

Croatian-Israeli research teams are hereby invited to submit joint proposals for applied research projects in the following area:

**Renewable Energy:**

subtopics:

- (1) Hydrogen-based energy;
- (2) Photovoltaic energy;
- (3) Energy storage;
- (4) Wind energy.

**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 Croatian 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 DURATION OF PROJECTS**

It is the intention of the Parties to fund research proposals selected hereunder for a term of **three (3) 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 5 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 total maximum funding for all research projects approved under this Call is **1,900,000 ILS** for the Israeli side (equivalent to 500,000 EUR), for a three-year period. On the Croatian side, the total maximum funding for all research projects approved under this Call is **500,000 EUR**, for a three-year period.

**The maximum funding for each single project will be up to 380,000 ILS for the Israeli side (equivalent to 100,000 EUR), for a three-year period. On the Croatian side, the maximum funding for each single project will be up to 100,000 EUR, for a three-year period.**

In accordance, research projects should be planned on a three-year basis beginning approximately in the last semester 2023/first semester of 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 not meeting 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 Croatian and Israeli scientific research teams.
2. Proposals must be for research projects in the main area 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, according to the Council for Higher Education Law, 5718-1958; 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" in Israel is a research institute whose main activity is the advancement of cutting-edge scientific knowledge, which possesses appropriate infrastructure and equipment, which employs researchers who, inter alia, publish articles related to their research in leading scientific journals, and who present their research at international symposia.

**In Croatia:**

- a) A higher education institution, scientific institutes or other legal entities that have employees with a PhD degree and are registered to perform scientific activities.

**Special eligibility provisions for Israeli Researchers:**

1. In compliance with MOST's Procedures Regarding Scientific Projects Funded by MOST ("[MOST Regulations](#)"), an Israeli PI that has or will have an active grant from any of 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 program in which he acts as Associated-PI.
2. A researcher who has submitted a proposal for any MOST international cooperation call for funding in 2023, calendar year **may not submit another proposal for any other MOST international cooperation call for funding in 2023.**
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.

**Special eligibility provisions for Croatian teams:**

1. Within this call, it is possible to participate in only one project, either as a PI or as Associated-PI.

**E. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

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

**Joint deadline for applications: September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 15:00 (Local time in each country). Proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances after the said 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 submission:** The PI must submit the proposal in English via the Science Forefront system by **September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 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 pre-submitted their proposals by September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 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, **September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 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.
- f) **Therefore, it is strongly recommended to fulfil the above steps well in advance of the applications deadlines.**

**Further submission instructions for Croatian research teams:**

- a) The Croatian PI shall submit the proposal by email to [silvana.siebert@mzo.hr](mailto:silvana.siebert@mzo.hr), and a printed copy by **September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023** to the following address:  
Ministry of Science and Education  
Independent Sector for Coordination of European Affairs and International Cooperation  
Donje Svetice 38  
10 000 Zagreb  
Croatia

**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 MZO in Croatia and to MOST in Israel. **If the applications are not duly received both in Croatia 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 is intended to enhance joint collaboration between Croatian and Israeli researchers. Therefore, funding may be assigned to costs related to support of the collaboration vectors, such as costs related to the bilateral nature of the project (travel expenses of the researchers, scientific meetings, etc.) as well as to defray costs incurred by the approved research projects (disposables, publication costs, 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 budget accordingly. Funding provided under this Call may only be used for visits taking place in Croatia 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.

## **G. RENEWAL OF FUNDING**

Renewal of project funding for a subsequent year is subject to the submission of the relevant documents, separately by the Croatian and Israeli PIs. Croatian and Israeli PIs must submit these documents to MZO 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 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; line spacing: 1.5.

1. **Full proposal** should be up to 10 pages, including figures (not including bibliography) and should include the following sections:
  - a) Abstract (max 1500 characters including spaces)
  - b) 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 ;
  - c) Research objectives and specific aims: The purpose of the research;
  - d) Detailed description of the proposed research: Working hypothesis, research program and methods, and preliminary results;

- e) Significance, importance, innovation, and potential benefits of the proposed research;
  - f) Applicability: Expected uses and future technological development;
  - g) Cooperation vectors between the research groups: Proposed modes of cooperation, their benefits and how they contribute to the research;
  - h) 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 or English
    - d) **Budget request** - enter the requested budget in INS.  
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 Israel with expertise in the field of the proposal, who could serve as potential external reviewers.
    - f) **Do not add additional documents beyond what is specified above and in the attached guidelines for submission to the Science Forefront system.**

## **I. PROPOSALS REVIEW**

The parties will establish a Joint Croatian-Israeli Scientific Committee, composed of 3-7 expert scientists from the academia and industry from each country ("The Committee"). The Committee will review the proposals, and in appropriate cases may pre-select



proposals to be sent to external reviewers for evaluation. The Committee will evaluate the proposals and formulate recommendations as to which proposals will be funded.

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 Croatia and Israel, between MZO and the Affiliated Institution of the Croatian PI and between MOST and the Affiliated Institution of the Israeli PI.

### **2. Payments:**

Payments will be made by MZO and MOST to the Affiliated Institution of each Principal Investigator, respectively, in keeping with the provisions of the contracts referred to above, according to the regulations and practices in force in each country.

### **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](mailto: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 three-year project period, in accordance with the contract's requirements.

Within three months of the conclusion of the project, Croatian PIs must submit a final report in English to MZO. It should include a final scientific and financial report covering the work and cooperation carried out during the entire three-year project period, in accordance with the contract's requirements.

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

## **K. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

### **For both sides:**

It is strongly recommended that the Croatian 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 and Associated-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**

Additional information can be obtained as follows:

**ISRAEL:**

**On administrative matters:**

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.

**On scientific matters:**

**Dr. Iris Eisenberg**

Director for Life Sciences Research, MOST

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**On administrative / scientific matters:**

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