



The present text is a translation from RESOLUCIÓN DE LA PRESIDENCIA DE LA AGENCIA ESTATAL CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS (CSIC) POR LA QUE SE CONVOCA EL PROGRAMA CSIC CONEXIÓN INTERNACIONAL i-LINK PARA LA PROMOCIÓN DE LA COLABORACIÓN CIENTÍFICA INTERNACIONAL DEL CSIC CON INSTITUCIONES EXTRANJERAS. CONVOCATORIA i-LINK 2024. The Spanish text prevails over the English version.

CALL OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE STATE AGENCY SPANISH NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (CSIC) BY WHICH THE CSIC OPENS THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME i-LINK 2024 FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE CSIC'S INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION WITH FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS. i-LINK CALL 2024

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I. PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The general objective of the i-LINK Programme is to stimulate the collaboration between CSIC research groups and international research groups of the highest relevance by means of its own resources. No geographical or thematic restrictions are contemplated in the call, but there must be a common and complementary research theme between the partners for the development of which they have adequate funding independently in their respective centers. All these within the scope of the Sustainable Development Goals. The central objective of this programme is to **create and consolidate international consortia of excellence** in order to compete in future calls for international R&I projects.

The activities promoted by this program are the realization of work and specialization stays of the CSIC research groups, as well as the research groups of the participating entities in both directions. It also includes meetings, seminars and other internationalization activities between the participating research groups within the framework of a common research project. The expected impact of the Programme is to improve the internationalization of the CSIC through the consolidation of stable links of scientific cooperation between CSIC teams and foreign scientific institutions of excellence.

2. TERMS OF THE CALL

This call provides funding for a maximum of **20 grants** for a maximum amount of **EUR 30,000.00** each one, up to two years (EUR 15,000.00 per year), from the concession of the grant to the end of the financial year 2026. In this regard, the total funding of the current call will be increased to a maximum total of EUR 600,000.00.

2.1. Eligible actions

2.1.1. The eligible actions will be all those aimed at creating and consolidating stable links of international collaboration with research groups belonging to foreign scientific institutions and international companies.

2.1.2. The call is open to any thematic area developed in the CSIC.

2.1.3. Only collaborations that have not previously benefited from an i-LINK 2023 action with the same consortium will be considered eligible.

2.1.4. Applications that include relevant entities from the following countries will be positively evaluated: **Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States.** In the interest of promoting the European Research Area in the so-called EU13, the participation of relevant entities from any of the following countries will also be positively valued: **Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.**

2.1.5. Proposals that include entities from countries receiving Official Development Assistance (ODA) will not be considered eligible as they are eligible to receive funds through the i-COOP call.

2.2. Participants

2.2.1. All proposals must have at least **one CSIC research group** (CSIC participating team), whose principal investigator will act as coordinator of the network, and **one or more groups from one or more foreign institutions** (foreign participating team(s) from non-ODA-recipient countries). **Each foreign participating team shall be led by a foreign principal investigator.**

2.2.2. Both research (predoctoral, postdoctoral, and teaching staff) and technical staff may participate in the teams.

2.2.3. Foreign institutions may be a non-profit public or private entity, i.e. a university, research or technological center, museum, foundation, and Public Administration. Throughout the duration of the grants, each member of the foreign institutions will remain under the exclusive direction and dependence of their home institution.

2.2.4. Spanish universities, research centers, and Public Administrations may participate in the action as long as they commit, with their own funds and infrastructure, to the financing of the activities in which they take part in within the framework of the project.

2.2.5. Both Spanish and foreign companies may participate, provided that they contribute their own funds to finance the implementation of the activities in which they participate within the framework of the project. **Companies will not be considered as members of the consortium**, but their participation will be considered in the second phase of the evaluation.

2.2.6. Research groups participating in the network must have their own funding, their own facilities and adequate equipment to carry out scientific research related to the actions proposed in their respective centers.

2.3. CSIC participating team requirements

2.3.1. The CSIC principal investigator must be part of the CSIC research staff¹ whose statutory or employment status complies with the instructions set out in the **Personnel Management Manual**², regarding the staff providing its services in the institutes, centers, and entities (hereinafter ICU), of the State Agency CSIC.

¹ 12/2011 Law, 1st of June, Science, Technology, and Innovation. The research personnel from Public Research Organizations of the General Administration of the State includes the research staff and those belonging to technical scales.

² Link to the Human Resources Management Guide: <https://intranet.csic.es/legislacion/-/contenido/98764566-6496-4c34-9cba-9a203d9880a4>.

2.3.2. Members of the CSIC participating team may only be part of an i-LINK 2024 proposal, regardless of whether they participate as principal investigator or as a team member.

2.3.3. The CSIC principal investigator and the rest of the team members must be part of the staff or have a contract compatible with participation in internationalization networks³. Staff from Joint Research Centers and Associated Units may participate as principal investigator or as a team member.

2.3.4. The CSIC principal investigator and other CSIC team members shall **maintain their employment relationship with the CSIC** throughout the duration of the action. In the opposite case, continuity of the action should be guaranteed through a substitution approved by the VRI. CSIC team members may participate as long as they maintain their employment relationship with the CSIC until they have completed the actions in which they are involved in the project.

2.3.5. The Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI) will be responsible for **authorizing any addition or removal of the team members** upon the reasoned request of the principal investigator addressed to i-link@csic.es

2.4. Eligible expenses

2.4.1. Transport, subsistence and accommodation costs for the CSIC team trips between Spain and the participating countries, and exceptionally to Brussels when justified.

These grants will be governed by the terms and conditions set out in this call, and as to the amounts by the **Royal Decree 462/2002**, of May 24, on compensation for the service, and will be processed through the application 233.00.201 according to the twenty-second provision of the *Resolution of February 16, 2018, or subsequent updates, by the President of the Spanish National Research Council MP, approving the Operating Budgets of the Institutes, Centres and Units, the granting of project loans, the management of the Operational Treasury (DTO) and Payroll System to be justified, and certain criteria for economic management and administrative contracting.*

Exceptionally, and on a limited basis, in the case that members of different ICUs participate in the CSIC team, trips will be permitted between the participating ICUs, in the event that these meetings take place in one of these ICUs.

With regard to the transport costs, these must be managed by the ICU, considering the travel contract applicable to the CSIC. The amount of the transport aid will include the amount of the expenses

³ Members of the group of CSIC research should be registered in the Management of Entities and People (GEP) application or in the similar registers of the National Centers.

corresponding to the management of visas and/or vaccines not covered by the Spanish National Health System, if mandatory for entry into the country of destination.

Expenses derived from mandatory **medical insurance or travel assistance** for CSIC staff travelling to countries without reciprocity agreement shall be managed by the ICU. Costs of accident insurance and of civil liability insurance, if mandatory for the stay, shall be eligible too and its management corresponds to the ICU.

2.4.2. Subsistence and accommodation expenses for the **members of the foreign team** to carry out activities related to the internationalization network in an ICU of the CSIC. These funds for accommodation and subsistence are processed through the application 233.00.201 in accordance with the aforementioned *Resolution* and their amount is established in the **Resolution of 26 March 2014 of the Presidency of the CSIC by which the amount is established according to its duration for VRI calls**, the breakdown of which is as follows:

	Daily allowance in Euros (€)
During the first 15 days	100,00
From day 16 to day 30	70,00
From the day 31 until the end of the stay	50,00
EXAMPLE: 15 days	1.500,00
EXAMPLE: 30 days	2.550,00
EXAMPLE: 45 days	3.300,00
EXAMPLE: 90 days	5.500,00
EXAMPLE: 180 days	10.050,00

The first and last day of stay shall be understood to be the day of departure and return from and to the municipality in which the participant has his/her official residence, considering what is established for this concept in the RD 462/2002. If the counterpart cannot afford the transport costs of the foreign principal investigator, these costs may be charged to the project.

2.4.3. Costs related to the organization of meetings, workshops, seminars and other internationalization activities that take place in Spain or in the country of the foreign participant team may be charged as expenses. Exceptionally, and with the prior authorization of the Vice-presidency of International Affairs, costs associated with the organization of meetings in other locations than those mentioned above may also be charged to the project. Only the **expenses destined to the rental of**

rooms and audio-visual means will be financed, and they shall be processed through the applications 226.06.201/226.15.201, depending on whether they take place in Spain or abroad.

2.4.4. Companies must participate in the project with their own funds and may under no circumstances receive funding from any of the sections included in point 2.4 of this call.

2.4.5. All expenses must be adequately detailed in the work plan and be consistent with the proposed activities. Those expenses included in the proposal that do not correspond to the section 2.4 of this call will not be eligible for financing.

2.5. Duration and execution of the action

2.5.1. Grants are expected to last 24 months, divided into two annuities of 12 months each. Proposals shall consider this same duration, although the continuation of the grant in the second year must be approved by the VRI in accordance with the provisions of section 2.5.3 of these terms.

2.5.2. For the execution of the expenses included in the grant, the processing deadlines established in the corresponding CSIC instructions for the closing of the financial year will be respected. In this sense, **eligible expenses originated in the framework of the project must be charged before the closing of the financial year; otherwise, they shall be charged in the following annuity, if any, to the detriment of the amount allocated for that new annuity.**

2.5.3. The VRI will authorize the full financial endowment for the first year, after the publication of the Resolution during the last quarter of 2024, to the ICUs of the CSIC for its execution and control of the expenditure by their Managements. **The allocation for the second annuity is subject to the approval of the intermediate reports.** The unjustified lack of execution of the planned activities, or the incorrect use of the endowed funds, may result in the cancellation of the grant and the reimbursement of the credit.

2.5.4. All expenditure must be carried out in accordance with the proposed work plan and the corresponding budget for a maximum annual allocation of EUR 30,000.00 per grant (EUR 15,000.00 per annuity), and will be in accordance with the terms of the call. Any deviation shall be previously approved by the VRI.

2.5.5. No transfers from one annuity to another will be authorized, except in cases of justified illness or mobility restrictions affecting the participating countries. In any case, such exceptional transfers must be requested in writing to the VRI and must be expressly authorized.

3. PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

3.1. The proposal and the required documents will be submitted in a single application by the CSIC principal investigator of the project, through the telematic application for calls on the CSIC Intranet: <http://siw.csic.es/icv/> Menu option: Convocatorias activas → PROGRAMA CSIC CONEXIÓN INTERNACIONAL PROMOCIÓN COLABORACIÓN INTERNACIONAL.

3.2. Applications will be written in English, or in Spanish if all participating foreign teams are from Spanish-speaking countries, and using Times New Roman or Arial font, minimum size of 11.

3.3. Applications that do not follow these norms will be immediately excluded and will not be considered for evaluation either in the 1st phase or in the 2nd phase. Furthermore, application pages that exceed the established maximum page limit will not be considered in the evaluation.

3.4. Only the following standard call documents shall be used:

3.4.1. Internationalization network report, including, as indicated in the templates, and with a maximum size of 5MB:

A) Internationalization activities (up to 3 pages, not counting chronogram or graphics):

- Summary of the proposal (objectives, scope of the study, international relevance, sources of funding for the project, etc.).
- List of keywords (both in Spanish and English).
- Thematic evaluation panel (see Annex I of the call)
- Composition of the consortium:
 - Background and current state of the collaboration
 - Description of the participating teams and their experience
 - Alignment and relevance of the request with the SDGs
 - Complementarity of the partners from a scientific point of view
- Implementation: work plan that includes the proposed internationalization actions as well as a schedule for their execution.
- Expected impact on a scientific, social, and economic level, in a differentiated way: for the research group, for the ICU, and for the CSIC, as well as for the research groups and foreign institutions and their countries of origin.

B) Detailed budget related to the proposed **chronogram** of activities (maximum 3 pages).

C) CV of the CSIC principal investigator highlighting the main achievements from 2020 to the present (maximum 2 pages).

D) CV of each foreign principal investigator highlighting major achievements from 2020 to present (maximum 2 pages).

E) Letters of acceptance/commitment from the foreign institutions and/or companies on which the participating teams depend. This letter must include the authorization to the foreign manager for participation in the project, committing to carry out the activities foreseen in the presented scientific-technical report and its corresponding financing. The format of presentation of the document will be by means of an official letter from the institution dated and signed by the Institutional or Scientific Head/Manager. In the event that these ones coincide with some of the IPs or team members, please indicate this fact in the suitable section of the application.

3.5. The application will require the telematic validation by the corresponding ICU Director for its later submission by the applicant.

3.6. The deadline for submission of applications will be from **June 5 to July 5, 2024**. The reception of applications will end at 24 h on the closing day of the call. Incomplete applications or applications that do not meet the requirements established in this resolution on the closing date will be automatically rejected.

3.7. Once the period for submitting applications has ended, a list of those applications admitted for evaluation and excluded of it will be published on the CSIC intranet. **There will be no time period to rectify errors.**

3.8. The personal data included in the application will be subject to the protection established by the *Organic Law 3/2018, and the Regulations (UE) 2016/679 of the European Parliament*. On the basis of Articles 6 and 7 of that Regulation, by sending the application, the corresponding processing of the personal data sent shall be deemed authorized.

4. EVALUATION

4.1. The evaluation of proposals will be carried out in **two phases**. The final score of each proposal will be the sum of the score obtained in each of the phases, will be based on the following scale:

- Score obtained in the first phase: 30% of the total score.
- Score obtained in the second phase: 70% of the total score.

4.2. In the **first phase**, a technical evaluation committee, designated by the VRI, will evaluate the adequacy of the applications to the CSIC's internationalization strategy and the budget planning proposals, assigning a maximum of 10 points. In particular, the following criteria will be considered:

Consortium composition (up to 7 points)

- Number of participating entities (up to 4 points):

- 2 foreign institutions from the same country: 1 point
 - 2 foreign institutions from different countries: 2 points
 - 3 or more foreign institutions from the same country: 2 points
 - 3 or more foreign institutions from different countries: 3 points
- Countries prioritized in this call and their value in the network duly justified (up to 3 points)
- 1 country: 1 point
 - 2 countries: 2 points
 - 3 countries or more: 3 points

Budget (up to 3 points)

- Coherence of the budget with the chronogram and eligibility of the included costs.

4.3. In case of a tie in the first phase of evaluation, applications with the highest scores in the 'composition of consortium' section will be prioritized.

4.4. In **the second phase**, the proposals will be evaluated by the Valencian Agency of Evaluation and Foresight (AVAP) by expert/collaborator personnel. Only the **45 highest scoring proposals** in the first phase of the selection process will be evaluated.

The evaluation criteria will be the following:

- **Scientific quality** (up to 3.5 points):
 - Definition and content of the objectives and of the added value of the project (quality and originality, or level of novelty) (up to 1.5 points)
 - Relevance of the proposed activities and their relation with the SDGs⁴, that should be identified in an explicit manner and justified (up to 2 points).
- **Implementation** (up to 3.5 points)
 - Feasibility of activities in accordance with the work plan that includes the objectives and the proposed actions, and the coherence with the chronogram (up to 1 point).
 - Adequacy and complementarity of the CSIC teams with the teams of foreign countries for the execution of the action (up to 2.5 points).

⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>.

- **Expected impact of the project in relation to the objectives of the call** (up to 3 points)
 - Sustainability of the collaboration in the future (in the case of the creation of consortia), or of the trajectory of said collaboration (in the case of consolidation of previously existing consortia), taking into account: articles published and/or under review, training of young researchers (postgraduate and/or doctors), joint projects, organized conferences, etc. Creation and consolidation of international consortia of excellence to compete in future calls for international R&I (Research and Innovation) projects with explicit indication of programs and calls (up to 2 points).
 - Participation in a multidisciplinary consortium in which the participating groups carry out their research in different global areas of the CSIC⁵ (up to 0.5 points).
 - The alignment with the 14 major 2030 scientific challenges of the CSIC will be assessed (up to 0.5 points)

4.5. In case of a tie in the second phase of evaluation, those applications with the highest scores in the 'Implementation' section will be prioritized.

5. INFORMATION ON THE CALL RESULTS

5.1. The result of the selection process will be informed by means of a Resolution of the Presidency of the CSIC, that will be published in the CSIC Official Bulletin (BO-CSIC) and the CSIC Intranet, along the second semester of 2024, and will be communicated by e-mail to the proposal applicants.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION

6.1. The beneficiaries of this program will have to justify the activities and expenses in two reports (intermediate and final) whose standardized template will be sent from the VRI.

The **intermediate report** will be sent before 15th December 2025, and the **final report** before 31st January 2026.

Each justification report shall include the following documents:

- **Scientific-technical report:** performed activities, results obtained, and degree of fulfilment of the proposed objectives.

⁵ Global Areas of CSIC: Life, Matter, and Society

- **Financial report:** implemented expenditure, taking into account the terms of the call and the approved chronogram. An extract of the supporting account authorized for the action must be included with the movements of the project during the executed year.

The reports will be sent in electronic format to the e-mail address i-link@csic.es

6.2. Principal investigators of the participating teams might be required to present these results in a public act before a committee of experts.

6.3. Any reference to the project in any dissemination media covered by these grants must include the phrase FINANCED BY CSIC I-LINK 2024 CALL, in addition to the logo of the call.

7. PENALTY REGIME

The lack of adequacy in the use of the grants, the non-compliance with the rules for the execution of the expense and payment, the lack of execution of the budget granted, the lack of compliance with the scientific-technical objectives of the project, and also the lack of compliance with the mandatory publicity of the grant, may be subject to sanctions by the VRI. These sanctions could include the ineligibility of the CSIC principal investigator for the request of any VRI call for a period of up to five years, as well as the reimbursement of the expenses unduly justified.

8. CONTACT DETAILS:

Inquiries about the i-COOP call can be sent to the following e-mail address : i-link@csic.es

Madrid, 31st May, 2024

CSIC President
Eloísa del Pino Matute

ANNEX I:
THEMATIC EVALUATION AREAS AND SUBAREAS OF THE VALENCIAN
AGENCY OF EVALUATION AND FORESIGHT (AVAP)

Area 1. CSO / **Social Sciences**

- COM / Communication
- CPO / Political Sciences
- FEM / Feminist, Women and Gender Studies
- GEO / Geography
- SOC / Sociology and Social Anthropology

Area 2. DER / **Law**

Area 3. ECO / **Economy**

- EMA / Economics, methods and applications
- EYF / Business and y finance

Area 4. MLP / **Mind, language, and thought**

- FIL / Philosophy
- LYL / Linguistics and languages

Area 5. FLA / **Culture: Philology, literature, and art**

- ART / Art, fine arts, museum
- LFL / Literature, philology, ancient languages and cultures and cultural studies

Area 6. PHA / **Studies of the past: history and archeology**

- ARQ / Archeology
- HIS / History

Area 7. EDU / **Education sciences**

Area 8. PSI / **Psychology**

Area 9. MTM / **Mathematic sciences**

Area 10. FIS / **Physical sciences**

- AYA / Astronomy y astrophysics
- ESP / Space research

- FPN / Particle and nuclear physics
- FAB / Applied Physics and Biophysics
- FCM / Quantum and Matter Physics

Area 11. PIN / **Industrial production, civil engineering and engineering for society**

- ICA / Civil engineering and architecture
- IBI / Biomedical engineering
- IEA / Electrical, electronic and automatic engineering
- INA / Mechanical, naval and aeronautical engineering

Area 12. TIC / **Information and communication technologies**

- INF / Computer science and information technology
- MNF / Microelectronics, nanotechnology and photonics
- TCO / Communication technologies

Area 13. EYT / **Energy and transport**

- ENE / Energy
- TRA / Transport

Area 14. CTQ / **Chemical sciences and technologies**

- IQM / Chemical engineering
- QMC / Chemistry

Area 15. MAT / **Material sciences and technologies**

- MBM / Materials for biomedicine
- MEN / Materials for energy and the environment
- MES / Structural materials
- MFU / Materials with Electrical, Magnetic, Optical or Thermal Functionality

Area 16. CTM / **Environmental sciences and technologies**

- BDV / Biodiversity
- CTA / Earth and water sciences
- CYA / Climate and atmosphere
- MAR / Marine science and technologies
- POL / Polar research
- TMA / Environmental technologies

Area 17. CAA / **Agrarian and agri-food technologies**

- ALI / Food science and technology

- AYF / Agriculture and forestry
- GYA / Livestock and aquaculture

Area 18. BIO / **Biosciences and biotechnologies**

- BIF / Integrative biology and physiology
- BMC / Molecular and cellular biology
- BTC / Biotechnology

Area 19. BME / **Biomedicine**

- CAN / Cancer
- ESN / Diseases of the nervous system
- DPT / Diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic tools
- FOS / Pathophysiology of organs and systems
- IIT / Immunity, infection and immunotherapy

ANNEX II:
CSIC 2030 Scientific Challenges

The 2030 CSIC Scientific Challenges include the following topics:

- 1- New foundations for a sustainable globalized society.
- 2- Origins, (co)evolution, diversity & synthesis of life.
- 3- Genome and epigenetics.
- 4- Challenges in biomedicine & health.
- 5- Brain, mind and behaviour.
- 6- Sustainable primary production.
- 7- Global change impacts.
- 8- Clean, safe and efficient energy.
- 9- Understanding the basic components of the universe, its structure and evolution.
- 10- Digital and complex information.
- 11- Artificial intelligence, robotics and data science.
- 12- Our future? Exploration and colonization of space.
- 13- Ocean science challenges for 2030
- 14- Dynamic Earth: probing the past, preparing for the future