

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 2023. 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 2023 FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE CSIC'S INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION WITH FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS.

“i-LINK CALL 2023”



CONTENT

1. Purpose of the call.....	page 1
2. Terms of the call.....	page 2
3. Procedures and deadline for submitting applications.....	page 7
4. Evaluation.....	page 8
5. Information on the call results.....	page 11
6. Scientific and economic justification.....	page 11
7. Penalty regime.....	page 11
8. Contact.....	page 11
Annex I.....	page 12
Annex II.....	page 13

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 centres. 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 Program 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 **€24,000 each one**, up to **2 years (12.000€/per year)**, from the concession of the grant to the end of the financial year 2025. Additionally, the total funding of the current call will be increased to a maximum total of €480,000.

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+2022 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, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, 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 responsible person will act as coordinator of the network, and **one or more groups from one or more foreign institutions** (foreign participating team(s) without geographical restriction (ODA countries are excluded). Each foreign participating team must be led by a foreign manager.

2.2.2. All participants must be occupationally linked to their institution at the time of application. Throughout the aid validity, each member of the foreign institutions will remain under the exclusive direction and dependence of their home institution.

2.2.3. Foreign institutions can be a public entity or private non-profit (for example, University, Research or Technology Center, Museum, Foundation, Public Administration...).

2.2.4. Companies may participate, both Spanish as well as foreign, provided that they contribute their own funds to finance the implementation of the activities in which they participate within the framework of the project. The companies will not be considered as a member of the consortium, but their participation will be considered in the second evaluation phase.

2.2.5. The research groups that are members of 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 person responsible for the action must be CSIC research staff¹ whose employment status shall comply with the instructions set out in the CSIC **Human Resources Management Guide**² that applies to services in the institutes, centers, and entities, and onwards 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 2023 proposal, regardless of whether they participate as a responsible or as a team member.

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

2.3.4. The CSIC responsible and the other members of the CSIC research team must **maintain their employment relationship with the CSIC** for the duration of the action. In the opposite case, continuity of the action should be guaranteed through a substitution that will be approved by the VRI. Exceptionally, the members of the team 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 action.

2.3.5. The Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI) will be responsible for **authorizing any addition or removal of the team members** of the participating teams after the reasoned request of the responsible people (CSIC and foreign) for the proposal. The authorization will be granted whenever appropriate and, in any case, **prior communication by the person in charge**, at least one month in advance regarding the participation of the incorporated members in carrying out the planned activities.

2.4. Eligible Expenses and Management

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

These grants will be governed by the regulations set out in this its 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.*

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.

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

With regard to the transportation costs these must be managed from the Institute, Center or Unit, hereinafter ICU, respecting the contract of provision of travel that is applicable to the CSIC. The amount of the expenses corresponding to the management of visas and / or vaccines not covered by the National Health System will be included within the amount of the transport aid, when they are obligatory for entry into the country of destination.

The expenses derived from **medical insurance or travel assistance** for CSIC members traveling to countries without a reciprocal agreement will be processed from application 162.05.201 by the ICU's management.

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:

	Cost in Euros (€)
During the first 15 days	100,00
From day 16 to day 30	70,00
From the 31st day 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

It will be understood as the first and the last day of stay the day of departure and return of the trip, from and to the municipality in which the participant has his/her official residence, taking into account the provisions for this concept in the RD 462/2002. Exceptionally and in the case of a reasoned request

once the action has been initiated, **the transport costs of the Foreign manager** may be included, if previously authorized by the Vice-presidency of International Relations.

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. The expenses destined to the rental of rooms and audio-visual means will be financed, and they will be processed through the applications 226.06.201 / 226.15.201, depending if 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.

2.5. Duration and execution of the action

2.5.1. The selected proposals will have a maximum duration of **24 months**. For the execution of the expenses included in the action, **the processing deadlines established in the 2024 and 2025 financial end-year instructions of the CSIC will be respected.**

2.5.2. All expenditure must be carried out in accordance with the proposed work plan and the corresponding budget for a maximum annual allocation of **€24,000 per grant (€12,000/annuity)**, and will be in accordance with the terms of the call. Budget deviations must be previously approved by VRI.

2.5.3. The VRI will authorize the full economic endowment for the first year after the publication of the Resolution during the last quarter of 2023 to the ICUs of the CSIC for their execution and control of spending from their Managements. **The amount corresponding to the second annual payment is subject to the approval of the interim report.** The unjustified lack of execution of the planned activities, or the incorrect use of the endowed funds, may lead to the cancellation of the aid and the refund of the credit.

2.5.4. Budget flow from one annuity to another will not be authorized, except in cases of justified illness or restricted mobility that affects the participating countries.

3. PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

3.1. The proposal and the required documentation will be presented in a single application by the CSIC responsible person and project coordinator, 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 respect the modeled norms will be immediately excluded, and will be ineligible for evaluation in the 1st and 2nd phases. Furthermore, application pages that exceed the established maximum page limit will not be considered in the evaluation.

For the call, the following documents will be presented:

3.6.1. Internationalization web report, including all that is 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 key words (in Spanish and English).
- 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, ICU, and 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 responsible highlighting the main achievements from 2019 to the present (*maximum 2 pages*).

D) CV of foreign manager(s) highlighting major achievements from 2019 to present (*maximum 2 pages*)

E) Letters of acceptance/commitment from the foreign institutions 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 them in this section of the application.

3.6. The application will require the telematic validation by the ICU Head/Manager for its later submission by the applicant. Exceptionally for National Centers, the signature by the Director will be required.

3.7. The deadline for submission of applications will be from **25th May 2023 to 26th June 2023**. The reception of applications will end at 23:59h 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.

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

3.9. 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, calculated based on this 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 scientific-technical evaluation committee, designated by the VRI, will evaluate the adequacy of the applications for the CSIC strategy of internationalization and the budget planning proposals, assigning a maximum of 15 points. Specifically, they will score based on the following criteria:

Consortium composition (up to 12 points)

- Number of participating entities (up to 3 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*

- Entities included in the NATURE INDEX⁴ (up to 3 points):
 - *Entities positioned up to number 50 in the global ranking: 3 points*
 - *Entities positioned up to number 100 in the global ranking: 2 points*
 - *Entities positioned up to number 300 in the global ranking: 1 point.*

- Countries prioritised in this call and their value in the network duly justified (up to 4 points)
 - *1 country: 1 point*
 - *2 countries: 2 points*
 - *3 countries: 3 points*
 - *4 countries or more: 4 points*

-Balanced composition of male and female responsible people (CSIC and foreign) in the consortium: male or female responsible people don't exceed 60% or are under 40%. (up to 2 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 have 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 State Agency of Research (AEI) by expert/collaborator personnel. Only the **45 highest scoring proposals** in the first phase of the selection process will be evaluated.

⁴ <https://www.natureindex.com/annual-tables/2020/institution/all/all>

The evaluation criteria will be the following:

- **Scientific Quality** (up to 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 2 points)
 - Relevance of the proposed activities and their relation with the SDGs⁵, that should be identified in an explicit manner and justified (up to 3 points).
- **Implementation** (up to 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 2 points).
 - Adequacy and complementarity of the CSIC teams with the teams of foreign countries for the execution of the action (up to 3 points).
- **Expected impact of the project in relation to the objectives of the call** (up to 5 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 3 points).
 - Participation in a multidisciplinary consortium in which the participating groups carry out their research in different global areas of the CSIC⁶ (up to 1 point).
 - The alignment with the 14 major 2030 scientific challenges of the CSIC will be assessed (up to 1 points)

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

⁵ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>.

⁶ Global Areas of CSIC: Life, Matter, and Society

5. INFORMATION ON THE CALL RESULTS

5.1. The result of the selection process will be made public through a Resolution by the Presidency of CSIC, that will be published in the CSIC Official Bulletin (BO-CSIC) and the CSIC Intranet, in the second trimester of the fiscal year 2023, and will be communicated by email 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 **interim report** will be sent before 15 December 2024, and the **final report** before 31 January 2026.

Each justification report shall include the following concepts:

- **Scientific-technical report:** performed activities, results obtained, and degree of fulfilment of the proposed objectives.
- **Financial report:** implemented expenditure, taking into account the bases 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 only in electronic format to the address i-link@csic.es

6.2. Any reference to the project in any media object of these grants must include the phrase FINANCED BY CSIC'S I-LINK 2023 CALL, as well as the logo of the call.

6.3. Eventually, the responsible people (CSIC and foreign) of the participating teams may be required to present these results in a public act before a committee of experts.

7. PENALTY REGIME

The lack of adequacy in the use of the aids granted, the non-compliance with the rules for the execution of the expense and payment, the lack of execution of the budget granted or the lack of compliance with the scientific-technical objectives of the project may be subject to sanctions from VRI. These sanctions could include the ineligibility of the CSIC responsible person 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:

i-link@csic.es

Madrid, 25th of May 2023
CSIC President
Eloísa del Pino Matute

ANNEX I:
THEMATIC EVALUATION AREAS OF THE STATE RESEARCH AGENCY

- Area 1. CSO / Social Sciences
- Area 2. DER / Law
- Area 3. ECO / Economy
- Area 4. MLP / Mind, language, and thought
- Area 5. FLA / Culture: Philology, literature, and art
- Area 6. PHA / Studies of the past: history and archeology
- Area 7. EDU / Education sciences
- Area 8. PSI / Psychology
- Area 9. MTM / Mathematic sciences
- Area 10. FIS / Physical sciences
- Area 11. PIN / Industrial production, civil engineering and engineering for society
- Area 12. TIC / Information and communication technologies
- Area 13. EYT / Energy and transport
- Area 14. CTQ / Chemical sciences and technologies
- Area 15. MAT / Material sciences and technologies
- Area 16. CTM / Environmental sciences and technologies
- Area 17. CAA / Agrarian and agri-food technologies
- Area 18. BIO / Biosciences and biotechnologies
- Area 19. BME / Biomedicine

ANNEX II:
CSIC 2030 Scientific Challenges

The 2030 CSIC Scientific Challenges include the following topics:

- 1- New foundations for a sustainable globalized society.
- 2- Origin and evolution of life and synthetic biology.
- 3- Genome and epigenetics.
- 4- Health challenges in biomedicine.
- 5- Aging and mind.
- 6- Responsible primary production.
- 7- Impact of global change.
- 8- Clean, safe and efficient energy.
- 9- Understanding the basic components of the universe, its structure and evolution.
- 10- Digitization.
- 11- Artificial intelligence, data science and robotics.
- 12- Our future? - Exploration and colonization of space
- 13- Ocean
- 14- Dynamic Earth