

The present text is a translation from BASES COMPLETAS REGULADORAS DEL PROGRAMA I-COOP Y SU CONVOCATORIA 2026. The Spanish text prevails over the English version.

COMPLETE REGULATORY GUIDELINES FOR THE I-COOP PROGRAM AND ITS 2026 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. PURPOSE OF THE CALL.....	1
2. TERMS OF THE CALL.....	2
3. APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND SUBMISSION DEADLINE.....	9
4. EVALUATION.....	12
5. INFORMATION ON THE CALL RESULTS.....	13
6. SCIENTIFIC AND ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION.....	14
7. CONTACT DETAILS.....	15

I. PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The purpose of the **CSIC Scientific Cooperation for Development Program, I-COOP**, is to promote, through its own funding, collaboration between CSIC research groups and international research groups from Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipient countries and from non-ODA Ibero-American countries. This is achieved through training, work, and specialization stays carried out by the research groups of the participating institutions.

This program is part of CSIC's internationalization strategy, promoted by the Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI), and aligns with the principles of the Spanish Master Plan for Sustainable Development Cooperation and Global Solidarity 2024–2027.

The call is open to any thematic area pursued by CSIC research groups. The collaborating international groups must belong to countries eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA)¹, as defined by

¹ Current applicable list: <https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/topics/policy-sub-issues/oda-eligibility-and-conditions/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2025-flows.pdf>

the list established by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and to non-ODA Ibero-American countries².

2. TERMS OF THE CALL

A maximum of 50 grants are announced, each with a maximum amount of €30,000 (up to €15,000 per year), covering the period from January 1, 2027, until the end of fiscal year 2028.

Of the total number of grants awarded, at least 10% will be reserved for actions coordinated by research staff from institutes belonging to the global area of Society. However, if no applications are submitted from this area, this quota may be allocated to other areas.

Exceptionally, if the participating foreign institution is based in Ukraine or Palestine, the maximum amount of funding may be up to €40,000 (up to €20,000 per year), provided that the funding is allocated to support stays at CSIC by the Ukrainian or Palestinian team, and that the duration of these stays entails a cost exceeding €15,000 per year (stays longer than 6 months, to be carried out within each annual period).

The total funding available under this call will amount to a maximum of €1,550,000.

2.1. Eligible actions

2.1.1. MODALITY A: The actions under this modality will consist of research stays at CSIC institutes or centers by early-career researchers who are currently pursuing postgraduate studies (master's or doctoral programs) at a foreign institution in an ODA-recipient country or in a non-ODA Ibero-American country. In order to participate in this modality, it is required that the doctoral thesis or master's final project be co-supervised by the CSIC team leader involved in the project.

2.1.2. MODALITY B: The main actions under this modality are based on scientific cooperation through stays aimed at:

- Specialized scientific and technical training
- Capacity building in the use of advanced instrumentation
- Planning of academic programs, including postgraduate and doctoral studies

² Uruguay, Chile, and Portugal.

- Scientific collaboration.

Proposals that, in the judgment of the VRI, have not been submitted under the appropriate modality may be reassigned *ex officio* to a different modality than the one originally requested.

2.2. Participants

2.2.1. All proposals must include a CSIC research group (CSIC participating team), which will act as the coordinator of the action, and one (for Modality A and B) or several research groups from one or more foreign institutions of the same country or of different ones (for Modality B) (foreign participating team(s)). Each foreign participating team must be led by a responsible person from the corresponding foreign institution.

2.2.2. The foreign institution may be a public or private non-profit entity (e.g., university, research or technology center, museum, foundation, public administration, etc.). The teams may include researchers (predoctoral, postdoctoral, or teaching staff) as well as technical personnel.

2.2.3. Spanish universities, research centers, or public administrations may participate in the action, provided that they commit, with their own funds and infrastructure, to financing the activities described in section 2.1 within the framework of the action's implementation.

2.2.4. Companies or other private for-profit entities interested in the action may participate, provided that they commit, with their own funds, to offering the beneficiary foreign team members and/or the CSIC participating team the opportunity to carry out the activities described within the framework of the action's implementation. Such companies and other private for-profit entities will not be considered consortium members, but their participation will be considered in the second phase of the evaluation.

2.2.5. Exceptionally, under Modality B, foreign research groups linked to entities located in non-ODA recipient countries outside Ibero-America may participate, provided they commit, with their own funds and infrastructure, to promoting scientific cooperation for development.

2.2.6. Consortia that have been beneficiaries of an I-COOP 2025 or a LINGLOBAL 2025 action may participate in this call, provided that the added value of the new proposal is clearly highlighted, especially if it involves the same consortium or scientific field.

2.3. Requirements for the CSIC research group

2.3.1. The CSIC research group³ will be composed of:

- In **MODALITY A**: the CSIC coordinator responsible for overseeing the predoctoral stay of the early-career researcher, who will also be the person responsible for the action and for co-supervising the doctoral thesis or master's final project in progress.
- In **MODALITY B**: the CSIC coordinator, as well as the CSIC scientific, technical, and/or trainee personnel who meet the requirements of this call.

2.3.2. The person responsible for the action may be a CSIC research staff member⁴ serving at the institutes, centers, and units (hereinafter ICU) of the State Agency CSIC, either under statutory or employment status. Staff from Joint Research Centers may participate either as the CSIC coordinator or as members of the team. Staff from Associated Units may participate only as members of the CSIC team and may not act as CSIC coordinators.

2.3.3. Members of the participating CSIC team may only be involved in one I-COOP 2026 proposal, regardless of whether they participate as coordinator or as a team member.

2.3.4. The CSIC coordinator must maintain a statutory or employment relationship with CSIC throughout the expected duration of the grant. In the event that the CSIC coordinator is unable to continue leading the project for any reason (contract termination, incompatibility, etc.), continuity of the project must be ensured through a replacement, which must be approved by the Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI).

2.3.5. The remaining members of the participating research team must maintain a statutory or employment relationship with CSIC at least until the completion of the activities in which they are involved.

2.3.6. In the case of individuals employed under subsidized programs or research projects, regardless of whether they participate as coordinator or as a team member, it must be ensured that their contracts allow participation in cooperation networks.

³ Members of the CSIC research group must be registered in the Entity and Personnel Management application (GEP).

⁴ Act 14/2011, of June 1, on Science, Technology, and Innovation. The research personnel from Public Research Organizations of the General Administration of the State includes the research staff, the technical staff and the management staff.

2.3.7. The Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI) will be responsible for **authorizing any additions or removals of team members**, upon a reasoned request submitted by the CSIC coordinator to i-coop@csic.es.

2.4. Requirements for the foreign research group

2.4.1. In MODALITY A:

- The team from the foreign country shall be composed of a single foreign responsible person and one early-career researcher. The responsible person must necessarily supervise the doctoral thesis or the master's final project of the early-career researcher.
- The early-career researcher must provide proof of enrollment in a doctoral or master's program (or equivalent) at an institution in an ODA-recipient country or in a non-ODA Ibero-American country. If no such program exists in their country, enrollment in a doctoral or master's program at a Spanish university will be accepted, provided that this is duly justified.

2.4.2. In MODALITY B:

- The foreign team must include one foreign responsible person from each participating foreign institution, along with other personnel interested in taking part in the action. All members must be predoctoral or postdoctoral researchers, or technical or teaching staff linked to the participating institutions.

2.5. Duration of the stays

2.5.1. In MODALITY A:

- The stays at CSIC by early-career researchers from the foreign team must have a **minimum** duration of **15 days**.
- The stays of the responsible persons, both from CSIC and from the foreign institution, may not exceed **30%** of the total duration of the early-career researchers' stays over the two-year period.

2.5.2. In both modalities:

- Teams involving Ukrainian or Palestinian institutions may request additional funding (up to €5,000 more per year) to enable their stays at CSIC to be carried out for a period exceeding 6 consecutive months within each fiscal year.

2.6. Eligible expenses

2.6.1. Grants for transportation, subsistence and accommodation expenses.

a) Travel of the CSIC team between Spain and the partner countries participating in the action.

These grants shall be governed by the terms set forth in this call for applications. The calculation of their amount shall be based on **Royal Decree 462/2002**, of May 24, on compensation for service-related expenses, and they shall be processed in accordance with the Resolution issued by the President of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), which approves the Operating Budgets of the Institutes, Centers, and Units; the allocation of project funding; the management of the Operational Treasury Allocation (DTO) system and Advance Payments; as well as certain criteria for financial management and administrative contracting.

Under modality A, stays by individuals who do not hold the position of CSIC principal investigator, foreign principal investigator, and the early-career researcher shall not be considered eligible expenses.

In modality B, In the event that members from different ICUs are part of the CSIC team, travels between the participating ICUs will be permitted for activities taking place at any of these ICUs.

Transportation expenses must be processed by the ICU, in compliance with the travel service contract applicable to CSIC.

The grant amount allocated for transportation may include expenses related to the management of visas and/or vaccinations not covered by the Spanish National Health System, when such requirements are mandatory for entry into the destination country.

Expenses related to medical or travel insurance for CSIC participants traveling to countries without a reciprocity agreement shall be managed by the ICU. Additionally, expenses related to accident and civil liability insurance will be eligible for funding if they are mandatory for the execution of the stay; the procurement and management of such insurance shall also be the responsibility of the ICU.

b) Travel of the foreign team to the countries of the entities participating in the action. These grants shall be processed in accordance with the aforementioned Resolution.

The amounts for accommodation and subsistence will be those established in the Resolution of February 18, 2025, issued by the Presidency of the State Agency CSIC, which sets the allowance for stays (accommodation and subsistence) for VRI calls. The breakdown is as follows, depending on the duration of the stay:

	Daily allowance in Euros (€)
During the first 15 days	150,00
From day 16 to day 30	100,00
From the day 31 until the end of the stay	70,00
EXAMPLE: 15 days	2.250,00
EXAMPLE: 30 days	3.750,00
EXAMPLE: 45 days	4.800,00
EXAMPLE: 90 days	7.950,00
EXAMPLE: 180 days	14.250,00

The first and last day of the stay shall be understood as the departure and return day of the trip, to and from the municipality where the participant has their official residence, in accordance with the provisions established for this concept in the Royal Decree 462/2002.

Regarding travel arrangements, transportation may be contracted through the ICU Management Office, in which case it will be processed via the centralized contract (except for exceptions⁵), or directly by the individual, who will be reimbursed upon submission of appropriate justification to the management office.

The grant amount allocated for transportation may include expenses related to the management of visas and/or vaccinations not covered by the National Health System, when such requirements are mandatory for entry into the destination country.

Expenses related to medical or travel insurance for foreign participants traveling to countries without a reciprocity agreement shall be managed by the ICU. Additionally, expenses related to accident and civil liability insurance will be eligible for funding if they are mandatory for the execution of the stay; the procurement and management of such insurance shall also be the responsibility of the ICU.

2.6.2. Other eligible expenses (including non-deductible VAT) include those intended for:

- Newly acquired or replacement inventory materials related to the activities carried out within the project and intended for the CSIC ICU.

⁵ It is reminded that, under the current centralized travel agency service contract, transportation originating from abroad is granted a direct exception.

- Costs of internal services (inter-center transfers to be requested from the Budget Area prior to expenditure) or external services.
 - Also included are expenses related to sample collection or fieldwork (e.g., shipment of samples to consortium members or rental of transport to access hard-to-reach areas).
- Consumable materials intended for scientific use, excluding those classified as indirect costs.
- Organization of meetings at the institutions forming part of the consortium (modality B only):
 - Expenses for room rental and audiovisual equipment.
 - Up to a maximum of €1,500 per action, from the budget allocated to 'Other expenses,' for coffee breaks (meal expenses will not be eligible).
 - Expenses related to event support staff will not be accepted.
 - Exceptionally, and with prior authorization from the Vice Presidency for International Affairs, expenses related to organizing meetings at locations other than those mentioned may also be charged to the project.
- Registrations for conferences held in the host country during the participant's stay. In such cases, transportation costs from the city of residence to the conference venue, as well as accommodation expenses at the conference location, may be eligible. Any other circumstances that may arise must be consulted in advance with the VRI.
- Registration in official training courses organized in the participating countries, related to the scientific objective of the action, for the participating teams during their stay.

Expenses in this category **must not exceed 40% of the total grant amount for** each of the two years.

On an exceptional basis and subject to verification and approval by the Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI) of the explanatory report, which must be duly submitted, expenses incurred by project researchers without the possibility of providing an invoice or equivalent documentation may be covered, provided they result from extraordinary conditions related to the provision of the service or the purchase in question. This shall be allowed up to a limit of €50 per payment and a maximum of €1,000 for the entire duration of the grant. Under no circumstances shall this provision apply when the service has been rendered or the good supplied by a company.

2.7. Duration and execution of the action

2.7.1. Grants are expected to last 24 months, divided into two 12-month periods.

2.7.2. For the execution of expenses included in the grant, the processing deadlines established in the corresponding CSIC instructions for the closure of the financial year 2027 and 2028 shall be respected.

2.7.3. The VRI will authorize the full financial allocation for the first year following the publication of the grant award Resolution to the CSIC ICUs for execution and expenditure control by the Management Offices. Unjustified failure to carry out the planned activities or improper use of allocated funds may result in cancellation of the grant and the reimbursement of the funds.

2.7.4. All expenses must be incurred in accordance with the proposed work plan and the corresponding budget, with a maximum allocation of €30,000 per grant (€15,000 per year), or €40,000 for grants in collaboration with Ukraine or Palestine (€20,000 per year). All expenditures must comply with the rules set out in the call for proposals. Any deviations must be approved in advance by the VRI.

2.7.5 The results arising from the collaboration shall belong to the Party that generates them. In the event that they are generated with contributions from both Parties, ownership shall be determined by means of a written agreement between the participating institutions, detailing the conditions governing the exercise of such joint ownership. Each institution shall retain ownership of the pre-existing knowledge contributed to the collaboration. Such pre-existing knowledge shall be confidential in nature and shall be governed by the provisions on industrial and intellectual property under the Spanish legislative framework.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND SUBMISSION DEADLINE

3.1. The proposal and the required documents shall be submitted as a single application by the CSIC coordinator of the project, through the online call application system on the CSIC Intranet: <http://siw.csic.es/icv/> Menu option: Convocatorias activas / PROGRAMA CSIC DE COOPERACIÓN CIENTÍFICA PARA EL DESARROLLO.

3.2. Applications shall be written in English, or in Spanish if all participating foreign teams belong to Spanish-speaking countries, using Times New Roman or Arial font, with a minimum size of 11.

3.3. Pages of the application exceeding the established maximum page limit will not be considered during evaluation.

3.4. Only the following standardized documents shall be used for the call:

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

A) Activities of the action (maximum 3 pages, excluding timeline, graphics, and images):

- **Proposal summary and scientific excellence:** including the definition of the objectives, scope of the study, international relevance, and the added value of the action (in terms of quality and originality, or degree of innovation).
- List of keywords (both in Spanish and English).
- Thematic evaluation panel (see Annex I of the call).
- Alignment and relevance of the application with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Implementation:** work plan including the objectives and proposed actions, as well as a timeline for their execution. The activities to be carried out will be detailed, along with the level of involvement of the foreign team.
- **Scientific, social, and economic impact** on the research groups and institutions, both Spanish and foreign, as well as on the participating countries.
- **Consortium composition:** key aspects of the research experience of the foreign principal investigators and the CSIC, as well as the suitability and complementarity among all participating groups.

B) Detailed budget related to the proposed activity **timeline** (maximum 3 pages).

C) CV of the CSIC coordinator highlighting the main achievements from 2022 to the present (maximum 2 pages).

D) CV of each foreign coordinator highlighting the main achievements from 2022 to present (maximum 2 pages).

Likewise, in the case of participation by individuals affiliated with the entities described in sections 2.2.3, 2.2.4, and 2.2.5, who must take part using their own funds and infrastructure, the CV of the responsible person may also be submitted if considered beneficial to the proposal. In such case, the main achievements from 2022 to the present should be highlighted (maximum of 2 pages).

- In the case of proposals submitted under **MODALITY A**, the following additional documentation must also be provided:

E) CV of the early-career researcher pursuing the postgraduate program (maximum 2 pages).

F) Letters of acceptance/commitment from the foreign supervisor of the doctoral thesis or Master's final project, certifying their commitment to participate in the action as well as to supervise the thesis or Master's final project of the early-stage researcher from the foreign team, with explicit

mention that the CSIC principal investigator will act as co-supervisor of the thesis or Master's final project.

The document must be presented as an official letter from the institution, dated and signed by the competent authority (institutional head or senior scientist). In cases where the person authorized to sign the commitment letter coincides with the foreign team coordinator, this fact must be indicated in the grant application in the corresponding section.

G) Certificate of enrollment of the early-stage researcher from the foreign team in the doctoral or Master's program (or an equivalent certificate) in which they are registered, specifying the title of the program, the institution, the postgraduate student, the period of implementation, and any other relevant information.

- In the case of proposals submitted under **MODALITY B**, the following additional documentation must also be provided:

E) Letters of acceptance/commitment from the foreign institutions to which the participating teams belong. These letters must include authorization for the foreign coordinator to participate in the project, committing to carry out the activities outlined in the submitted scientific-technical report and their corresponding funding.

The document must be presented as an official letter from the institution, dated and signed by the competent authority (institutional head or senior scientist). In cases where the person authorized to sign the commitment letter for each entity coincides with the foreign team coordinator (or with the foreign or Spanish participant with own funds) or its members, this fact must be indicated in the grant application in the corresponding section.

3.4.2. If the consortium includes entities described in sections 2.2.3, 2.2.4, and 2.2.5, they must also submit a letter of acceptance or commitment under the terms stipulated in section 3.4 of the call.

3.5. The application will be electronically validated by the director of the CSIC ICU to which the applicant belongs. Subsequently, before the application submission deadline, the CSIC team coordinator must submit the application definitively.

3.6. The application submission period will run **until 23:59 on June 5, 2026.**

3.7. Once the application submission period has ended, a list of applications admitted for evaluation and those excluded will be published on the CSIC Intranet. **There will be no period for correcting errors.**

3.8. Personal data collected in the application will be subject to the protection established by Organic Act 3/2018, of December 5, on Personal Data Protection and Guarantee of Digital Rights (LOPD, 3/2018), and by Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament. Based on Articles 6 and 7 of said Regulation, submission of the application will be deemed as authorization for the processing of the submitted personal data.

3.9. This call will be governed by the principles, objectives, and priorities of the Spanish cooperation policy for sustainable development as set forth in Article 2 of Act 1/2023, of February 20, on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity⁶.

4. EVALUATION

4.1. The evaluation of proposals will be conducted in **two phases**, in compliance with the CoARA principles for the evaluation of curricula vitae (CoARA, 2023).

The final score for each proposal will be the sum of the scores obtained in each phase, which will be conducted according to the following criteria:

- Score obtained in the first phase: 10% of the total score.
- Score obtained in the second phase: 90% of the total score.

4.2. In the **first phase**, a technical evaluation committee, appointed for this purpose by the VRI, will assess the alignment of the applications with the CSIC internationalization strategy and the budget planning, assigning a maximum of 10 points. Specifically, the following criteria will be considered:

1. SDGs (maximum 6 points):

- Adequacy and clear exposition in the proposal of its relation with the Sustainable Development Objectives, citing specifically the SDGs involved and its targets.

2. Budget (maximum 4 points):

- Consistency of the budget with the timeline and eligibility of the included costs, as well as compliance with the limitations and other specifications established in the call regarding stays and expenses.

4.3. In case of tie, those with the best score in section I will be prioritized (adequacy with the SDGs).

⁶ <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2023-4512>

4.4. In the **second phase**, proposals will be evaluated by expert personnel collaborating with the Spanish State Research Agency (AEI). Only a maximum of **100 highest-ranked proposals** from the first phase of the selection process will be evaluated.

The evaluation criteria for the second phase are as follows:

- **Scientific excellence** (maximum 5 points):
 - a. The definition and content of the objectives and the added value of the action, as described in the proposal summary, will be assessed (quality and originality, or degree of innovation): maximum 3 points.
 - b. The scientific and technical excellence of the CVs of early-career researchers (Modality A) and of the coordinators (both modalities) will also be assessed, recognizing the career trajectory, main contributions, relevance and impact of the work, coherence of the research line, and taking into account the disciplinary context and career stage, as well as a broad range of contributions beyond publications (such as open data, software, knowledge transfer activities, academic leadership, mentoring, contributions to open science, or social or policy impact): maximum 2 points.
- **Implementation** (maximum 3 points):

The feasibility of the activities will be evaluated according to the work plan, which should include the objectives and proposed actions, as well as their consistency with the timeline and with the purpose of the selected participation modality.
- **Expected impact of the action in relation with the objectives of the call for the participating groups and institutions** (maximum 2 points).

The following aspects will be evaluated:

 1. Scientific, technical, social, and economic impact of the action on both the CSIC team and the foreign team(s), as well as on the CSIC and other participating entities, including potential future scientific cooperation collaborations and the creation of sustainable capacities: 1 point.
 2. Suitability and complementarity of the CSIC team with the foreign teams for the execution of the action: 1 point.

4.5 After combining the scores from both evaluation phases according to the applicable weighting, ties will be resolved by prioritizing proposals with the highest score in the Implementation criterion.

5. INFORMATION ON THE CALL RESULTS

5.1. The result of the selection process will be announced through a Resolution issued by the Presidency of the CSIC, which will be published on the CSIC Intranet and will be communicated by e-mail to the proposal applicants during the second half of 2026. The coordinators of the successful proposals will also be informed individually.

5.2 Following the publication of the final resolution, the CSIC coordinator may request the corresponding evaluation report from the Vice Presidency for International Affairs, which shall state the assessment awarded in accordance with the criteria set out in the call.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION

6.1. The beneficiaries of this program shall justify the activities carried out and the expenses incurred in two annual reports (intermediate and final), using a standardized form that will be provided by the VRI⁷.

The **intermediate report** must be submitted before December 15, 2027, and the **final report** before January 31, 2029.

The justification reports will include the following documents:

- **Scientific-technical questionnaire:** Activities carried out, results obtained, and observations on the degree of fulfillment of the initially proposed objectives.
- **Financial report:** Expenses incurred in accordance with the call's guidelines and the approved schedule. An extract of the accounting statement allocated to the project must be included, detailing the transactions carried out during the executed year.

The questionnaires and reports must be submitted electronically to the e-mail address i-coop@csic.es, including the project code in the subject line of the e-mail.

6.2. Coordinators of the participating teams might be required to present these results in a public event before a committee of experts.

⁷ Non-compliance with the rules set out in this call may lead to the recovery of unduly justified funds and, where appropriate, to the imposition of sanctions by the Vice Presidency for International Affairs (VRI).

6.3 Any reference to the project in any dissemination media related to these grants must include the phrase FUNDED BY CSIC, I-COOP 2026 CALL, along with the logo of the call (for publications: CSIC/I-COOP2026/project code).

7. CONTACT DETAILS

Inquiries about the i-COOP call may be addressed to the e-mail i-coop@csic.es

Madrid, April 30, 2026

President of the CSIC
Eloísa del Pino Matute