



Republic of Serbia
Ministry of Science, Technological
Development and Innovation



Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca



Republic of Serbia
Ministry of Education

CALL FOR JOINT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECTS 2024-2026
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELDS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
BETWEEN
ITALY - SERBIA

CLOSING DATE: MARCH 8th, 2024, h17:00 C.E.T.

1. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) of the Italian Republic, the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”, recognise the **crucial role of science, higher education, research, and innovation** in driving sustainable development and socio-economic transformations.

Taking into account the long-standing and positive collaboration developed over the course of the last decades and acknowledging the potential of cooperation in science, higher education, technological, innovation based on the principles of mutual benefit, and with the aim of fostering knowledge exchange and the sharing of joint applications in research and innovation on shared scientific, technological and societal challenges; the abovementioned Ministries intend to **further strengthen cooperation** in these areas between Italy and Serbia.

The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the fields of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (MoU on HE&R&I) signed on 22 March 2023 in Belgrade aims to promote **new joint actions** such as scientific and industrial research projects, mobility of academicians, scholars and researchers and innovative infrastructures.

It will foster structured cooperation along the lines of the development of major national programmes in the selected research priority areas.

The MoU on HE&R&I must operate in **synergy with the existing agreements**, namely the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, done at Rome on December 21st, 2009; the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of the Italian Republic on cooperation in the field of culture and education done at Rome on November 13th, 2009 and numerous memoranda between Universities and/or Research Organisations defining a coherent set of initiatives and instruments for **long-term strategic cooperation in HE&R&I**.

The MoU on HE&R&I intends to promote, among others, strategic cooperation between respective national research and innovation programmes, institutions, infrastructures, and innovative businesses.

Within the framework of the MoU on HE&R&I between the Government of Italy and the Government of Serbia, Directorate General for Internationalisation and Communication of the Italian Ministry of University and Research and the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of Serbia are opening a call for proposals for the first Executive Programme of cooperation in the fields of research and innovation for the years 2024 - 2026.

For further information, please contact representatives of the national funding organizations (see contact details in Section 5.3).

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2. PRIORITY AREAS

Introduction

The call aims to support **excellent, collaborative, bilateral, transdisciplinary, fundamental, or applied research projects**, focused on priority themes described below, based on the principles of mutual benefit, and with the aim of strengthening knowledge and sharing applications.

R&I is a fundamental driver of progress. It expands our knowledge, addresses technological challenges, and helps solve societal problems. By **joining forces in R&I**, we can rise our ambition to unlock new frontiers, drive innovation, and create a brighter future for humanity.

R&I **expands the boundaries of knowledge** by encouraging exploration and discovery. It enables scientists, researchers, and innovators to delve deeper into existing fields, uncover hidden phenomena, and generate new insights. By pushing the boundaries of knowledge, R&I opens new possibilities and paves the way for advancements in various domains, such as science, medicine, technology, and social sciences.

Nowadays more than ever, R&I plays a crucial role in addressing **technological challenges**. In a rapidly evolving world, technology is constantly transforming industries and societies. R&I allows for the development of new technologies, processes, and solutions that enhance efficiency, productivity, and quality of life. It drives innovation in areas like renewable energy, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and information technology, providing practical solutions to pressing issues.

Lastly, R&I is vital for addressing **societal challenges**. Complex problems like climate change, poverty, healthcare, and education require innovative approaches. R&I enables the development of sustainable practices, social interventions, and policy reforms. It fosters interdisciplinary collaborations and brings together experts from diverse fields to tackle multifaceted challenges. Through R&I, new insights, evidence-based solutions, and transformative ideas emerge, contributing to the betterment of societies and the well-being of individuals.

Most of these challenges are shared regionally or globally. Climate change, resource depletion, food safety and security, health, cybersecurity threats to name a few of the challenges, as well as the development of key enabling technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, should be jointly addressed because they transcend national boundaries, thus require collaborative solutions.

Research themes – Common strategic areas

The call will focus on five priority themes, matching the Areas of Cooperation of the MoU on HE&R&I: High Performance Computing and Big Data (Theme 1), Artificial Intelligence and its applications (Theme 2), Agri and Food technologies (Theme 3), Bio and RNA technologies (Theme 4), Sustainable Economy and Sustainable Mobility (Theme 5).

2.1. High Performance Computing and Big Data

High Performance Computing (HPC) and Big Data are vital for addressing major economic and societal challenges. These technologies enable the processing of large datasets, complex simulations, and data-driven research, driving innovation across various fields.

In scientific research, HPC and Big Data allow for the analysis of vast amounts of data, leading to discoveries in genomics, personalized medicine, and disease understanding. Climate modelling benefits from HPC, aiding in predicting climate change impacts and informing mitigation strategies. In healthcare, HPC and Big Data support personalized medicine, drug discovery, and disease management.

Energy and engineering sectors optimize systems through HPC simulations, enhancing sustainability and efficiency. Smart cities leverage Big Data to improve transportation, energy usage, and urban planning. HPC and Big Data also enhance economic competitiveness by enabling data-driven decision-making, predictive analytics, and optimization in industries like finance, manufacturing, and logistics.

These technologies have profound societal impacts, influencing policy-making, urban development, and environmental stewardship. By harnessing HPC and Big Data, researchers, businesses, and governments gain valuable insights, driving innovation and addressing the challenges of our time.

2.2. Artificial Intelligence and its applications

Research in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications is of paramount importance in addressing major economic and societal challenges. Through rigorous investigation and innovation, AI research serves as a driving force for progress.

AI research drives technological advancement, solves complex problems, addresses ethical considerations, enables responsible AI development, and promotes innovation. By investing in AI research, we can harness its potential to make a profound impact on economic growth, societal well-being, and the future of our world.

By continually advancing AI capabilities, researchers are able to develop more sophisticated algorithms, models, and techniques. This leads to improved accuracy, efficiency, and adaptability of AI systems, enabling them to tackle complex challenges effectively.

Furthermore, AI research focuses on solving intricate problems across various domains. Whether it is healthcare, climate change, or transportation, researchers explore new algorithms and methodologies to develop AI applications that provide innovative solutions.

Ethical considerations also play a significant role in AI research. By addressing biases, privacy concerns, and algorithmic transparency, researchers can ensure the responsible and fair deployment of AI systems. This helps build public trust in AI technologies and mitigates potential risks.

Additionally, AI research contributes to the development of frameworks and guidelines for responsible AI development. Researchers investigate the societal impact of AI, develop guidelines for ethical AI use, and explore methods for explainability and accountability. This promotes the reliable and beneficial application of AI in addressing economic and societal challenges.

2.3. Agri and Food technologies

Research and innovation in Agri and Food technologies plays a pivotal role in addressing major global challenges. By enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting climate resilience, minimizing environmental impact, and improving food safety and nutrition, research contributes to a sustainable and secure food future for the growing global population.

For instance, climate change poses a significant threat to agricultural systems worldwide. Research helps identify climate-resilient crop varieties and develop sustainable farming practices to mitigate the effects of climate change. By studying climate patterns, soil health, and water management, researchers can provide insights and solutions to adapt agricultural practices to changing environmental conditions, reducing the vulnerability of farming communities and ensuring food production continuity.

Research in Agri and Food technologies helps develop innovative approaches to enhance agricultural productivity, optimize resource utilization, and improve crop yields. By employing techniques such as precision agriculture, genetic engineering, and biotechnology, researchers can develop crops that are resistant to pests, diseases, and harsh environmental conditions, ensuring a sustainable and secure food supply.

Furthermore, research in Agri and Food technologies contributes to minimizing the environmental impact of agricultural practices. Sustainable farming techniques, such as organic farming, agroforestry, and precision irrigation, can be developed through research to reduce chemical inputs, soil degradation, and water pollution. This promotes sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation, and the preservation of natural resources.

Additionally, advancements in Agri and Food technologies enable the development of nutritious and safe food products. Research helps improve food processing methods, food safety standards, and nutritional analysis, ensuring that consumers have access to high-quality, healthy, and safe food options.

2.4. Bio and RNA technologies

Research in Bio and RNA technologies holds immense importance in addressing major global challenges. The advancements in healthcare, pandemic response, agriculture, food security, and environmental conservation demonstrate the immense impact of this research in shaping a better future for humanity. Continued investment and support in these fields are crucial to tackle the complex issues our world faces today.

In the field of healthcare, Bio and RNA technologies have the potential to revolutionize disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Research in genomics and personalized medicine allows for a deeper understanding of genetic factors influencing disease susceptibility and response to therapies. This knowledge helps develop targeted treatments, resulting in improved patient outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.

Bio and RNA technologies play a pivotal role in addressing global pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the criticality of rapid diagnostic tests, vaccine development, and therapeutic interventions. Ongoing research in these areas enables the development of more accurate and efficient diagnostic tools, effective vaccines, and innovative treatments, equipping us with better tools to combat future pandemics.

Agriculture and food security and safety are also major global challenges. Research in Bio and RNA technologies contributes to developing resilient crops, improving yield, and enhancing nutritional content. Assisted Evolution techniques (AEs) facilitate the development of organisms that are more resistant to pests, diseases, and environmental stresses, ensuring safe and sustainable food production to feed the growing global population.

Furthermore, Bio and RNA technologies support environmental conservation efforts. They offer solutions for renewable energy production, such as biofuels, and bioremediation, which helps in addressing climate change and mitigating pollution.

2.5. Sustainable Economy and Sustainable Mobility

Research in sustainable economy and sustainable mobility is fundamental in driving positive change and creating a more sustainable future. By driving the transition to environmentally friendly practices, these research areas contribute to addressing climate change, resource depletion, and air pollution, while fostering economic growth and improving the overall well-being of societies.

In the realm of sustainable economy, research plays a crucial role in developing innovative strategies and technologies that promote environmentally friendly practices. Research enables the identification of renewable energy sources, the development of sustainable production methods, and the implementation of circular economy models, all of which contribute to long-term economic stability and resilience.

Regarding sustainable mobility, research is essential for revolutionizing transportation systems and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Studies have demonstrated the benefits of electric vehicles, public transportation networks, and shared mobility solutions in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, alleviating congestion, and improving air quality.

By investing in research, policymakers and industry leaders can make informed decisions and develop strategies that promote sustainable transportation options, such as the expansion of charging infrastructure, the integration of renewable energy sources, and the implementation of smart mobility solutions.

3. THE CALL FOR JOINT PROJECTS

3.1. Funding Scheme

With regard to the present call, one funding scheme is available:

- **“Joint Research Projects”**: this funding scheme is aimed at supporting joint research activities. Inclusion of early career scientists in the research team will be positively evaluated. The expenses for research activities are co-funded by Parties concerned of both Countries.

Further details on the funding scheme, including priority research areas, are given in below.

3.2. Priority Research Areas

Joint Research Projects must be submitted in the following priority research areas only (see Section 1):

- High Performance Computing and Big Data;
- Artificial Intelligence and its applications;
- Agri and Food technologies;
- Bio and RNA technologies;
- Sustainable Economy and Sustainable Mobility

Proposals submitted in other research areas will not be considered for evaluation.

Only some of the above listed research areas may be funded, depending on the scientific quality of the submitted proposals.

3.3. Eligibility Requirements

Project proposals:

- must be written in English;
- must have the same duration of the Executive Programme (E.P.): 3 years, 2024-2026; must address at least one of the five call themes.

Each Principal Investigator (P.I.) must submit only one proposal.

Italian Party:

The call is open to public or private (no-profit) research institutions.

The P.I. must have Italian or any other EU nationality, legal residence in Italy, and must be affiliated with a public or private (no-profit) Italian research institution with a permanent position, or a temporary position covering at least the entire duration of the proposed project.

Serbian Party:

Researchers and research teams, employed in the scientific research organizations that meet the requirements in accordance with the Law on Science and Research (*“Official Gazette RS” No 49/2019*), can apply for this call.

3.4. How to apply

Joint proposals must be submitted to both Parties. The proposals must be written in English, show the same project title and have the same duration as the Programming Period of this Call.

Italian Party:

Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, by filling the dedicated forms through the following platform:

<https://banditransnazionali-miur.cineca.it/>

The application submitted through such platform has to be signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution, or her/his delegate duly authorized by formal provision. For any inquiry concerning the present call, please contact the following email address:

aldo.covello@mur.gov.it

For projects involving experiments with animals, the status of ethics approval by the competent Ethics Committee must be provided when submitting the proposal. Please note that formal

authorization by the competent Ministry of Health is mandatory to start the activities (D.Lgs 26_04/03/2014 and Directive 2010/63 EU). Proof of submission to the institutional OPBA (Organismo Preposto al Benessere degli Animali) is acceptable at the proposal submission stage. Projects involving experiments with human beings must be performed in accordance with the Directive 536/2014/EC. The Italian Principal Investigator should include a self-declaration of adherence to the above cited rules in the Methods section.

Serbian Party:

Proposals shall be submitted exclusively online, in English, by filling in the dedicated forms on the website:

<https://bilateral-italy.nitra.gov.rs>

The application process is as follows:

- First of all, P.I. need to log on to the abovementioned website in order to receive the code for on-line filling in the project application;
- During the period when the Call is open, it is possible to upgrade and correct the project proposal on-line and send the completed project application to the e-mail address:
bilateral_italy@nitra.gov.rs
- Print out the completed signed project application and send it to the Serbian Ministry's address.

Serbian applications must be accompanied by an endorsement letter, written in Serbian and signed by the legal representative of the applying Institution or by her/his officially authorized delegate, providing official acceptance of all conditions listed in the call text.

Applicants must fill out all mandatory fields on the form for their proposal to enter the selection process and to be considered for funding.

Projects involving experiments with human beings and animals, must be performed in accordance with the relevant national and international regulations on Ethics.

Proposals will not be taken further into the competition in case the following occurs and this cannot be corrected in a timely manner:

- do not meet the project requirements described in Sections 3.2 and 3.3,
- and/or do not comply with the eligibility criteria of the Funding Organizations which they seek funding from,
- and/or are incomplete.

Projects must have the same duration as the Programming Period of this Call (3 years: 2024-2026). In any case, financing will cover maximum three years of Project's activities from its start.

3.5. Call timeline

This call consists of a one-stage submission and two-steps evaluation process, described in Section 4. Applications received after the submission deadline will not be allowed into the evaluation and selection process.

Deadline for submitting Joint Proposals is **March 8th, 2024, h17:00 C.E. T.**

3.6. Proposal requirements

3.6.1. General requirements

Serbian and Italian partners must fill out all mandatory fields on the submission form for their proposal to enter the evaluation process and to be considered for funding. To be eligible, a proposal must include all mandatory information requested in the Proposal Form.

In filling out the online proposal form, it is expected that applicants consider the following:

- proposals should clearly describe how the proposed project will deliver on one, or more, of the chosen themes;
- proposals should include well-justified budgets, partitioning of funds, and allocation of responsibilities and time. Proposals may include, where appropriate, well thought out data management, project stakeholder engagement, and communication management plans. Plans for providing broad public accessibility of data, results, and findings should be described.
- the active input of involved stakeholders (including but not limited to relevant policymakers, regulators, NGOs, communities, or industry) in the research and innovation, provided it is clearly demonstrated in the application, will be considered positively;
- proposals should also detail the impact and dissemination strategy, external communications activities, planned social media activities as well as any other externally facing communication activities foreseen as a result of this work.

3.6.2. The Partnership and its strategic objectives

The purpose of MoU HE&R&I is the establishment of more effective relationships in science and technology between Italy and Serbia, especially through the coordination and collaboration of national research programmes. The MoU HE&R&I aims at facilitating the exchange of good practices, the strategic planning and the design of joint research initiatives as well as the implementation of joint activities, in particular coordinated Calls for joint R&I projects. The strategic objectives (SO) of the call for **Joint Research and Innovation Projects** are:

- SO1: Joint scientific breakthroughs based on complementary research expertise of the project partners from Italy and Serbia in one of the common strategic areas.
- SO2: The potential positive impact of the proposed scientific breakthroughs and innovations in actively addressing technological and societal challenges.
- SO3: Increased research and innovation capacities of the partner institutions in the scientific areas which are prioritised in the national policy of Italy and Serbia.
- SO4: Increased mobility of researchers and exchange of research resources between the project partners from Italy and Serbia during and beyond the project timeframe.

Therefore, the proposals are expected to focus on shared priorities of the respective multi-annual strategies and work programmes thus creating the conditions for future joint developments. They should provide prospects for long-term cooperation between respective national research and innovation programs, institutions, infrastructures and innovative businesses.

3.6.3. Budget and eligible costs

Research partnerships are expected to include one overall project budget in the Proposal Form, expressed in euros (€ / EUR). The budget proposal of each Partner must meet the eligibility requirements of the national Funding Organization which it seeks funding from, including a potential budget limit per Partner.

A detailed budget justification is required in the Proposal Form. Applicants are also required to explain the source of any additional funding.

4. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

4.1. Evaluation Process

Evaluation of proposals will be performed in accordance with national legislation.

Art.4.3 of the MoU HE&R&I states that prior the publication of the call, the Parties appoint a **joint Call Management Committee** in charge of evaluating the proposed projects, in accordance with national legislation, and monitoring the project execution.

After the call closure, all submitted proposals will undergo formal eligibility check before moving to the two-steps evaluation process. The first step will be performed at the national level to identify a shortlist of proposals.

The second step of the evaluation process will be performed at the bilateral level. The two Parties will reach consensus on the final list of projects eligible for funding during the meeting of the joint Call Management Committee, which includes representatives from both countries. The selected projects will be announced by the Ministries by publishing them in the websites of each Party at the end of the process.

4.2. Evaluation criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- compliance of project research outcomes with the call Specific Objectives (see Section 4.2.1);
- credibility of the proposed methodology for achieving project research outcomes (see Section 4.2.2);
- qualification and expertise of the research teams and involvement of early career scientists (see Section 4.2.3); (For Serbian participants early career scientists meets the following conditions: have been selected for a research or scientific title or an equivalent title in higher education; have the PhD title, have obtained a maximum of 10 years of research work, before the closing date of the public call and are employed in an accredited scientific research organization)
- exploitation and dissemination measures towards the project impact, (see Section 4.2.4);
- management and Budget (see Sections 3.6.3 and 4.2.5).

Preference will be awarded to:

- proposals involving more than one national public/private research organization and universities;
- initiatives carrying potential industrial impact and/or involving a private company which may contribute to the project as Societal/Industry Partner.

4.2.1. Strategic Objectives

Joint Scientific Breakthroughs: foster collaboration for scientific breakthroughs based on complementary research expertise:

- how does the project leverage the unique research capabilities of partners from Italy and Serbia?
- in what specific ways do the research strengths of both countries complement each other?
- how does the project integrate different scientific disciplines to address the research problem?
- in what extent interdisciplinary collaboration will lead to more innovative solutions?
- how does the project align with the shared priorities and goals of both countries?

Positive impact of Innovations: assess and enhance the proposed scientific breakthroughs:

- can you clearly articulate the technological or societal challenges that your project aims to address?
- what evidence or data supports the significance of the identified challenges?
- how do you plan to translate the scientific breakthroughs into practical applications or solutions that address the identified challenges?
- can you provide examples of potential applications and their impact?
- are there specific plans for licensing, partnerships, or creating startups for deployment?

Increased Research and Innovation Capacities: enhance research and innovation capacities aligned with national policies:

- what specific capacity-building initiatives are planned for researchers in both countries?
- what plans are in place to improve research infrastructure, such as laboratories or computing facilities?
- how will infrastructure development benefit the research and innovation capacities of both countries?
- in what ways does the project align with and contribute to the national research and innovation policies of Italy and Serbia?
- how the project supports the broader policy goals related to research and innovation?

Increased Mobility and Exchange: facilitate the mobility of researchers and exchange of resources between partner institutions:

- how does the project plan to facilitate the sharing of research facilities, equipment, and datasets between partner institutions?
- what specific resources that will be shared during the project?
- what plans are in place for presenting project outcomes at international conferences?
- how does the project contribute to the exchange of ideas and collaboration between researchers from both countries?

4.2.2. Scientific relevance

Scientific relevance and innovativeness of the objectives of the project:

- are project research outcomes specific, measurable and verifiable?
- are project research outcomes realistically achievable?
- does the project proposal present a credible and up-to-date state of the art?
- are the research hypotheses and proposed methodologies of the project clearly explained and justified?
- are the objectives coherent with the expected outcomes, given the methodology to be used and the data to be collected?
- does the proposal demonstrate conceptual and/or methodological innovation, or justify clearly why an existing approach has been chosen?
- does the proposal contribute to scientific excellence and significant progress toward the state of the art in its own field and/or across different fields?
- is the methodology well described, adequate and coherent to the project?

4.2.3. Qualification and expertise of the research teams

Competence and expertise of teams and complementarities of partnership (inclusion of all necessary expertise):

- considering the project's objectives and proposed methodologies, are the project teams well-balanced, complementary and fit-for-purpose partnership of disciplines and expertise?
- do Principal Investigators have the necessary knowledge, expertise and experience to conduct and deliver the project?
- what is the added value of the bilateral cooperation?
- are the scientific contributions of each of the partners clearly described and explained? What would this funding allow the partnership to do that it could not do otherwise?
- does the partnership value early career scientists?
- does the partnership represent a diversity in terms of seniority within the partnership and can capacity building be expected?
- does the proposal integrate diversity and gender perspectives in the partnership, project plan and desired outcomes, where relevant?

4.2.4. Project impact

- what is unique contribution of the project results towards the call specific objectives?
- do the project results make impact to science, economy, and society?
- does the proposal adequately describe the dissemination of generated knowledge in relevant scientific fora?
- does the proposal describe core target groups for communication and dissemination of the project results?
- does the proposal present clear communication and dissemination plan with communication and dissemination measures?
- does the proposal include IPR strategy and Data Management Plan?

4.2.5. Management and Budget

Appropriateness of resources and funding requested:

- how well conceived and organized are the proposed research activities?
- is there an operational plan with well-defined milestones in place?
- is there an operational plan with well-defined project results (deliverables) which allows project monitoring?
- is the total funding requested for the project well justified and cost-efficient for the expected outcomes?
- are project risks and mitigation measures identified? Does the proposal show an awareness of ethical, societal or environmental issues? Does it describe appropriate ways to deal with these?
- are the data management processes during and beyond the project lifetime well described and relevant?

5. FUNDING PROCEDURES

5.1. Funding decision and grant administration

The Funding Organizations will select five (5) projects for funding based on the results of the joint evaluation process, considering the budgets made available by each Funding Organization. The joint Call Management Committee will ensure the fair and equitable nature of the evaluation and selection process.

Italian Party:

Funding for selected projects will be provided in two instalments, a pre-payment after the signature of the Grant Agreement, equal to 80% of the total funding, and the balance at the end of the project after verification of the final financial report.

The contribution granted by MUR to “Joint Research Projects” is intended as co-funding support for the project, equal to 70% of the eligible costs. Therefore, co-funding by the coordinating Italian Institution of 30% of the total costs of the project is mandatory. Co-funding can include salaries of the involved personnel and indirect costs. Any other financial contribution from public or private, Italian or Serbian Institutions, will be positively evaluated.

The maximum cost of the research activities of the Italian partner(s) is 300.000 euros, including co-funding by the applying institution.

Serbian Party:

Funding for selected projects will be provided on a yearly basis. The Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation will finance 5 projects in a period of up to 3 years with the provided budget of up to 150,000 € per project (i.e. 50,000 €/year). The coordinating Institution is expected to anticipate all project expenses and will be reimbursed on a yearly basis, upon submission of the financial documents and positive evaluation of the corresponding scientific report.

Funding for the following year will not be granted if the coordinators fail to submit their progress reports.

All parties commit not to provide information on selected/excluded projects (including the outcomes of the formal eligibility check mentioned in the Section 4 above) until the end of the process, with the signature of the Executive Programme.

5.2. Reporting

Principal Investigators will be requested to submit an annual report on the progress of their project to the Funding Organisation. The reports will be due each January 31st as indicated in the text of the Ministerial Decree establishing the projects selected for funding. The first annual report is not required if the Project's lifespan is less than 6 months as of January 31st.

5.3. Contact Information

Specific questions about eligibility and additional information on the present call, applicants can refer to the Contact Points listed in the table below.

In Italy	In Serbia
Office III - Directorate General of Internationalization and Communication (MUR)	Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation Department of International Cooperation and European Integration Nemanjina 22-26 11000 Belgrade Republic of Serbia Phone: +381 11 3616 529
Dott. Aldo Covello	Mrs. Svetlana Bogdanović
e-mail: aldo.covello@mur.gov.it	e-mail: svetlana.bogdanovic@nitra.gov.rs

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1. Data Management and open access

Proposals must have a reasonable and credible Data Management Plan¹ for open data access.

Applicants will be requested to describe their Data Management Plan in their proposal. The plan should include information about types of data, information, models, software, workflows and code, or other digital products being generated by the project. It should outline the accessible archives or other open repository where these products and accompanying metadata will be housed.

The funded projects are expected to make their best efforts to ensure open access to data as soon as possible.

6.2. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

Funding Organizations of this Call are dedicated to applying the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

DORA is a global initiative that aims to improve the assessment of research and researchers, with the primary goal of discouraging the use of exclusionary metrics that are used for journals and publishers. In embracing DORA, the Parties furthermore acknowledge that there is not one ideal type of researcher and that talent can mean a broad range of approaches in the context of scientific or scholarly research. In this Call the Parties therefore enable assessment focused on quality and context.

The evaluators will be asked to focus on the strength of the proposed research's scientific content and the strength of its related research outputs, rather than on any publication metrics or any research journals in which past research has been published or where research is expected to be published. Journal-based metrics, such as the Journal Impact Factor, will not be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposals.

¹ <https://enspire.science/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Horizon-Europe-Data-Management-Plan-Template.pdf>