

BILATERAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2025

Under the **Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation** between the Government of the Republic of Tunisia and the Government of the Republic of India, signed in Tunis on October 17, 1995, the **General Directorate of Scientific Research (GDSR)** at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tunisia, and the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, invite Tunisian and Indian universities, research centers, and institutes to submit joint proposals for scientific and technological research.

I. PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

The joint research project should be on any of the following areas:

- climate change and eco- innovation
- e-health
- geospatial technology

II. WHO CAN APPLY

The proposals should involve **one or more research entities** from both sides. The joint application must include **one Tunisian and one Indian Principal Investigator (PI)**, who will be responsible for both the **technical and administrative coordination** of the project, including periodic **scientific and financial reporting** to the respective authorities (MHESR in Tunisia and DST in India).

The involvement of **industrial or socio-economic sector partners** is preferred to promote collaborative research and optimize the valorization of scientific outcomes. These partners may participate at their own expenses.

In Tunisia:

- The PI must hold the rank of **Full Professor** or **Associate Professor (Maître de Conférences)**.
- The PI must be affiliated with a **public research laboratory** that is part of the **partner institution** involved in the project.
- The critical mass of the research team involved must be composed of a minimum of five (5) statutory researchers (corps A and B), including at least two members with the rank of professor, associate professor, or equivalent rank.

In India:

Indian Project Lead and Co-Is should be scientists/faculty members working in regular capacity in universities, academic institutes and national research and development laboratories/institutes. The Indian Project Lead and Co-Is should not be retiring or leaving the parent institute during the proposed duration of the project. The Indian scientist involved in any way in the implementation of two or more projects supported by DST (International Group) that are not expected to be completed by March 31, 2025 are not eligible to be a member of Research team/Project Lead.

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- For the Tunisian research entities: Each project will be funded up to TND 50,000 per year for a duration of maximum three years (maximum total budget of TND150,000).
- For the Indian research entities: Each project will be funded up to for a duration of maximum three years (maximum total budget of 45 lakhs).

Eligible costs are those spent directly by the project partner during the duration of the project and used exclusively for achieving the objectives of the project. All expenses must be incurred between the start date and the end date of the project and must be limited to the allocated budget

The following expenses are eligible for financial support under the approved projects:

- **Exchange Visits for Project Team Members:**
 - For researcher exchanges, the sending party will cover round-trip economy-class airfare to the relevant entry city of the host country and medical insurance.
 - The receiving party will provide accommodation and cover living expenses.
- **Support for Consumables:** Up to 30–40% of the total budget may be allocated for consumables and accessories.
- **Human Resources:** The participation of research students is encouraged.
- **Scientific Events and Meetings:** Support is available for organizing and participating in scientific conferences, seminars, and meetings.
- **Research-Related Expenses: (Only Tunisian Applicants)**
 - Coverage includes publication and filing fees for scientific publications and patent applications.
 - Expenses for conducting analyses and processing samples are also supported.
- **Institutional Overhead: (Only Indian Applicants)**
 - Institutional overhead costs for Indian applicants will be determined based on prevailing DST norms.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals

- The proposal must be written in English and jointly prepared by Tunisian and Indian applicants.
- The application must include the following documents:
 - Duly completed application forms.
 - Curriculum vitae (CV) of each research team member.
 - A letter of intent exchanged between the project's Principal Investigators (PIs).
 - A signed submission request, approved and reviewed by:
 - The Director of the research structure,
 - The Head of the institution, and
 - The supervisory authority (e.g., University President, Director General, etc.).
 - Details of the participating industrial or socio-economic sector partners, including their field of business and the expected project outcomes, particularly in terms of productivity and competitiveness.

Submission

- For Tunisian applicants:
 - Applicants can apply by accessing the link: [Application](#)
 - The Tunisian PI should submit the proposal electronically to partenariat.scientifique@gmail.com in **a single PDF file**.
 - Incomplete applications will not be considered.
 - Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.
 - Sending hard copies of proposals is not needed.
- For Indian applicants:

Indian applicants should submit their proposals using the format available at <https://onlinedst.gov.in> by 5:00 PM (India time) on last date (31 July 2025). After registration, they should move to "scheme and format" section where details about this call would be available in the International Cooperation (bilateral). An email acknowledging receipt of the application will be provided to the applicant in 3-5 working days. It should be ensured that application with identical title has been submitted by his / her Tunisian counterpart scientist with Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tunisia by due date.

V. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Projects are evaluated by MHESR/GDSR and MST/DST independently by their own evaluation procedures. Only the proposals which are accepted by two sides will be funded.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Strategic Alignment and Project Relevance**
 - **Consistency with priority research areas:** The project must align with the themes defined in the call for proposals (climate change and eco- innovation; e-health; geospatial technology and address major scientific and societal challenges).

- **Innovation and originality:** The project should introduce a novel approach, either through new methodologies or by applying existing knowledge to an unprecedented context.
 - **Added value of bilateral collaboration:** The complementarity of the institutions and researchers involved must be demonstrated, with a clear distribution of responsibilities and scientific contributions from each partner.
 - **Scientific and technological impact:** The project should demonstrate its potential to advance the state of the art in its field and produce exploitable results.
- **Scientific Quality and Methodological Robustness**
- **Clarity and precision of objectives:** The project goals must be well-defined, measurable, and achievable within the proposed timeframe and budget.
 - **Adequacy of the methodology:** The proposal must present a robust methodological approach, well-suited to the research objectives and aligned with international standards.
 - **Interdisciplinarity and integrated approach:** The project’s ability to mobilize multiple disciplines to address complex challenges will be valued.
 - **Risk management:** Potential risks must be clearly identified, along with mitigation strategies.
- **Expertise and Complementarity of Research Teams**
- **Experience and scientific excellence of researchers:** The scientific leadership of the coordinators and the experience of the teams in the relevant field must be demonstrated.
 - **Complementarity of skills:** The interaction between partner teams should create strong synergy, leading to a deeper understanding of the research topic.
 - **Supervision of young researchers and training:** The involvement of young researchers, postdoctoral fellows, and PhD students will be valued, with an emphasis on skill transfer and capacity building.
 - **Collaboration dynamics and integration of diversity and gender equality perspectives:** The project’s commitment to promoting inclusive and balanced partnerships will be assessed.
- **Impact, Dissemination, and Exploitation of Results**
- **Contribution to societal and economic challenges:** The project should demonstrate how its results will benefit society, industries, or public policies.
 - **Dissemination and communication plan:** Strategies for sharing results with the scientific community, policymakers, and the general public must be clearly defined (publications, conferences, digital platforms, etc.).
 - **Transferability and applicability of results:** Identifying exploitation perspectives, particularly through industrial collaborations or technological innovations, will be an asset.
 - **Follow-up and sustainability perspectives:** The project should outline a clear vision for continuing research and maintaining collaborations beyond the funding period.

VI. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRESS AND FINAL REPORTS

For Tunisian team:

The PI must submit an interim report (scientific and financial) to the MHESR, the granting of the second and third budget depends on the submission and positive evaluation of the interim reports. At the end of the third year, a final report is required

For Indian team:

The PI must submit an annual financial year wise report (scientific and financial) to the DST, the granting of the second and third budget depends on the submission and positive evaluation of the interim reports. At the end of the third year, a final report is required

VII. SCHEDULE

- Publication of the Call: **May 19, 2025.**
- Deadline for Proposal Submission: **July 31, 2025.**

VIII. CONTACT POINTS

For further information, please contact:

Tunisia	India
<p><u>Hayet Souai</u> Director of programs and scientific partnership, General Directorate of Scientific Research. e-mail address: hayet.souai@mes.rnu.tn souaihayet@gmail.com</p> <p><u>Saida Rafrafi Farhat</u> Deputy Director, Directorate of programs and scientific partnership, General Directorate of Scientific Research. e-mail address: saida.rafrafi@mesrs.tn partenariat.scientifique@gmail.com</p>	<p><u>Dr Sulakshana Jain</u> Scientist International Cooperation Department of Science & Technology Technology Bhawan, New Mehrauli Road New Delhi – 110 016 E-mail: jain.s@nic.in</p>