

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Notice for the selection and funding of joint Italy-China research projects under The International Activities Of The National Biodiversity Future Centre (NBFC) (PNRR MUR – M4C2 – Investimento 1.4 - Avviso “Centri Nazionali” - D.D. n. 3138 del 16 dicembre 2021 e D.D. n. 3175 del 18 dicembre 2021. CUP: B73D21014990006).

1. Premises and purposes

Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale, a company operating in the field of strategic consultancy, management of complex research and innovation programs and support for the internationalization of scientific activities, with headquarters and institutional references available on the website www.eidongroup.it, has been commissioned by the National Biodiversity Future Center (NBFC) to provide an integrated service for the management of the entire identification process, selection and funding of international joint research projects in the field of biodiversity.

This call therefore concerns the public selection of joint research project proposals between Italian and Chinese scientists, aimed at international scientific collaboration in the field of biodiversity, with the aim of identifying and funding no. 6 projects consistent with the priorities of cooperation defined between NBFC and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), in implementation of the Action Plan for the strengthening of the China-Italy Global Strategic Partnership (2024-2027). Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale, while not required to apply the Public Contracts Code set forth in Legislative Decree 36/2023 and subsequent amendments and additions, intends to proceed with the management of this procedure by ensuring adequate levels of publicity, transparency, impartiality, and competition, in accordance with the general principles governing publicly available procedures and consistent with the principles of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

All admitted parties shall be notified of the outcome of this procedure.

2. Notice Subject

This Notice is intended for the selection and funding of international joint research projects within the international activities of the National Biodiversity Future Center.

The projects selected will be financed by the provision of a maximum contribution of EUR 10 000, intended to cover the costs directly connected with carrying out research activities, including, by way of example, access to scientific infrastructure, the use of laboratories, research platforms and analytical tools, as well as other expenditure strictly functional to the implementation of the project.

The selection process and the award of funding must be completed no more later than January 31, 2026.

The emanation of the contribution in favour of the winning parties will take place exclusively following the actual transfer of project resources from the National Biodiversity Future Centre (NBFC) to Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale.

Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale cannot be held liable for any delays or impediments in the emanation of contributions resulting from timelines, procedures, or constraints attributable to the NBFC financier.

The effectiveness of the contribution allocation is therefore subject to the availability of the financial resources transferred to Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale under the Programme by the NBFC.

3. Management Subject of procedures

The complete management of this procedure is entrusted to Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale

Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale is responsible for publishing the Notice, disseminating the call nationally and internationally, receiving applications, verifying the formal eligibility of project proposals, organizing and managing the technical-scientific evaluation, preparing the final ranking, and supporting the granting, monitoring, and reporting phases of funded projects.

NBFC maintains scientific and strategic ownership of the initiative and exercises guidance and supervision functions, validating the final outcomes of the procedure.

4. Eligible thematic areas

Submitted projects must be part of one of the following six thematic areas identified by the National Biodiversity Future Center and divided by marine, urban, and terrestrial context.

Proposal 1 – Climate change Impacts on Marine Biodiversity

The first thematic area concerns the study of the impacts of climate change on marine biodiversity, with particular reference to the development of predictive models, the assessment of species vulnerability, and the understanding of the ecological processes that determine biological risk in marine ecosystems.

Proposal 2 – The ecological dynamics of deep-sea ecosystems, in particular seamounts

The second thematic area is dedicated to the study of the ecological dynamics of deep-sea ecosystems, with specific reference to seamounts, including the analysis of biodiversity, pelagic productivity, the functioning of deep ecosystems, and interactions with biogeochemical cycles, particularly the carbon cycle.

Proposal 3 – Urban morphology and design as drivers of urban biodiversity and ecological function

The third thematic area concerns urban biodiversity, with attention to the role of urban morphology and design as key factors in determining the structure, functioning, and resilience of urban ecosystems.

Proposal 4 – Urban carbon sequestration strategies and effectiveness

The fourth thematic area concerns carbon sequestration strategies in urban environments, with the aim of analyzing their effectiveness, implementation conditions, and contribution to climate change mitigation through nature-based solutions.

Proposal 5 – Biodiversity and Ecosystem functioning (BEF) in long-term monitoring networks

The fifth thematic area is focused on biodiversity and ecosystem functioning within long-term monitoring networks, with particular reference to BEF (Biodiversity–Ecosystem Functioning) networks

and the development of international scientific collaborations based on comparable and harmonized data.

Proposal 6 – AI driven urban biodiversity and third-party cooperation

The sixth thematic area concerns the use of artificial intelligence and remote sensing-based methodologies for monitoring urban and forest biodiversity, including in relation to the contribution of research activities to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Proposals that are not clearly attributable to at least one of the aforementioned thematic areas are considered not eligible.

5. Eligible subjects

Eligible applicants under this procedure are research teams affiliated with universities, research bodies and scientific institutions, whether public or private non-profit entities, having their registered offices in Italy or in China.

Proposals must be submitted by partnerships mandatorily composed of at least one Italian researcher and at least one Chinese researcher, formally identified and actively involved in the project activities. The lead partner of the partnership must be an Italian researcher.

Applicants shall ensure full compliance with the applicable regulations governing public funding, including the prohibition of double funding and the principle of “Do No Significant Harm” (DNSH) with respect to environmental objectives.

6. Submission of proposals modalities

Project proposals must be submitted according to the methods, terms and forms made available by Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale on its institutional website and on the channels indicated in this Notice.

For the purposes of participating in the procedure, the submitting parties must submit, under penalty of exclusion, the following documentation:

- Project proposal format (model A), duly completed and signed by the scientific representative of the Italian proposing entity;
- Form of application for participation (model B), duly completed and signed, accompanied by information on the processing of personal data pursuant to current legislation.
- Curricula vitae of the project team, including the main scientific and professional qualifications and relevant experience with respect to the planned activities;
- Declaration of Compliance with the DNSH Principle;
- Valid identification document of the declarant acting as Lead Applicant.

The entire documentation must be transmitted exclusively by PEC to the address eidonsrl@legalmail.it, no later than the day 01/31/2026 at 24:00.

Submission that is incomplete, late or does not comply with the provisions of this Notice shall result in exclusion from the selection procedure.

7. Proposals evaluation and financing award

Eligible proposals are subjected to technical-scientific evaluation by a commission of independent experts, appointed by Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale and validated by NBFC. The evaluation aims to assess the scientific quality of the proposals, their consistency with NBFC's thematic areas and priorities, the added value of international collaboration, their technical and economic feasibility, and the expected impact of the results.

At the end of the evaluation, a ranking of the eligible proposals is drawn up. Each proposal is given a maximum overall score of 100 points. The final score is determined by the sum of the scores assigned to the individual evaluation criteria below.

Evaluation Criteria	Summary Description	Maximum Score
Scientific quality and value	Objectives Clarity, appropriateness of research methodologies	30
Thematic coherence with NBFC criteria	Reasoned and explicit coherence with one of the six thematic area listed in this Notice	30
Technical and economic feasibility	Appropriateness with planned activities, project duration and contribution expenditure	20
Project team experience and knowledge	scientific and professional competence of the working group, consistency between curriculum and objectives of the proposal, involvement in national and international research projects.	10
Total Score		100

At the end of the evaluation activities, the Evaluation Commission draws up the ranking of eligible project proposals, ordered according to the overall score achieved.

The final ranking is approved by Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale, after validation by the National Biodiversity Future Center (NBFC), and is published on the institutional website of Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale at www.eidongroup.it.

The publication of the ranking on the Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale website has the value of an official communication in all respects to the participating entities. No further individual communications are foreseen, except as necessary for the purposes of the next phase of granting and reporting the contribution.

Funding is awarded in ranking order, within the limits of available resources.

The award becomes effective following verification of the possession of the requirements declared by the proposing entities and must be formalized no later than 02/13/2026.

8. Duration of projects

Funded projects must be completed within deadlines compatible with the NBFC Program timelines and, in any case, concluded and reported by 12/31/2026.

9. Proprietà dei risultati

The scientific results generated under the funded projects remain the property of the executing parties.

NBFC retains the right to use these results for institutional, scientific, and policy purposes, in compliance with current legislation and open science principles.

10. Properties of results

The following constitute grounds for exclusion from the procedure, without the possibility of subsequent integration or regularization:

- a. the submission of the application beyond the compulsory deadline indicated in this Notice;
- b. the transmission of documentation in ways other than those provided for (PEC);
- c. failure to submit even just one of the required documents, i.e. submission of incomplete documentation, which does not comply with or does not include the required signatures;
- d. failure of the partnership to comply with the minimum eligibility requirements set out in the Call, in particular the lack of at least one Italian researcher and at least one Chinese researcher;
- e. the submission of project proposals that are not clearly attributable to at least one of the eligible thematic areas;
- f. exceeding the maximum amount of the grantable contribution;
- g. the existence of situations of incompatibility, conflict of interest or impediments provided for by current legislation;
- h. failure to comply with the principles applicable to public funding, including the prohibition of double funding.

Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale reserves the right to conduct verifications at any stage of the procedure regarding the truthfulness of the statements made, excluding the submitting party in the event of false statements, without prejudice to the additional responsibilities provided for by current legislation.

11. Final provisions

Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale reserves the right not to proceed with the award if no proposal is suitable or consistent with the objectives of this Notice.

As far as not expressly provided for in this Notice, the existing national and European regulatory provisions, as well as the principles and rules of the NBFC Programme, apply.

12. Processing of personal data

Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR) and current national legislation on the protection of personal data, the data provided by the participating entities will be processed exclusively for the purposes related to the management of this procedure, including the evaluation, selection, granting, monitoring and reporting activities of the funded projects.

The Data Controller is Eidon S.r.l. Impresa Sociale, with registered office and contacts indicated on the institutional website www.eidongroup.it

Data processing will take place in compliance with the principles of lawfulness, correctness, transparency, minimization and security, by means of paper and computer tools suitable to guarantee the confidentiality and integrity of the information.

The provision of data is mandatory for participation in the procedure; failure to provide data makes it impossible to evaluate the application.

Interested parties may exercise at any time the rights provided for in Articles 15 et seq. of the GDPR, including the right to access, rectify, cancel, limit and object to processing, within the limits and conditions provided for by current legislation.

Personal data may be communicated to third parties involved in the procedure exclusively for purposes closely related to the investigation and evaluation of proposals, in compliance with confidentiality obligations.

13. Model

- Model A - Form of application for participation.
- Model B - Project proposal format.
- Declaration of Compliance with the DNSH Principle