CHINA-SPAIN JOINT CALL FOR INNOVATION-DRIVEN R&D COOPERATION STRATEGIC PROJECTS 2026-2027

MOST-CDTI CALL FOR PROPOSALS UNDER THE SPAIN-CHINA TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION PROGRAM (CHINEKA)

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities of the Kingdom of Spain on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation in June 2022, renewed in 2023 and 2026. Within this MoU both Ministries agreed to launch joint calls promoting innovation-driven R&D cooperation projects and to be implemented by the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science and Technology, of the People´s Republic of China (DIC MOST), and CDTI E.P.E.

Within the framework of the Spain–China Intergovernmental Programme (CHINEKA), CDTI E.P.E. (Spain) and the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science and Technology (DIC MOST, China) hereby launch a **new funding modality** dedicated to **Strategic Unique Projects**, aimed at promoting ambitious, market-driven joint R&D and technology development initiatives with high technological impact, exceptional novelty, strong market potential and a robust collaborative structure between Spanish companies and Chinese entities.

This new modality seeks to strengthen bilateral R&D cooperation by providing **enhanced funding conditions** to support **larger-scale, more ambitious and high-impact collaborative flagship projects in strategic technological fields of mutual interest**, addressing global challenges and accelerating industrial transformation, particularly in **renewable energy, health, manufacturing technologies and mobility**, with due consideration to Spain–China foreign direct investment flows and shared business priorities.

To support this initiative, both organizations will allocate €3 million and an equivalent amount of RMB 24 million, respectively, subject to the applicable eligibility and evaluation criteria.

CALL GUIDELINES:

1) NODAL IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES

The Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science and Technology (DIC MOST), of the People´s Republic of China, and CDTI E.P.E., Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, Government of Spain, are the nodal implementing entities from the Chinese and Spanish side, respectively.

The Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science and Technology, of the People´s Republic of China is the body of the Chinese administration in charge of

carrying out intergovernmental scientific and technological innovation cooperation with relevant countries, regions, international organizations and multilateral mechanisms.

CDTI E.P.E. is a Public Entity under the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities Government of Spain, which fosters the technological development and innovation of Spanish Companies.

2)THEMATIC AREAS

The current Call is open to collaborative R&D projects in all following priority sectors:

- Renewable technologies
- Climate change, biodiversity and sustainable mobility
- Production technologies and smart manufacturing
- Biomedicine, advanced therapies including digital health

3) TYPE OF PROPOSALS

Industry-driven and market-oriented R&D projects, joint technological co-operation projects between industrial partners (start-ups, SMEs and large companies), Universities or Research Centers in China and industrial partners in Spain consisting in the development or substantial improvement of new products, processes or services will be considered.

Duration of projects: Projects should have a duration of 2 years, starting in January 2028 and ending no later than 31st December 2029.

The proposals have to cover the thematic areas above mentioned to enhance bi-regional co-operation and develop new partnerships as well as strengthen existing ones.

4) TIMETABLE

- **Launch of Call for Proposals: 30th October 2026**
- **Deadline for Submission of applications:**
  - **Chinese applicants via MOST: 18h December 2026 at 4:00 pm China Standard Time (MOST)**
  - **Spanish applicants via CDTI: 15th January 2027 at 2:00 pm Central European Standard time (CET)**

  Please note that applications should be submitted by PIs to their respective agencies. Unilateral submission of proposals or submissions will be disqualified.

- **Eligibility feedback to applicants: 29th January 2027**
- **Deadline for Submission of complete projects: 26th February 2027 (only applicable to Spanish PIs)**
- **Label concession: September 2027**

5) WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible Spanish Applicants

Spanish applicants or participating entities must include at least one enterprise (preferably two). Spanish eligible enterprises include small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and large companies with fewer than 499 employees (small mid-cap companies) or whose project development management is based in the Canary Islands regardless of their size, with legal personality and tax domicile in Spain. Participation of research institutes/universities and other organizations is highly encouraged as subcontractors or self-funded participants.

Spanish applicants may register and submit a maximum of one (1) proposal to this call.

Each Spanish applicant or consortium must have a total minimum project budget of €800,000 to be considered eligible.

Eligible Chinese Applicants

The Chinese Applicants Lead and participating entities should be either research institutes, universities or enterprises registered in mainland China with independent legal person status, with competent R&D capacities, solid foundation for international cooperation and sound operational management. State organs cannot lead or participate in applications.

6) HOW TO APPLY?

First stage - Common International phase:

- **Joint R&D&I proposals must be submitted to DIC MOST, within 50 days since the official launching of the call in order to consider the eligibility, being the deadline for submissions applicable to Chinese PIs, 18th December 2026 (4:00 pm CST) 2026.** Unilaterally submitted proposals shall not be considered.
  In China, the participants will have to submit a formal application with the funding Proposal and the other documents required (full proposals) to DIC MOST in Chinese.

- **In Spain, the participants will have to submit a formal R&D international project (CHINEKA+) application through CDTI E.P.E.'s website (https://sede.cdti.gob.es/) within the deadline for submissions applicable to Spanish PIs, which is next 15th January (2:00 pm CET), 2027**. Unilaterally submitted proposals shall not be considered

Documents:

- Chinese and Spanish co-applicants must elaborate a single project proposal application. The Bilateral Co-operation Form must emphasize how the proposed collaboration adds value, main technology highlights and innovations, activities to be developed by the Parties involved underlining the collaborative work being carried out on each side, their expertise, etc.

  Please note that this Application Form must be sealed and signed by all co-applicants at the end of the document, expressly indicating name and designation of the authorized signatory in the organization. Any other relevant information not expressly mentioned on the form and that the applicants consider relevant may be included as Annexes.

- In addition to the Application Form, co-applicants have to submit the following documents as relevant appendices:

  - **Consortium Agreement** in English whereby the co-applicants should agree upon the ownership, access rights and exploitation of intellectual property generated during the co-operation, to be submitted to CDTI E.P.E. and DIC MOST. The Consortium Agreement needs to be sealed and signed by all co-applicants

  - **Additional specific documents required by CDTI E.P.E.**

    They will be requested in the second phase according to CDTI E.P.E´s. procedure.

Second Stage - National level

In Spain, only those proposals which have positive eligibility by CDTI E.P.E. and DIC MOST will be able to submit the individual R&D&I proposal established by each agency.

- The funding Proposal in Spanish required by CDTI E.P.E.:

Only industrial partners, individually, are able to summit the funding proposal and other required documents through the electronic services at https://sede.cdti.ob.es/AreaPrivada/Expedientes/Accesosistema.aspx. Application must be submitted before the **26th February 2027**, after receiving the notification of eligibility.

The complete details of the Call are available on DIC MOST's and CDTI E.P.E.'s websites: https://service.most.gov.cn/ and http://www.cdti.es

Applicants are recommended to contact the nodal representatives at their national funding organizations whose contact details are given below:

Chinese side (DIC MOST)
Ms. Song Song
Division of European Affairs, MOST
Joint Call Manager
Phone: 86-10-58881357
E-mail: sophie1117@126.com
Website: https://service.most.gov.cn/

Spanish side (CDTI E.P.E.)
Department of Foreign Technological Action
Center for the Development of Industrial Technology and Innovation - CDTI E.P.E.
Mr. Ricardo Rubianes / Mr. Adrián Gutiérrez
Joint Call Managers
Phone: +34 91 581 56 07
E-mail: china@cdti.es
Website: www.cdti.es

7) ELIGIBLE COSTS AND FUNDING

The project must clearly specify the costs of each and all the activities pertaining to the project and specify the costs to be respectively borne by the Spanish and Chinese partners. The cost of the Chinese and Spanish partners must be eligible under the laws that may be applicable in each country and under internal regulations of CDTI E.P.E. and DIC MOST, respectively.

The funding conditions from DIC MOST are set in RMB and the ones from CDTI E.P.E. in €. Budgets must be expressed in the local currency of each applicant. All figures and budgetary conditions in this Call refer to the value of both currencies on the date of the launch of the Call.

In order to ensure a reciprocal and balanced participation and funding by DIC MOST and CDTI E.P.E., and to guarantee an effective cooperation, none of the countries´ budget (namely the budget of its entities participating in the proposal) can have more than 70% of the global budget.

DIC MOST will provide up to **¥ 24 million RMB** for a **maximum number of 4 projects (6 million yuans for each project).** DIC MOST funding will be done through the National Key R&D Programme for International Scientific and Technological Innovation Cooperation.ao

CDTI E.P.E. will provide matching funding needed for the Spanish participation in the referred projects setting **aside 3 million €** (Three million euros) specifically for cooperation with MOST, China from the 2027 competitive grant Call INNOGLOBAL FEDER.

Spanish companies located in certain regions (FEDER/ERDF-eligible regions) participating in projects considered eligible could benefit from a grant of up to 80% of the eligible costs of their participation in the projects depending on their size and type of activity – industrial research or experimental development -.

8) REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION

All received proposals are peer reviewed and processed independently by both sides. After having received the recommendations of the respective evaluation panels, DIC MOST and CDTI E.P.E. will jointly arrive at a mutual understanding on the projects to be funded.

The best project will be selected for each thematic area. In the event that a thematic area is not covered, the second best-positioned project from another area may be selected, and so on.

9) EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria are the following:

- Crucial Criteria
  - Financial capacity of Partner
  - Formal Agreement between Partners

- Basic Assessment Criteria
  - Partnership and Partners
    - Well balanced partnership
    - Added Value through co-operation
    - Technology Capacity of all Partners
    - Managerial Capacity of all Partners
  - Project Structure
    - Methodology and Planning Approach
    - Milestones and deliverables
    - Cost and financing structure
    - Financing commitment of each Partner

- Technology and Innovation

  - Technological Advance
    - Degree of technological maturity and risk
    - Technological Achievements
  - Innovation
    - Degree of innovation
    - Geographical / sector impact

- Market and Competitiveness

  - Market and profitability
    - Market size
    - Market access and risk
    - Return on investment

- Competitive advantages
    - Strategic importance of the project
    - Enhanced capabilities and visibility

10) FUNDING DECISIONS

DIC MOST and CDTI E.P.E. will, after having formed their mutual understanding on the projects to be funded, make their funding decisions according to their normal procedures and rules and on a non-exchange of funds basis. CDTI E.P.E. and DIC MOST will inform the beneficiaries about the funding decisions according to their normal practice.

11) REPORTING AND PROJECT OUTPUT

Funding granted by DIC MOST and CDTI E.P.E. will be governed by the general terms and conditions of each funding organization, respectively. Both parties will carry out an international follow-up until the completion of the projects and inform the counterpart about the success or failure of the international cooperation at the end of the project.

If required, each participant should submit financial and technical reports to their national funding organisations, according to national regulations. The progress and final results of each individual contract/letter of grant will be monitored by the respective national funding organisations.