



Dear readers,

Ud'A Research News dedicates this special issue to the new national Three-year Research Plan 2026-2028 (*Piano Triennale della Ricerca - PTR*), published by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR) on February 3, 2026, together with the corresponding calendar for the forthcoming calls for proposals.

The Plan, established by the national [Budget Law 2026](#), aims at ensuring a stable scheduling of funding for basic and applied research. The initiative relies on the **Research Programming Fund** (*Fondo per la programmazione della ricerca - FPR*), with an initial budget of 259 million Euro for 2026, which will gradually grow to 837 million Euro in 2031.

It intends to support and promote

- **Fundamental Research** through the PRIN (Projects of Relevant National Interest), PRIN Hybrid, and FIS (Italian Science Fund) programmes
- **Applied Research** through the new **Synergy Grant** tool
- **European Partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding**, strengthening Italian participation in strategic Horizon Europe 2021 - 2027 partnerships and other global initiatives
- **Evaluation and Monitoring** of impact in funded projects, with the introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the scientific, social, and economic outcomes of the Plan ([Ministerial Decree 398/2025](#))
- **Sustainable Development**, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 UN Agenda, promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Posts in the Ud'A Research News are targeted to the four broad researchers' profiles used by the European Commission: [R1 - First Stage Researchers](#), [R2 - Recognised Researchers](#), [R3 - Established Researchers](#), [R4 - Leading Researchers](#). In the Italian context, these may refer to R1: PhD candidates; R2: Post-docs holding a non-permanent position (e.g. assegni, contratti di ricerca, RTDA); R3: Associate professors, tenure track researchers (RTDB, RTT); R4: Full professors.

For information or suggestions on **Ud'A Research News**, please contact us at [research.news@unich.it](mailto:research.news@unich.it) (person in charge: Ms. Anna Fois, Research Division, ext. 6241).

Enjoy your reading!

Research and Third Mission Executive Areas



## The 2026–2028 Three-year Research Plan: A renewed national research system

The Ministry of University and Research (MUR) aims at overcoming the fragmentation in governance and funding streams within the national research planning and financing system. To this end, it has established priority and strategic objectives to be pursued over a defined timeframe through two new instruments, launched on February 3, 2026.

- **Research Programming Fund (FPR)** brings together the Ministry main funding for Fundamental and Applied research, i.e. Italian Fund for Scientific and Technological Research (FIRST), Special Supplementary Fund for Research (FISR), Italian Science Fund (FIS), Italian Applied Science Fund (FISA) and Fund for Economic and Social Research (FRES). The FPR budget will increase from around 259 million Euros in 2026 to over 687 million Euros in 2031, with a significant increase in resources from 2029 onwards. In addition, from 2026, the Fund will be supplemented with 150 million Euros per year dedicated exclusively to PRIN.
- **Three-year Research Plan 2026 – 2028 (PTR)** establishes a new course for the national scientific system. It represents not only an economic programming tool but a true strategic manifesto aimed at making research funding stable, predictable and competitive at the international level. For all actions, it is expected that the evaluation procedures will be concluded within a maximum of 6 months from the deadline for submission of applications.

Over the last four years, between 2022 and 2025, Italian **Basic Research** has been bolstered by investments exceeding **1.1 billion euros** through the **PRIN** (Projects of Relevant National Interest) and **FIS** (Italian Science Fund) schemes. These resources have been instrumental in enhancing "bottom-up" excellence, with a strategic focus on young researchers and the use of ranking lists (*scorrimento delle graduatorie*) to reward scientific merit. In parallel, **Applied Research**—funded through the **FISA** (Italian Applied Science Fund) with increasingly substantial allocations that grew from 50 to over 172 million Euros, has promoted **technology transfer**, aiming at transforming scientific ideas into tangible industrial impacts.

**PTR** identifies political and institutional priorities which, for the year 2026, are outlined in the [relevant policy document](#) and include the following

1. **NRRP (PNRR) – Consolidating the long-term positive effects of the reforms and investments achieved**, completing the NRRP objectives while ensuring effectiveness and sustainability; strengthening the research

ecosystems established under the NRRP (Partnerships, National Centres, and Innovation Ecosystems), engaging universities, research bodies, and businesses, leading competition within European Union structural programs.

2. **Research Impact** – Through stable financial programming, the Ministry intends to promote a more effective integration between Fundamental and Applied research, a necessary prerequisite to foster **technology transfer**, transforming scientific results into concrete solutions for markets and society. This approach seeks to root research within local territories, increasing its social and economic impact.
3. **Research** – Enhancing PhD programmes; attracting international talent; reforming university recruitment processes to reward merit; strengthening research infrastructures and promoting shared access thereof.
4. **Internationalization** – Strengthening Italian participation in European and international programmes, such as Horizon Europe 2021 - 2027; promoting cooperation with Africa and the internationalization of universities; investing in research infrastructures, including those at the international level.

**Africa Strategy** - MUR (Ministry of University and Research) identifies the African continent as a priority scientific partner rather than a mere recipient of aid. With the goal of building equal partnerships based on reciprocity, it promotes:

- **bidirectional mobility** for researchers and students
- **co-financing of research programmes** on themes of mutual interest, such as food security, sustainable resource management, and public health
- **scientific capacity building** within local institutions, consolidating Italy's role as a bridge between Europe and Africa in the fields of higher education and research.

The **2026-2028 PTR** fully incorporates the guidelines of the **European Research Area (ERA)** and the priorities of the **Horizon Europe 2021-2027** programme, focusing on:

1. **Technological sovereignty** – massive investments in critical fields such as quantum technologies, Artificial Intelligence, High-Performance Computing (HPC), and cybersecurity
2. **Green transition and health** – research oriented toward sustainable climate solutions and innovative pathways in precision medicine to address the most urgent societal challenges
3. **Knowledge hybridization** – introduction of the **PRIN Hybrid** model, designed to foster the integration of computational sciences with the humanities.

The funding schemes outlined in the **2026–2028 Three-year Research Plan** are open to Universities, Research Institutions overseen by MUR, AFAM institutions (focusing on Higher Education in Art, Music, and Dance) affiliated with the MUR, enterprises, and non-profit organisations as specified in the individual calls. For all funding schemes, the **opening dates for application** are scheduled by **April 30th**, and the **publication of ranking lists** is expected by **September 30th** for each year of the triennium (2026–2028). The annual financial allocation provided by the Ministry varies each year for every specific funding scheme. Below is an overview of the funding programmes, grouped in **Basic Research** and **Applied Research** opportunities, **European Partnerships**, and **Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)**.

## Fundamental Research

2026

**Research** through a **bottom-up approach**, aimed at fostering widespread scientific excellence. They are structured as collaborative and consortial tools, intended to strengthen the Italian research fabric by building stable scientific networks between universities and research institutions. Depending on the specific provisions of each call, projects may be carried out by a research group divided into one or more research units, or by the Principal Investigator alone.

**Domain:** Any research field within the European Research Council (ERC) macro-sectors, based on the strategic priorities defined by the Three-year Research Plan

**Targeted to:** Researcher R3, R4

**Budget:** 270.029.354 Euro

**Contatto:** [Task Force Prin](#) Ud'A

### PRIN Hybrid 2026

New funding instrument primarily oriented towards supporting strategic scientific and technological sectors, aligned with both European priorities and the competitiveness needs of the national system. The **PRIN Hybrid** instrument encourages the enhancement of **multidisciplinarity** as a structured dialogue between diverse and complementary skills. It promotes the integration of computational sciences, digital technologies, green technologies, and the humanities, social sciences, and arts. Furthermore, it supports the application of new technologies to artistic, choreographic, and musical disciplines through a "knowledge hybridization" approach. These projects also aim to foster interaction with businesses and non-profit organizations.

**Domain:** Quantum technologies, High-Performance Computing (HPC), Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, and innovative technologies and pathways within the healthcare sector

**Targeted to:** Researcher R3, R4

**Budget:** 59.000.000 Euro

**Contact:** [Task Force Prin Ud'A](#)

## Fundamental Research

2027

**PRIN 2027 - Budget:** 180.633.003 Euro

**PRIN Hybrid 2027 - Budget:** 57.000.000 Euro

### Italian Science Fund – FIS Starting 2027

The official notice for this funding scheme is scheduled for publication in **2027**. The **FIS Starting** follows the ERC model, heavily focusing on the Principal Investigator by rewarding individual scientific excellence, leadership capacity, and projects with high innovative potential.

**Domain:** All research fields

**Targeted to:** Researcher R3, R4

**Budget:** 100.000.000 Euro

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## Fundamental Research

2028

**PRIN 2028 - Budget:** 180.703.366 Euro

**PRIN Hybrid 2028 – Budget:** 35.000.000 Euro

### Italian Fund for Science - FIS Consolidator – Advanced 2028

The official notice for this funding scheme is scheduled in **2028**. It requires the Principal Investigator (PI) to take full responsibility for the managerial and organizational oversight of resources, as well as the intellectual development of their own research insights and trajectories. It encourages original, high-risk, and high-impact research approaches aligning with the highest international standards, while promoting scientific autonomy and flexibility throughout the project evolution.

**Domain:** All research fields

**Targeted to:** Researcher R3, R4

**Budget:** 130.000.000 Euro

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## Applied Research

2026

### Synergy Grant 2026

New Funding Scheme supporting applied, innovative, and frontier research projects that—due to their scientific ambition and project complexity—require advanced cooperation models and a substantial integration of multidisciplinary expertise. It is designed to strengthen multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary research ecosystems, characterized by **strong public-private synergies** and the direct participation of businesses in project activities. It bridges basic and applied research, enhancing the entire “knowledge value chain”. The instrument may support the applied evolution of top-tier projects previously funded under the **PRIN Hybrid** scheme to attract talent.

**Domain:** Priority to scientific and technological fields strategic for national competitiveness, autonomy, and technological sovereignty. Key areas include High-Performance Computing (HPC), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, Quantum Technologies, Innovative healthcare technologies and pathways

**Budget:** 50.000.000 Euro

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## Applied Research

2027

2028

**Synergy Grant 2027- Budget:** 40.000.000 Euro

**Synergy Grant 2027- Budget:** 50.000.000 Euro

## European Partnership Memorandum of Understanding

### European Partnership

The Ministry supports the participation of the national scientific community in co-funded European Partnerships operating in strategic areas consistent with national priorities. It ensures continuity and an adequate level of co-financing for the initiatives in which Italy participates. Resources will be allocated based on a systematic review of relevant partnerships and their co-financing needs, applying priority criteria based on expected impact, national positioning, complementarity with national instruments, and the ability to engage universities and public research institutions.

**Domain:** Digital & ICT; Health & Biotech; Green & Clean Tech; Agri-food & Bioeconomy; Technological Innovation; Key Enabling Technologies

(KETs), With a specific focus on **microelectronics and semiconductors**, in alignment with the **European Chips Act** framework. ([D.L. 104/2023](#)).

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

Funding bilateral calls implementing **Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)** already signed or currently being finalized by the Minister. Cooperation agreements include—but are not limited to— partner Countries such as **Morocco, Kenya, Switzerland, Serbia, Algeria, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan**.

These calls aim at translating the agreements into joint research and innovation initiatives, researchers' mobility schemes, and shared strategic planning. Particular emphasis will be placed on initiatives with African Countries, consistent with the Mattei Plan and in coordination with the African Union–European Union Innovation Agenda, as a joint AU-EU framework guiding research and innovation cooperation towards concrete results and impacts, promoting the strengthening of innovation ecosystems and collaboration on shared priorities (including public health, green transition, technology/innovation, and strengthening scientific capacity).

**Budget:** for European Partnerships and the Memorandum of Understanding it will be divided as follows

**Year 2026:** 30.000.000 Euro

**Year 2027:** 30.000.000 Euro

**Year 2028:** 40.000.000 Euro

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