PUBLIC CALL

FOR THE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

"MEDITERRANEAN INGREDIENTS Lessons in Entrepreneurship, Design, Manufacturing and Innovation"

Article 1 – Purpose

The Ministry of Culture – Mission Unit for Cultural Cooperation with Africa and the Wider Mediterranean, within the scope of its institutional remit and cultural cooperation initiatives with African and Mediterranean countries, promotes the entrepreneurial training programme Mediterranean Ingredients – Lessons in Entrepreneurship, Design, Manufacturing and Innovation. The programme is implemented by the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat, in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Morocco, the Moroccan Forum of Cultural and Creative Industries (FOMICC), Fondation Hiba and the Federation of Cultural and Creative Industries of Morocco.

The programme is an integrated pathway for cooperation, entrepreneurial training, innovation and skills transfer. It aims to help transform ideas, skills, raw materials and local resources into business proposals, products and solutions with tangible development potential.

By bringing local expertise and value chains into dialogue with Italian know-how in research, design, manufacturing and innovation, the programme connects training, research and the productive sector, with particular attention to environmental sustainability and the circular economy.

The programme adopts an open-innovation and applied-learning approach, combining training, workshops and practical activities, collaborative design, specialist mentoring, and a subsequent phase of training and prototyping in Italy.

This Call is intended to select seventy-five (75) Moroccan designers, women and men, active in the fashion and textile sectors, working independently or within an atelier, brand, company or other creative or production organisation.

Article 2 – Objectives

The programme pursues the following objectives in particular:

(a) to strengthen local skills in sustainable innovation, the circular economy, entrepreneurship and the cultural and creative industries;

(b) to encourage the development of business, product or process ideas capable of enhancing raw materials, by-products, skills and local value chains;

(c) to promote the application of sustainability and circular-economy principles in textiles, fashion, design, agri-food and other fields consistent with the programme's aims;

(d) to support participants in moving from ideas to design and from design to practical experimentation through training, co-design, mentoring and prototyping;

(e) to develop entrepreneurial, design, technical-scientific and production skills, supporting the definition of business models and the assessment of the technical, economic and production feasibility of proposals;

(f) to promote the transfer of knowledge, technologies and innovative methodologies between Morocco and Italy, connecting local expertise with the know-how of the Italian production, creative and research systems;

(g) to build and consolidate a stable cooperation network among institutions, universities, research centres, businesses, professionals, incubators and other public and private stakeholders in both countries;

(h) to support selected projects through the development of prototypes, products, demonstrators or other project outputs, and subsequently encourage their public presentation and, where possible, their promotion at trade fairs, exhibitions, events and sectoral initiatives.

Article 3 – Eligibility requirements
Applicants must:

(a) be at least 18 years old and under 51 years old on the application deadline;

(b) be citizens of the Kingdom of Morocco and resident in Morocco;

(c) enjoy civil and political rights;

(d) hold a valid identity document;

(e) have sufficient knowledge of English or French to participate fully in the training and project activities provided for by the programme.

Participation in the programme entails a commitment to take part regularly in the activities planned across its different phases.

Applicants must undertake to obtain a valid passport before the scholarship-award stage and any stay in Italy, and to participate in the stay in Italy if selected.

Absence from programme activities, unless justified by valid reasons, will result in exclusion from subsequent programme phases.

Participants also undertake to contribute to project-related communication, documentation, monitoring and dissemination activities.

Article 4 – How to apply
1. Applications must be submitted using the online form. The link will be communicated on 6 November 2026. The form will be available from 9 to 28 November 2026 and must be completed and submitted no later than 28 November 2026 at 6:00 p.m. (Morocco time). The general conditions of participation will be available directly through the form and must be accepted when submitting the application.

An automatic receipt confirmation will be sent to the email address provided in the form.

2. The application form referred to in paragraph 1 includes the following declarations:

(a) that the applicant is at least 18 years old;

(b) that the applicant is a citizen of the Kingdom of Morocco;

(c) that the applicant resides in the Kingdom of Morocco;

(d) that the applicant enjoys civil and political rights in the Kingdom of Morocco;

(e) that the applicant holds a valid identity document;

(f) that the applicant has sufficient knowledge of English or French, as certified by a self-declaration in the application form. The Administration reserves the right to verify the applicant's actual level during the selection procedure;

(g) that the applicant is not in a situation of incompatibility or conflict of interest with the programme's promoting and implementing bodies, as provided for in this Call and under applicable law;

(h) that the applicant is available to take part in the programme activities in accordance with the schedule and arrangements set out in this Call and subsequently communicated by the promoting bodies;

(i) that the applicant has read and fully and unreservedly accepted all the provisions of this Call.

3. The application must include the following information and documents, to be entered or uploaded directly through the online form:

(a) a brief presentation of the applicant's professional background, skills and activity;

(b) a portfolio or link to a selection of work in the fashion and/or textile sectors;

(c) brief answers to questions about the applicant's motivation and interest in the programme;

(d) confirmation of availability for the activities scheduled from 9 to 13 December 2026;

(e) a copy of a valid identity document or passport.

Additional supporting administrative documentation may be requested at a later stage from shortlisted applicants, in accordance with the applicable requirements.

4. Applications must be submitted in English or French. The Administration reserves the right to request clarifications or additional documents in the cases and within the limits permitted by this Call and applicable law, provided that the eligibility requirements are met by the application deadline.

5. Each applicant may submit only one application. If the same person submits more than one application, only the last application validly submitted before the deadline will be considered. Applications received after the deadline, submitted through methods other than those specified in

this Article, or lacking essential information required to identify the applicant and assess the application will not be considered, in accordance with the Article on grounds for exclusion.

6. Submission of an application constitutes acknowledgement and full acceptance of the provisions and conditions of this Call and, if admitted, a commitment to participate in programme activities according to the schedule and arrangements set out in this Call and subsequently communicated by the promoting bodies.

Article 5 – Evaluation Committee

Applications and participant selection for the subsequent programme phases will be assessed by a specially appointed Evaluation Committee, to be formally established after the application deadline.

The Committee will consist of four (4) members with institutional, scientific, technical and professional expertise relevant to this Call, namely:

(a) a representative of the Ministry of Culture's Mission Unit for Cultural Cooperation with Africa and the Wider Mediterranean, who will act as Chair;

(b) an expert appointed by the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat;

(c) two experts with recognised experience or standing, appointed by the Mission Unit and the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat, selected for their recognised expertise in the programme's relevant fields.

The Committee will deliberate collectively in accordance with the criteria and procedures set out in this Call. Decisions will be taken by a majority of members. In the event of a tie, the Chair's vote will prevail.

The composition of the Committee will comply with the principles of competence, impartiality and transparency. Upon taking up their duties, members will declare that they have no incompatibility or conflict of interest in relation to applicants or the ideas/projects being assessed.

To ensure continuity, consistency and a unified assessment process, the Committee will remain unchanged throughout the selection procedure, except where a duly justified need arises or a member becomes incompatible, unable to act or unavailable.

The same Committee will oversee the development of applications and projects through the different programme phases and will: (a) assess applications submitted under this Call; (b) assess ideas and project proposals developed during the intensive training days, in order to select up to 10 projects for the mentoring and language-training pathway; and (c) select, from among projects that have completed the mentoring pathway, up to 5 beneficiaries of the Italy residency scholarships at partner companies, laboratories, research centres, universities or other institutions.

Minutes will be drawn up for Committee meetings and decisions. The results of the different stages will be approved and made public in accordance with this Call.

Article 6 – Assessment criteria

1. Following the administrative eligibility check carried out by the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat, the Committee will select up to seventy-five (75) participants for the first phase of the programme. If the number of eligible applications exceeds the available places, the comparative assessment will take into account the applicant's experience and achievements, motivation and the relevance of their profile to the programme's objectives. Initial selection is of individual participants. Project proposals may subsequently be developed collaboratively during the intensive days; the subsequent selection will concern up to 10 projects, while the Italy residency scholarships will be awarded individually to up to 5 beneficiaries.

2. At the end of the intensive training week, the Committee will meet to assess the ideas and project proposals developed during the training days and select up to 10 projects for the remote mentoring and language-training pathway.

The comparative merit assessment will be based on a total score of up to 100 points. Applicants must obtain a minimum score of 75/100 to be considered eligible.

The Committee will assess applications and projects on the basis of the following criteria: (a) the applicant's motivation and the quality, consistency and degree of innovation of the proposal in relation to the programme's objectives; (b) the ability to enhance local raw materials, resources, skills and value chains; (c) the technical feasibility, development potential and business prospects of the proposal; (d) the project's internationalisation potential in terms of skills transfer between Morocco and Italy and cultural cooperation; (e) the applicant's ability to build on the outcomes of the training and mentoring activities, and the project's resulting level of maturity, feasibility and development potential.

3. At the end of the mentoring pathway, for the purpose of awarding the residency scholarships referred to in Article 7, the Committee will carry out a further comparative assessment using the criteria set out in paragraph 2 above, again on a total scale of 100 points.

4. The weighting of the criteria and the corresponding points will be defined by the Committee before the start of each assessment phase.

Article 7 – Residency scholarships and prototyping activities in Italy – hosting arrangements

1. At the end of the mentoring pathway, the Committee will select up to 5 beneficiaries, each of whom will be awarded an individual scholarship of EUR 5,000.00 (five thousand euros) to support participation in a period of training, applied research, experimentation and project development in Italy.

2. Activities will take place at companies, laboratories, research centres, universities, institutions or other partner organisations identified by the promoting bodies in relation to the characteristics of the selected projects. Matching each beneficiary with a host organisation will take into account the relevant value chain, the technical and scientific skills required, available technologies and equipment, and the specific needs of experimentation and prototyping.

Proposed matches will be submitted to participants during the mentoring period and may be accepted or declined until the end of that period. Final identification of the host organisation is a

necessary condition for access to the subsequent phase of training, applied research, experimentation and project development in Italy.

3. The scholarship amount is individual support for the beneficiary and does not include the costs of travel within the host country, accommodation or delivery of the activities, which will be covered separately through the programme budget, in accordance with the arrangements and limits defined by the promoting bodies. The programme will cover:

– international travel to and from Italy and insurance coverage for the entire stay in Italy;

– an additional flat-rate contribution of EUR 1,600.00 (one thousand six hundred euros) will be paid to each participant to cover accommodation during the stay; any internal transfers connected with the activities; the costs of training, tutoring and technical assistance provided by host organisations; access to laboratories, workshops, equipment, machinery and other infrastructure; materials, processing and other technical costs directly related to experimentation and prototype development; and any further services required for the activities, subject to prior authorisation by the promoting bodies. The amount specified in this Article is fixed, not subject to revision, and represents the total amount payable to cover all the costs of the activities described.

These services and provisions are made available to the beneficiary in addition to the scholarship and are not included in the individual amount of EUR 5,000.00.

4. The scholarship is strictly linked to participation in the programme and does not constitute or give rise to any employment or professional collaboration relationship with the promoting bodies or the host organisation.

5. The payment arrangements for the scholarship, the duration of the stay in Italy, the identification of the host organisation and any further organisational conditions will be communicated to beneficiaries before the activities begin.

Article 8 – Grounds for ineligibility and exclusion

1. Employees and collaborators of the bodies promoting and implementing the Mediterranean Ingredients programme who are directly involved in preparing, managing or assessing this procedure may not take part in the selection. Nor may persons who are in a situation of incompatibility or conflict of interest, including a potential conflict, with those bodies or members of the Evaluation Committee that could compromise the impartiality of the procedure.

2. The following applications will be excluded: (a) applications submitted after the deadline or by means other than those specified in this Call; (b) applications from candidates who do not meet the eligibility requirements set out in Article 3; (c) applications that do not include the application form or mandatory documents required under Article 4; (d) applications submitted by persons in the situations of incompatibility or conflict of interest referred to in paragraph 1.

3. If one or more eligibility requirements are found not to be met, the applicant may be excluded at any stage of the procedure, without prejudice to the provisions of applicable law concerning the regularisation or supplementation of documents.

Article 9 – Intellectual property

1. Ownership of project ideas and any intellectual property rights remains with their respective authors.

2. Before the hackathon begins, participants will be informed of the rules applicable to intellectual property and the confidentiality of projects developed collectively. Pre-existing creations will remain the property of their respective authors. For creations developed in teams, participants will agree on how rights are to be shared and how results and prototypes may be used. Any commercial exploitation of creations or prototypes by the promoting bodies or third parties will require the prior consent of the relevant rights holders.

3. Participants authorise the promoting bodies to use information and images relating to the activities and projects for institutional purposes and for programme communication and dissemination, in compliance with applicable law and while safeguarding any confidential or protectable content.

Article 10 – Indicative schedule

The programme is expected to follow the schedule below:

- 3 November 2026 – Publication of the Call;
- 9–28 November 2026 – Online application form available and applications received;
- 30 November–2 December 2026 – Shortlisting of applicants;
- 3 December 2026 – Notification of results;
- 7 December 2026 – Deadline for selected applicants to confirm participation;
- 9–12 December 2026 – Programme kick-off, intensive training days, workshops and working groups;
- 13 December 2026 – Project presentations and selection of projects admitted to the mentoring pathway;
- 15 January–15 June 2027 – Remote mentoring, support and language training;
- By 30 May 2027 – Selection of up to 5 beneficiaries for the Italy residency scholarships;
- 16 June – 30 July 2027 – period dedicated to the Field Study Workshop and prototyping activities in Italy;
- September–October 2027 – Closing event, date to be confirmed, presentation of prototypes and dissemination of results.

Dates may be changed for organisational reasons; participants will be informed promptly.

Participation in the initial phase of the programme does not automatically confer the right to enter subsequent phases or receive financial benefits.

Article 11 – Communications and results

All official communications relating to the procedure, including general notices, updates, corrections, extensions and the results of the various selection stages, will be published on the institutional website of the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat and sent to applicants at the email address provided in their application.

Article 12 – Requests for clarification and FAQs
Requests for clarification concerning the content of this Call, eligibility requirements or application procedures must be sent exclusively to the email address of the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat: segreteria.iicrabat@esteri.it.

Requests for clarification must be received no later than seven days before the application deadline, i.e. 21 November 2026.

To ensure transparency, consistent information and equal treatment of potential applicants, responses to requests for clarification will be compiled and published as FAQs on the institutional website of the Italian Cultural Institute in Rabat.

No advance assessment will be provided on the eligibility of individual applications, nor will advance opinions be given on the merits of proposed ideas and projects.

Article 13 – Personal data processing
Personal data provided by applicants will be processed exclusively for purposes related to the administration of this Call and implementation of the programme, in compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and applicable national legislation.