

The British Institute of Persian Studies
1961 - 2021



BIPS

The 60th Anniversary

Supporting the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS)

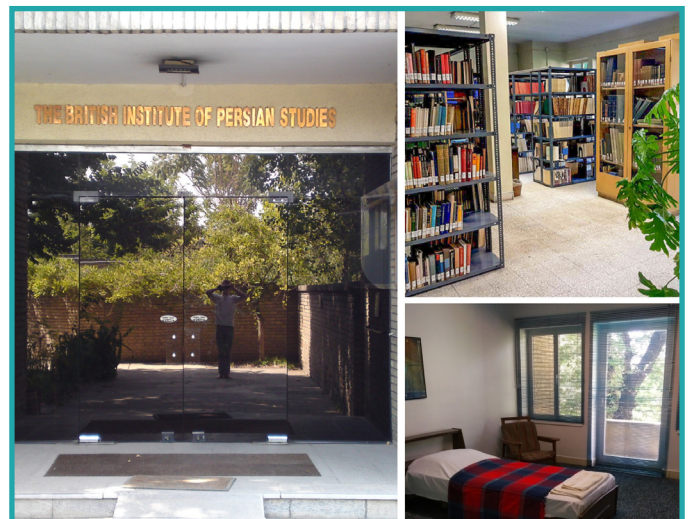
Our mission is to promote excellence in academic research on Iran and the Iranian world, to promote wider knowledge of Persian civilisation, its rich heritage, culture and history and to make our archives and research accessible to scholars and the general public. We do this on a very limited budget and seek support to enable us to fulfill our objectives in this, our sixtieth anniversary year, and realise our new initiatives for the future.



BIPS was founded in 1961 to enable scholars to work in Iran on the country's ancient heritage, particularly in the field of archaeology. BIPS became the base for several significant expeditions in Iran, including the excavation of Pasargadae, capital of Cyrus the Great, by the Institute's first director, David Stronach.

In 1976, a purpose-built Institute was opened in Qolhak, north Tehran.

The Institute continues to make important library resources available for local researchers, offers lectures in collaboration with leading Iranian institutions and provides accommodation for British and international students.



BIPS is one of only seven British Academy International Research Institutes (BIRIs) giving Iran its due place alongside the prestigious schools at Athens, Rome and Ankara among others. We are a registered charity with a small council of trustees, all unpaid, drawn from the academic community and supported by a part-time salaried staff in London and Tehran.

Top left: Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae (Iran).

Bottom right: The British Institute of Persian Studies in Tehran.

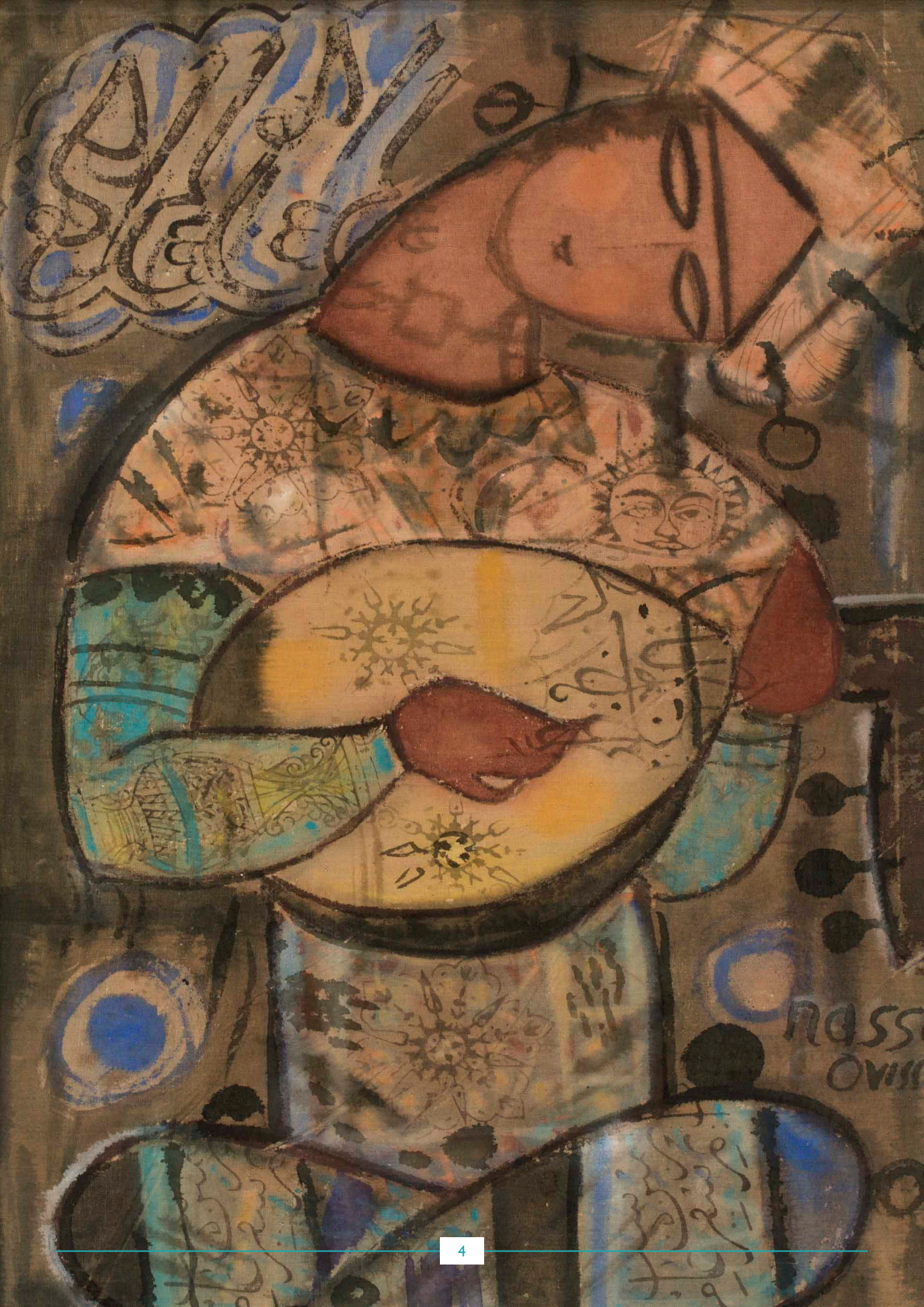


We remain dedicated to the study of Iran and the wider Persian-speaking world, ancient and modern, its archaeology, history, literature, religion, art and architecture across the whole region where Persian and other languages belonging to the Iranian language group have been spoken and used. In so doing, we enable scholars working across the region to connect with colleagues in the UK.

We also aim to engage with modern and contemporary culture in Iran, for example, art, cinema, music and photography.

Our aims are achieved through the following key activities:

- 1. Awarding research and travel grants**
- 2. Supporting scholars and publications, lectures and cultural events**
- 3. Publishing an international peer-reviewed journal, *IRAN***
- 4. Publishing two book series: *Archaeological Monographs Series* and *Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World***



Our Challenge Today

Long known as Persia, the region was once the centre of one of the great civilizations of the ancient world. Today, there are over 100 million speakers of Persian and Iranian languages around the world, and outside Iran itself chiefly in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Iran is culturally distinct from its neighbours despite elements of a shared Islamic faith and is home to one of the oldest religious traditions, Zoroastrianism.

Yet only a handful of museums and an ever-shrinking number of university courses offer access to this rich heritage. The study of Persian language is offered in very few schools despite being on the GCSE and A level syllabi, and dedicated materials about Persian history and culture for younger children are almost non-existent. The media rarely provides a balanced discussion about Iran to the general public.

BIPS' role in championing knowledge and understanding of Iran is more vital now than ever before.



How You Can Help

The bulk of our funding comes from the UK government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), via the British Academy.

The annual working budget received from the Academy is the equivalent to the salary of a single moderately senior university professor. This is modestly supplemented by membership subscriptions, some collaborative research funding and donations.

We are dependent on your support to achieve both short-term and long-term objectives: raise our profile, attract new members, engage with international partners and expand what we offer in research, education and outreach.

This year is BIPS's 60th anniversary – an opportunity to celebrate our past achievements and look forward to shaping a very different future. Support of these events will greatly enhance their impact, underwrite our long-term plans and provide opportunities for named sponsorships.



Above: BIPS Miniature Course, in 2019.

BIPS 60th Anniversary Celebrations

The first event will take place on 30th July.



BIPS has organised a breakfast and private view of the iconic “*Epic Iran*” exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum for BIPS members. Tickets to the exhibition are hard to come by but BIPS members will have an unhurried opportunity to view the wide range of exhibits testifying to the achievements of 5,000 years of art, design and culture in Iran.

A webinar at the end of July will be dedicated to a discussion between Robert Hillenbrand, Bernard O’Kane and Richard McClary on Iranian art and architecture, its backgrounds, themes and highlights.

BIPS will host its second anniversary event on the 21st September at the British Academy. The evening will concentrate on BIPS’s contribution to the field of archaeology in Iran, opening with a short film dedicated to its first director, the late Professor David Stronach. The film will be followed by a panel discussion chaired by Vesta Sarkosh Curtis with panellists Rémy Bouchard, Ali Mousavi and Cameron Petrie. The evening will finish with a reception allowing attendees to catch up after so many months of COVID restrictions.



A further set of events will take place in November in both Iran and the UK. A live exhibition ‘*Shahnama Today*’ will be shown in the Soo Contemporary gallery, Tehran, co-curated by Firuza Abdullaeva and Shirin Gharavisky, along with a short video trailer and a virtual exhibition, to be presented at our Institute in Tehran (circumstances permitting). Venetia Porter and Linda Komaroff will join a panel discussion and a reception, to be hosted in London, with further events provisionally planned in Cambridge and York on the occasion of a musical performance of ‘*Zal and the Simorgh*’ by the Kent Philharmonia.

Each of these three events has a budget of £15,000 for which we seek sponsorship and support.

Top left: Political banner. Hosseini Fakhkhari (Isfahan, 1932) ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

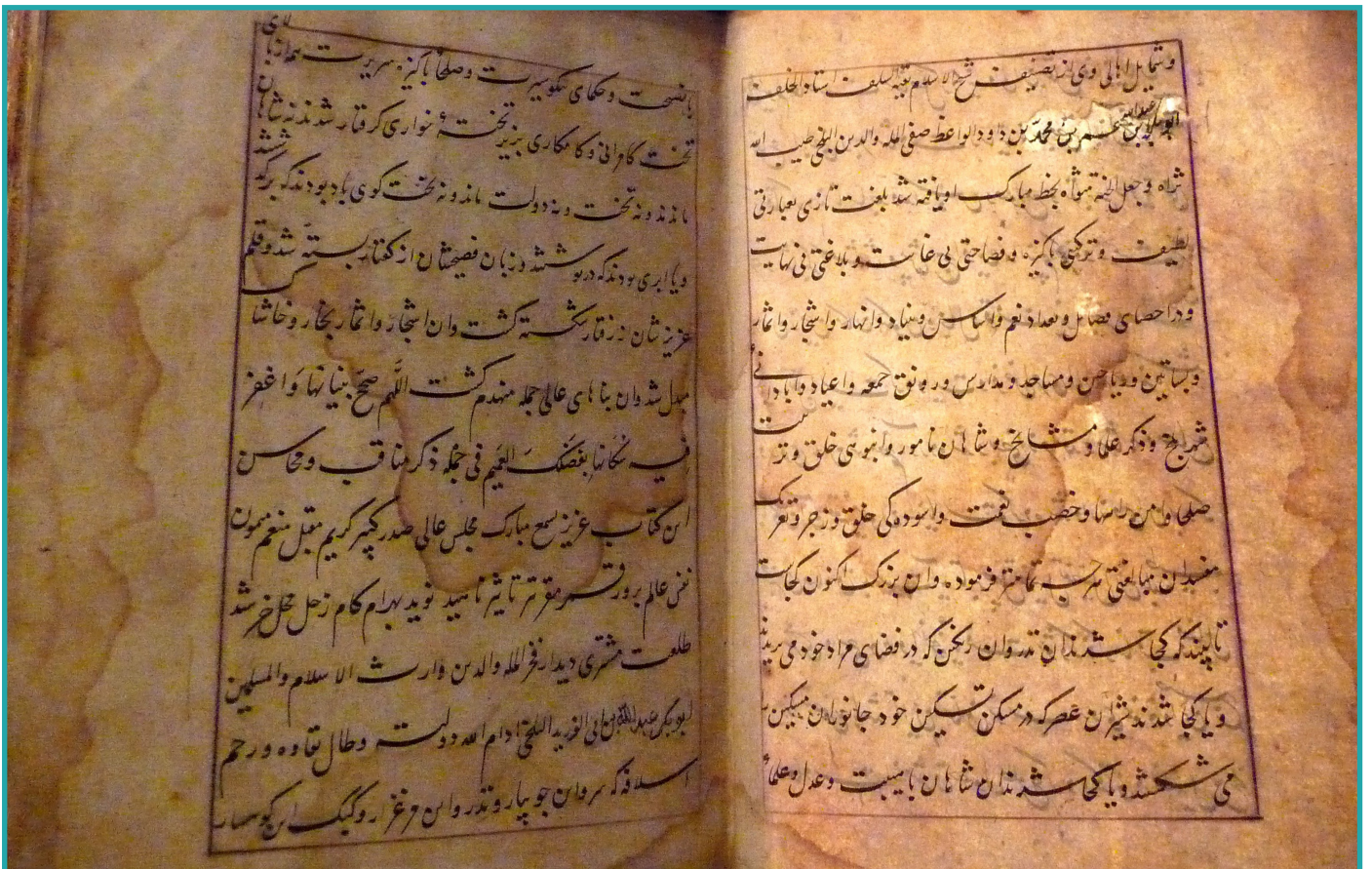
Middle: David Stronach and his skilful and popular foreman, Seyyed Morteza Mousavi, standing in front of the tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae. © Keren Stronach.

Bottom left: Love and Death. Shahnama series. Farah Ossouli (2007).



We expect the events planned for 2021 will provide an extra springboard to carrying out future projects.

We intend to focus our research programmes not only on Iran but to include regions of the wider Persianate world and seek to strengthen our activities in the UK. We will also continue to develop research partnerships with institutions in Central Asia, India and the Caucasus.



Top: 'Afrosiyob', the high-speed train linking Tashkent to Samarqand.
Bottom: A page from the manuscript of the *Faza'il-e Balkh*.

Our forward-looking projects offer a variety of opportunities for sponsorship of programmes over an initial three-year period:

1. Establishing a scholarship fund to support the fees and maintenance costs to allow a promising student from the region to come to the UK and undertake an MA or doctoral degree programme in Persian or Iranian studies. Outstanding candidates with an accepted offer at a UK university, on any subject related to the study of the Persianate world, will be eligible. BIPS is seeking donations to support this initiative. Significant donations will be eligible for naming rights. **Sponsorship sought: £ 20,000 pa. for three years.**
2. Establishing a Digitisation programme to make all BIPS archival materials available for specialist researchers and the wider public. **Sponsorship sought: £25,000.**
3. Offering Research Assistantships to help support new projects, including work on the David Stronach archives. **Sponsorship sought: £5000 per award; £15,000 per Research Fellowship.**
4. Creating an open-access database of images of the art, architecture and material culture of Iran. **Sponsorship sought: £10,000.**
5. Inaugurating a Schools Outreach project on Persian culture past and present. **Sponsorship sought: £5000.**

Please contact Louise Hosking on bips@thebritishacademy.ac.uk if you would like to sponsor our Events, Scholarship, Research, Schools Outreach or Digitisation programmes.

If you do not wish to participate in sponsorship, we would also welcome any help through membership or donations. To join BIPS as a member or to donate, visit our website (www.bips.ac.uk), where you will find a Donate and Join Us buttons.

To remain informed about our events, please visit the BIPS website, subscribe to our mailing list (www.bips.ac.uk/join-us/), Facebook page ([BIPS.ac.uk](https://www.facebook.com/BIPS.ac.uk)), Twitter page ([@BIPS_Britac](https://twitter.com/BIPS_Britac)), and YouTube channel ([British Institute of Persian Studies](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBtPz3t3t3t3t3t3t3t3t3t)).

Please feel free to pass on this paper to family and friends as we would greatly appreciate being widely known to people interested in the Persianate world.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of BIPS is open to all, and we welcome new members. BIPS organises an extensive programme of talks, conferences and workshops throughout the year in the UK and overseas. It publishes its journal *IRAN* twice a year and occasional books in its *Persian Studies Series* or *Archaeological Monograph Series*. Becoming a member is your chance to support our work and contribute to our efforts to broaden appreciation of the cultural heritage of the Persianate world.

Membership runs from January to December, but new members can apply any time of the year. We offer four types of membership: Student (£20 a year); Corresponding (£30 a year - for non-UK members); Full (£40 a year) and Fellow (£50 a year for academics). Membership renewals or applications can be made via our website: www.bips.ac.uk/join-us/

CONTACT DETAILS

10 Carlton House Terrace
London, SW1Y 5AH
+44(0)20 7969 5203
bips@britac.ac.uk

1623 Dr Shariati Avenue
Tehran, 19396-13661
+98 (21) 2260 1045
bips@pol.ir

