**Call for Proposals for the Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme 2016**

**1.0 Introduction**

The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) is receiving proposals under the Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme for collaborative initiatives between local academic institutions or private entities and at least one centre of academic excellence based within the EU. Proposals should describe the nature of the joint activities that would be funded through the Award. Applicants are to demonstrate how the proposed activities contribute towards achieving the goals of the National R&I Strategy 2020, and to describe the potential of any activities to become self-sustaining or generate longer-term outcomes.

Proposed activities to be funded through this Award Scheme should promote internationalisation, for example, through:

* the development of joint teaching curricula for Masters or PhD students
* placements for local researchers in foreign institutions for the purposes of furthering research & innovation collaboration
* the arrangement of strategic and targeted visits by local academics/researchers and representatives of private entities to foreign entities in order to participate in research & innovation activities of an exploratory and developmental nature
* the organisation of seminars or workshops on a particular research and innovation area in Malta that would benefit from the participation of foreign experts
* the development of transnational research & innovation proposals for submission to third party-funders, e.g. H2020, etc.

Projects must be implemented over a 1-year period and shall not extend beyond 30th September, 2017.

**2.0 Eligibility Criteria**

Members of Staff from the University of Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, as well as all other legally established and licensed Academic Institutions and Private Entities in Malta are eligible to apply. The Applicant should be of a high-enough level to ensure the adequate degree of commitment and support for the activities. Applications should be endorsed by the Applicant’s CEO/Chairman/Rector, as the case may be.

Eligible Applicants are to partner up with international institutions with a proven track record of excellence and experience in the research & innovation field that will form the basis for cooperation. Applicants already featuring on MCST’s non-compliance list will not be eligible to apply for this Awards Scheme.

**3.0 Financing**

Each Applicant is invited to provide a breakdown of the anticipated costs to carry out the proposed internationalisation activities as part of the application form. The Malta Council for Science and Technology reserves the right to negotiate any amount quoted by the Applicant should this be considered as being over-estimated. The amount of the Award available to any one successful Applicant is capped at €5000.

Costs that are considered as being eligible for funding and that can, therefore, be included in the Applicant’s cost breakdown include:

* flights for travel related to the project (the total amount for each flight should be estimated as costing no more than €500 and should cover economy class tickets);
* travel insurance;
* subsistence allowance (including accommodation) (When subsistence costs are calculated the local entity’s pre-approved subsistence allowances can be used as a guide.)
* catering and up to two hosted meals (strictly in relation to meetings, workshops and seminars hosted locally); and
* information and promotional material (as long as these are necessary to ensure the effectiveness and success of the collaboration).

**Consumables and equipment cannot be funded through this grant.**

Award holders will be responsible for arranging all relevant activities including, but not limited to, travel plans, accommodation, logistics planning, insurance coverage for any participant travel, etc.

The Applicant should provide an estimated breakdown of the anticipated costs to carry out the project’s activities in the application form. Supplementary or match-funding from the foreign partner is allowed and encouraged, as long as it does not finance the same activities that will be funded through the Internationalisation Partnership Award. Proposals including such supplementary or match funding from partner institutions will be prioritised.

1. **General Condition of Award**

Only one application per Department/Institute/Centre/Private Entity may be submitted and will be evaluated by the selection panel.

**5.0 Submission of Application Form**

Interested Applicants are to submit their application form electronically to Mr. Mark Farrugia at mark.c.farrugia@gov.mt with “Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme Application 2016” as a subject heading by not later than **noon on 15th July, 2016**. All submissions should be initialised / signed, dated and stamped on each page. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Submissions should include the following documents:

* the ‘Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme 2016 Application Form’ provided by MCST and associated with this Call
* letters of support from all partner institutions, confirming any matching or additional funding
* **full CVs of principal investigators from local and partner institution/s**

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure the timely and correct delivery of the application form to the MCST. It should be noted that emails larger than 6MB shall be automatically rejected by the system.

**6.0 Selection Process**

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel set up by MCST against the following criteria:

- **Quality of Project/Activity** – Proposals will be judged on the quality of the collaboration activities with the foreign partners. Activities must either be, or be supportive of, high quality international research & innovation with the potential to yield mutually beneficial results and demonstrate innovation and interdisciplinarity in the selected field of interest. The involvement of early career researchers (i.e. at Masters or PhD level) in the implementation of the internationalisation activities will be considered an advantage.

- **Strength of Partnership and** **Leadership** – Projects/activities must be led by recognised experts with a demonstrated track record in research and innovation and good leadership ability. Evidence of past collaborative work between the partnering institutions, for example, joint projects or publications, and any other relevant past achievements will be considered a testament to the strength of the partnership. New partnerships between local and foreign entities in the interest of furthering R&I collaboration are also encouraged with the aim of fostering closer ties between local and international institutions. A convincing case should be made for the benefits of the partnership(s).

- **Outcomes and Sustainability** – Proposed activities must have significant potential outcomes, including, for example, joint publications, subsequent grant bids, development of innovative products, etc., and will build longer term international relationships based on a genuine commitment by the partners to invest in a sustained successful partnership. Evidence of the potential to attract or generate external funding will be considered an asset.

Priority will be given to well-defined proposals which demonstrate a clear benefit to enhancing the international dimension of local research & innovation activity.

**7.0 Award Duration**

Upon successful completion of the evaluation stage, it may be necessary for MCST to negotiate the amount of the Award requested in the application form. MCST retains the right to provide Awards of a different volume should the amount in the ‘breakdown of costs’ appear to be over-estimated.

The deadline for completion of the projects/activities financed through the Award is **30th September, 2017**, although projects may be completed at any point within this 1-year time-frame. Upon completion of the activities/projects, the Applicant is to submit a final report within 30 days according to a standard template developed by MCST. The final report would need to be accompanied by all relevant documentation, including receipts, to demonstrate how the Award was spent. MCST retains the right to audit the financial documentation and to request further proof of expenditure of the Award. Should there be a significant discrepancy between the volume of the Award disbursed by MCST and the amount spent by the Applicant (as substantiated through receipts or other financial documentation) MCST retains the right to request a reimbursement of the unspent funds.

Any requests for an extension or change of use of the Award should be addressed in writing to Mr. Mark Farrugia at MCST prior to being effected. Applicants are reminded of the importance of retaining all documents proving expenditure of the awarded funds for submission with the final report.

**8.0 Correspondence**

All successful Applicants will be required to inform Mr. Mark Farrugia within the R&I Programmes Unit at MCST regularly of any direct or indirect outputs resulting from this Award during and beyond the lifetime of the Award.

Successful Applicants are also required to submit a detailed report on the activities undertaken to Mr. Mark Farrugia within thirty days from the date of completion of the activities being funded by the Award. For those activities extending for the full duration of this Scheme (i.e. until 30th September, 2017), final reports should be submitted to MCST by no later than 31st October, 2017. MCST reserves the right to take any necessary action should such reporting not be submitted.

Reference to this Award should be made on any publication, marketing, or PR material that is generated in relation to the project or activity undertaken.

**9.0 Further Information**

For further information on the Internationalisation Partnership Award Scheme kindly contact Mr. Mark Farrugia as per details below:

Mr. Mark Farrugia

R&I Project & Finance Administrator

R&I Programmes Unit

The Malta Council for Science and Technology

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