



## **Joint Call – Preliminary Proposals (Step 1)**

### **Science and Technology Cooperation – Sino-Malta Fund**

Parameters and rules 2019



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## **1 Introduction**

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The Call for Proposals for the Science and Technology Cooperation – Sino-Malta Fund for 2019 is to be carried out in accordance with the framework of the Agreement on Science and Technological Co-operation between the Government of Malta and the Government of the People's Republic of China and subsequent agreements by Joint Commission on Science and Technology between the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of the People's Republic of China and the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST).

The aim of this Science and Technology Cooperation – Sino-Malta Fund, is to intensify scientific collaboration between the two countries to strength R&D activities, technology transfer and to carry out comprehensive, steady and long-term cooperation through support of researchers' mobility and the networking of industries, universities and research institutions to generate mutual-beneficial and win-win research.

## **2 Funding Scheme**

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Through this Call MOST and MCST are to collate proposals from their local research communities in line with the priority areas for 2019. Further to the collation of applications under this Call (Step 1), MOST and MCST will convene to share the proposals received at either end. Where a match has been made (an eligible match is one where there is at least one partner from the People's Republic of China and one partner from Malta, and eligibility criteria have been fulfilled), proposals will be shortlisted, and the consortium will be invited to submit a full application in due course under Step 2. Only those proposals that have been submitted under this Call (Step 1), will be eligible to proceed to Step 2.

### **2.2 Selection Procedures**

STEP 1:       Joint Call – Preliminary Proposals  
                  Opens 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019  
                  Closes 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (cob)

STEP 2:       Submission of full project proposals (following down selection from Step 1)  
                  Opens Q3 2019  
                  Closes approx. 30 days after Call opens

### 2.3 Areas of Cooperation

The cooperation agreement between MOST and MCST, permits R&D within the following fields for 2019:

- a) Maritime Services and/or Maritime Technology and/or Aquaculture
- b) Transport

Following respective assessment procedures in Step 1 and Step 2, MOST and MCST aim to select at least one project in each or either of the areas of cooperation, with consideration to the resources and budget made available to MOST and MCST.

Applicants must indicate **one** area from a) or b) in their applications.

### 2.4 Eligibility Conditions

Both Maltese and Chinese entities shall be participating in the Joint Call – Preliminary Proposals (Step 1) simultaneously. The Maltese PI must submit their application to **MCST** within the deadline stipulated within the Maltese Call, in **ENGLISH**. The Chinese PI must submit their application to **MOST** within the deadline stipulated within the Chinese Call, in **CHINESE**. Proposals submitted to only one Party, **will not** be considered for evaluation.

Thus, applications under this Call must be submitted to:

Maltese applicants:

Dr. James Foden, Senior Director, Malta Council for Science and Technology, Malta

email for application: [james.foden@gov.mt](mailto:james.foden@gov.mt)

tel. for Technical consultation: +356 23602176

AND

Chinese applicants:

Through the online portal: <http://service.most.gov.cn>

Tel. for Technical consultation : 010-58882999

e-mail for Technical consultation : [program@istic.ac.cn](mailto:program@istic.ac.cn)

For the **Maltese side**, the Call is open to all Maltese legal entities including Public entities (which in turn include higher education entities as per the below definition under Public Entity), Private Bodies, NGO's and Professional Bodies.

Definitions:

**Maltese Legal Entity** means any entity created under the law of Malta which has legal personality and which may, acting under its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations.

**Public Entity** means any Maltese Public Service Department or Maltese Public Sector Entity, or any Maltese Legal Entity which has more than 50% government shareholding.

- (i) Public Service refers to all Ministries and Departments; and
- (ii) Public Sector Entities refers to authorities, corporations, agencies and commercial public-sector entities in which the Government has a majority shareholding and that are not listed on the stock exchange. Public Entities also include foundations, local councils and public academic entities. In the case of public academic entities, this includes but is not limited to a higher education entity or a research institute, whether as a whole body or as a component unit or department within such body, provided that the entity's ongoing education and research is scientifically in line with the subject of the application being submitted during this call and the relevant smart specialisation areas and provided that the higher education entity must be in possession of a license for Higher Education according to the Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations – Subsidiary Legislation 327.433. This does not include the license for a tuition centre.

**Private Body** means any Maltese Legal Entity which has more than 50% private shareholding.

**NGO** means any Voluntary or Non-Governmental Organisation set up in accordance with The Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap. 492 of the Laws of Malta).

**Professional Body** may be an organisation, an association, a chamber, society, institute or a group of professional persons not being enrolled or registered in terms of The Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap. 492 of the Laws of Malta) or not being otherwise recognised in terms of Law, and which is generally recognised and acknowledged by the professional persons it seeks to represent as their representative Body. For the purposes of this Definition, a professional person is one who has undergone a period of study at a university or a recognised institution of higher learning and has obtained the formal qualification entitling

the person to practice the respective profession; and who provides a specialised service to the public, based primarily on a fiduciary relationship between himself and the party to whom he provides such service on his own personal credibility and responsibility.

An application under this Call, can also be made by multiple entities, i.e. a Maltese Consortium. These multiple entities would thus be defined as **partners** (where partner means any Maltese Legal Entity, as previously described, that forms part of a Consortium for the purposes of applying under this Call). Where an application is to be submitted by a **Consortium** (where a Consortium means a group of two or more Maltese partners), it must nominate a **Principal Investigator (PI)** to represent the Consortium in the submission of the application. Where applications are to be made by single Maltese Legal entities, that same Maltese Legal Entity is the PI. The Chinese side must also appoint a PI.

After proceeding through Step 1 and 2, should a proposal be selected for funding, a Joint-Consortium will be formally constituted through a Grant Agreement, between Maltese partners and Chinese partners, with a PI from each of the sides.

## 2.5 Aid intensities

It is expected that the Joint Call may operate under two funding modalities (*de minimis* Regulation and General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)). More information on these funding modalities may be found on:

[http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/legislation/de\\_minimis\\_regulation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/de_minimis_regulation_en.pdf)

and

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651&from=EN>, respectively.

At this stage, Step 1, applicants will merely indicate (non-committal), their preference/applicability with regards to these funding modalities. However, applicants should bear in mind their choice, and hence consider the relevant aid intensities prescribed in these regulations when estimating their requested funding.

The funding modality is to be project specific, i.e. all Maltese partners applying for state aid within a particular project are to opt under only one type of the probable funding modality (de Minimis **OR** GBER).

Whilst some entities, or in fact projects, may be exempt from state aid regulations as a result of the entity and/or project strictly pertaining to non-economic activities, such applications may also be allowed. The presentation of a considerable justification for the non-applicability will be required by the applicants at Step 2. Should the exemption be granted, funding rate shall be 100% of eligible costs.

The definition of eligible costs shall vary depending on the selection of the funding modality. It is recommended that applicants contact the Malta Council for Science and Technology for further information and refer to the mentioned regulations. Depending on the funding modality, eligible costs **may** include: personnel costs (with conditions), specialised equipment costs relating to the R&D project (equipment value or depreciation costs, depending on funding modality), costs for access to scientific information, consumables (capped), sub-contracted activities (capped), travel costs (in the case of de Minimis) and a 10% indirect cost allowance. Further details will be provided during the Step 2 Call for Applications.

For the **Chinese side**, the call is open to the legal entities based in China, including universities, research institutes, and enterprises (preferably SMEs). Entities and PI should meet the requirements of the Special Project on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation of National Key Research and Development Plan.

### **3 Procedures for the Submission of the Preliminary Proposals (Step 1)**

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The proposal must be jointly submitted to both MOST and MCST:

Maltese entity submissions through the Maltese PI:

Dr. James Foden, Senior Director, Malta Council for Science and Technology, Malta  
(james.foden@gov.mt)

AND

Chinese entity submissions through the Chinese PI:

Through the online portal: <http://service.most.gov.cn>

Tel. for Technical consultation: 010-58882999

e-mail for Technical consultation: [program@istic.ac.cn](mailto:program@istic.ac.cn)

The above contacts may also be used for queries in preparation for the Call.

### **4 Project Evaluation and Selection**

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For the Maltese side, the application under Step 1 is to be formulated as follows:

Submission of a short proposal in English (abiding by the word limits in the application form), which must contain:

- project title
- clear indication of one thematic area of application (a or b as per Section 2.2). The chosen thematic area must be the same in both the Maltese and Chinese applications.
- administrative details
- the objectives and targets of the project
- the innovative points
- the technical line and research foundation
- links to partner profiles and a brief bio of key researchers
- a description of the type of Chinese partner being sought and why
- a description of the benefits that the Maltese partner/s expects to obtain from the collaboration with the Chinese partner/s, and vice-versa
- lump-sum funding in Euros requested from MCST by the Maltese partners (with breakdown per partner) and lump-sum funding requested from MOST by Chinese partners in RMB.
- As an appendix to the Step 1 application, the Maltese partner must include an Agreement for all Chinese partners, describing the cooperation agreement for the purpose of this scheme. The Agreement is to be signed by all parties. The Chinese counterparts will also have to submit this in their application.
- As an appendix to the Step application, the Maltese partner must include an Intellectual Property Agreement or IPA articles in an Agreement, signed by all local and Chinese partners for the purpose of collaboration under this scheme. The Chinese counterparts will also have to submit this in their application.

An application form encompassing all of the above, shall be made available during the Call for Applications and must be adhered to.

An Administrative Check to ensure all eligibility requirements have been met, will be performed.

Eligible applications will then move on to the selection process.

Step 1 submissions will be evaluated at a national level according to the following criteria:

- Scientific relevance and alignment to the priority area
- Research Methodology
- Competence and expertise of the research team/s
- Alignment to the scope of the Science and Technology Cooperation Project China
- Described benefits for both the Maltese and Chinese participants



Preference will be given to:

- Proposals involving more than one Maltese partner, and/or,
- Proposals that offer collaborative opportunities for scientific breakthrough research, and/or,
- Proposals having a potential for strong commercial synergies and industrial impact.

At the end of this first stage evaluation (Step 1), MOST and MCST will agree on a short-list of priority Step 1 proposals, for which synergy between the Maltese and Chinese sides is implementable.

The applicants short listed after Step 1 shall be informed through the PIs by their respective managing authorities, and will be invited to submit a full proposal in accordance with Step 2. The full proposals will be evaluated independently by the Maltese and Chinese sides (evaluation criteria to be communicated in Step 2). Both sides will then convene to move towards a mutual decision on adjudication.

Some of the evaluation criteria for the full project proposals may include, but may not be limited to: Scientific relevance, Methodology and documentation, Competence and expertise of the research teams, added-value of the bilateral cooperation, involvement of early career researchers, appropriateness of the budget requested with respect to methods and expected results. A template, or rather, an application form, would be available in due course ahead of Step 2.

## **5 Financing of the projects**

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The contribution of MCST to the Maltese side of the bilateral projects, is up to €350,000 in total. Each project request, and hence MCST contribution, is thus expected to be in the region of €175,000 per project, thus allowing the funding of two projects.

Applicants can submit more than one different proposal within the Call.

The contribution of MOST to bilateral projects of is up to ¥2.8 million RMB in total. Each project request, and hence MOST contribution, is thus expected to be in the region of €175,000-equivalent per project, thus allowing the funding of two projects.

Each side will finance their own local entities, with project start dates within 2019, and project durations of 24 months.

The requested funding from the Chinese and Maltese entities, within the same project proposal, does not need to be equal.