

Call for Proposals for the Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme Plus (IPAS+)

1.0 Introduction

The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) is receiving proposals under the Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme Plus (IPAS+). This year the Scheme is divided into two options. Applicants are to fill in the appropriate sections of the form; they may select either Option A or Option B, or both:

Option A: opportunities for collaborative initiatives between **Maltese** academic institutions, public entities, or private entities and at least one **foreign** research center or academic/private entity of proven track record of excellence. 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 and align with 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.

Option B: opportunities for Maltese entities intending to submit a Horizon 2020 (H2020) proposal as the **coordinator** of a consortium to engage a service provider (local or foreign) who will be supporting the applicant through proposal writing and submission.

The activities that will be funded under Option A of this Award Scheme should promote internationalisation through at least one of the following:

- 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 **held** 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. AGRIP, EASME - COSME, EPLUS, Horizon 2020, Life Programme, etc...

In the case of Option B, develop and submit an H2020 proposal, as the **coordinator** of a consortium, to any part of the programme **open to Maltese registered legal entities**, by engaging the services of proposal writer/s or consulting services of proven track record in proposal writing in H2020. The activities must be implemented over a one (1) year period and shall not extend beyond 30th September 2020. Applicants are encouraged to participate in related H2020 events and training organised by MCST. In addition, applicants are encouraged to set up regular meetings/consultations with the respective H2020 National Contact Point.

2.0 Eligibility Criteria

Maltese registered legal entities such as licensed academic institutions, public entities, NGOs or private entities are eligible to apply. Applications should be endorsed by the entity's legal representative.

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 activities as part of the application form. MCST 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 per option.

Eligible costs include:

For Option A:

- flights for travel related to the project (the total amount for each flight should be estimated as costing no more than €500 for EU countries and €1000 for non-EU countries and should be an economy class ticket);
- travel insurance;
- subsistence allowance (inclusive of accommodation) - when subsistence costs are calculated the local entity's pre-approved subsistence allowances should be used;
- catering and up to two hosted meals per day (strictly in relation to meetings, workshops and seminars hosted by the applicant in Malta); and
- information and promotional material (essential for the effectiveness and success of the collaboration).

Furthermore,

under Option A: 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 (IPAS+). Proposals including such supplementary or match funding from partner institutions will be prioritised.

For Option B:

- proposal writer/s or consulting services fees.

For Option B, MCST will provide 100% reimbursement upon confirmation of proposal submission and confirmation of invoice and receipt by beneficiary. The beneficiary must follow procurement regulations and must also provide evidence that the services were value for money. eg. quotations, track record of selected service provider.

A conflict of interest (COI) exists for Option B if the proposal writer/s or consulting service;

- is involved in the preparation of the IPAS+ application.
- stands to benefit directly if the proposal is positively evaluated. Providing market research information to the applicant will not be considered a COI.
- has a family / personal relationship with any person representing an applicant
- is a director / trustee / partner of the applicant or involved in the management of the applicant's entity or is an employee of the same entity.



Consumables and equipment cannot be funded under this Scheme. Expenses related to loans, interests and recoverable value added tax are also considered as ineligible costs.

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.

No double funding is permitted for the **same** activities carried out in IPAS+ and in conjunction with other schemes.

4.0 Submission of Application Form

Interested Applicants are to submit their application form electronically to Mr. Mark Farrugia at mark.c.farrugia@gov.mt with "IPAS+ - Application 2019" as a subject heading by not later than **midnight on 21st June, 2019**. All submissions must be initialised / signed, dated and/or stamped on each page. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Submissions should include the following documents:

- the 'Internationalisation Partnership Awards Scheme Plus - 2019 Application Form' provided by MCST that is associated with this call.
- Under option A:
 - letters of support from all partner institutions, confirming any matching or additional funding.
 - full CVs of principal investigator/s from local and partner institution/s.
 - profile of potential partners,
 - agenda of event, activities, training etc...
- Under option B:
 - proposed project idea (project's brief) and pre-identified call topic.
 - profile of pre-identified potential consortium partners (if already available).
 - profile of at least 3 *potential* proposal writers or consulting services providers.
 - company profile/track record of the applicant's legal entity.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the timely and correct delivery of the application form to MCST. It should be noted that emails larger than **6MB** will be automatically rejected by the mail system. The applicant may make use of cloud storage.

5.0 Selection Process

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

For Option A:

➤ **Quality of Project/Activity:**

- Proposals will be evaluated 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 demonstrates increased odds of success for securing third party-funding or which demonstrate a clear benefit to enhancing the international dimension of local research & innovation activity.

Option B:

- Excellence of the proposed project idea (project's brief) and relevance to the pre-identified call topic.
- Proven track record of the proposed consultancy individuals/firms, including a list of other Horizon 2020 projects that have been supported in the past.
- Quality of the proposed consortium partners, makeup, distribution, diversity (academic, public, private).

6.0 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 sum should the amount in the 'breakdown of costs' appears to have been overestimated.

The deadline for completion of the projects/activities funded through the award is **30th September 2020**, although projects may be completed at any point within a 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 will need to be accompanied by all relevant documentation, including receipts demonstrating 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 sum 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 mark.c.farrugia@gov.mt with "IPAS+ - Request for modification 2019" as a subject heading. Such request needs to receive consent from 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.

7.0 Correspondence

Successful applicants will be required to inform Mr. Mark Farrugia at mark.c.farrugia@gov.mt 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 funded by the Award. For those activities extending for the full duration of this Scheme (i.e. until 30th September 2020), final reports should be submitted to MCST by no later than 31st October 2020. MCST reserves the right to take any necessary legal 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.

8.0 State aid

This scheme is being implemented in line with Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (OJ L 352/1), hereinafter referred to as the de minimis Regulation.

Assistance may not be awarded to the following:

- a) Undertakings active in the fishery and aquaculture sector, as covered by Council Regulation (EC) No. 104/2000;
- b) Undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;
- c) Undertakings active in the sector of processing and marketing of agricultural products, in the following cases:
 - i. Where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the businesses concerned;
 - ii. Where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
- d) Aid to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to other current expenditure linked to the export activity;
- e) Aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods;



The total amount of de minimis aid granted to a single undertaking shall not exceed the amount of €200,000 over any period of three consecutive fiscal years. This period covers the fiscal year concerned as well as the previous two fiscal years.

This maximum threshold would include all State aid granted under this aid scheme and any other State aid measure granted under the de minimis rule including that received from any entity other than MCST.

The term 'single undertaking' includes, all undertakings having at least one (1) of the following relationships with each other:

- a) one undertaking has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another undertaking;
- b) one undertaking has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another undertaking;
- c) one undertaking has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another undertaking pursuant to a contract entered into with that undertaking or to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
- d) one undertaking, which is a shareholder in or member of another undertaking, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that undertaking, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that undertaking.

Undertakings having any of the relationships referred to in points (a) to (d) of the first subparagraph through one or more other undertakings shall also be considered to be a single undertaking.

In terms of Article 5 of the de minimis Regulation, de minimis aid granted under this scheme may be cumulated with de minimis aid granted in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 360/2012 up to the ceiling laid down in that Regulation. It may be cumulated with de minimis aid concerning different eligible costs granted in accordance with other de minimis regulations up to the relevant ceiling fixed in terms of this Call for Proposals.

The de minimis declaration form must be filled in and submitted together with the application form.



9.0 Further Information

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

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