

The Malta Council for Science and Technology

**Framework Programme Unit:**

***PARADISE Call***

**Call for Expressions of Interest for Evaluators**

**The Malta Council for Science and Technology is seeking proposal and/or report evaluation services in research**

**DEADLINE: 26th October 2020**

This measure falls under the Evaluators category under the PARADISE Call which is supported through Malta Government funds and is managed by the Malta Council for Science and Technology, on behalf of the Foundation for Science and Technology

**Call for Expressions of Interest for Evaluators**

**1.0 General**

This is a Call for Expressions of Interest for Evaluators to provide advisory support to the Malta Council for Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as the Council) in the systematic and objective assessment of submitted project proposals within the PARADISE Call. Evaluators are expected to provide information that is credible, useful, and will be expected to determine the worth or significance of the relevant activity or project based on the guidelines provided. Upon selection, the Council will provide a defined set of criteria upon which projects or reports should be evaluated.

This Call is open to Evaluators with expertise in research areas related to the wider blue and green economy and preferably with a focus on the remediation of plastic pollution, including but not limited to:

* Business Development
* Higher Education and Research
* Climate Change
* Environment
* Water
* Transport
* Sustainable Development
* Building Strategic Partnerships
* Other

The purpose for evaluations and the main aim of this call is to ensure that national funding is utilised to support entities that are interested in carrying out the necessary activities that will potentially lead to an enhanced project proposals for Horizon Europe calls, while also contributing to sustainable practices and data collection. It is fundamental for the evaluator to ensure that all services are being tailored to the unique and specific requirements of each proposal, within a local, professional and, international context.

**2.0** **Background to the PARADISE Call**

The call is aimed at Enabling Research in Plastics in a Circular Economy Context, it is intended to support applicant entities seeking to escalate the activities that will lead to an enhanced project proposal based on any actions they wish to carry out locally and may include activities overseas . To this effect, MCST is making available a limited number of Research and Development grants to offer financial support to entities that are interested in carrying out the necessary activities that will potentially lead to an enhanced project proposals for Horizon Europe (HE) calls, while also contributing to sustainable practices and data collection. In so doing, the entities will demonstrate that their activities have impact in the short term towards circular economy, showcasing that we can mitigate the effects of plastic pollution, while achieving better economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

This call relates to the Directive (EU) 2019/904 and the forthcoming Single-Use Plastics Products Strategy for Malta 2020-2030 (in the interim referee to the Public Consultation Document ) for a better understanding of the measures to give priority to sustainable and non-toxic re-useable products and re-use systems rather than to single -use products, and to reduce the quantity of plastic waste in our environment. Moreover, reference is made to the report – “A Circular economy for plastics, Insight from research and innovation to inform policy and funding decisions” ; which aims to inform policy and funding decisions on a circular economy for plastics by providing research and innovation insights from EU-funded projects and the wider scientific community. The report covers the entire plastics value chain, highlighting a broad range of challenges and opportunities. Based on scientific evidence, the insights presented contribute to the transition towards plastic production from renewable feedstock and product design for use, reuse, repair, and mechanical, chemical, or organic recycling. In addition, the report explains how this systemic change can be supported by innovation in business models, collection systems, and sorting and recycling technologies. In this way, plastics could circulate through our society with full transparency at high-value usage, while minimising the risks to human health and the environment.

This call for applications for bottom-up Start-Up Actions (SUAs) is addressed at Maltese entity/ies to explore and tackle the plastics challenges in our seas. Although applicants may apply as mono-beneficiaries, it is encouraged to form partnerships with local and/or foreign partners ideally with the involvement of the private sector.

Each applicant or partnership will be expected to generate ideas and implement a series of activities (webinars/workshops/networking meetings) leading up to a feasibility, foresight, business plan or pilot study, which effectively will be the cornerstone of the concept to apply for relevant funding under a Horizon Europe call.

Activities to be carried out may include, but not limited to:

• feasibility studies that lead to the setting up of a local start-up;

• prototypes/integrated test cases/methodologies;

• forward-looking East-West/North-South strategies through the assessment of common features and differences;

• co-planning data retrieval/reuse for further exploitation driven by end-users (decision makers, entrepreneurs, etc.) and aimed at generating new economic activities;

• co-create R&I pilot projects, including citizen science;

• co-shaping practices to share capacities (e.g. infrastructures and human potential) and/or to enhance relevant skills;

• co-building science-to-policy strategies to provide solutions in support of policy makers;

• conducting match-making exercises towards the implementation of joint activities by aligning available instruments and tools.

The bottom-up SUAs represent concrete opportunities to explore innovative, knowledge-based pathways and forward-looking visions with a multidisciplinary, mission-oriented approach, for further uptake and developments. The proposed Research and Development activities of the SUA must be in line with the definition of Research and Development set out in the PARADISE call terms of reference.

In practice, they will be developed by the applicant or partnership through activities such as workshops, information-gathering, networking activities, etc. implemented at transnational level, complemented by deskwork and fieldwork, and knowledge transfer towards the preparation of creative, forward-looking studies on plastic challenges in our seas that are crucial for the future of the Mediterranean.

This is an open competitive call and MCST will undertake an independent evaluation of all proposals received. It will support the top ranked proposals (up to depletion of the available fund) which include a clear concept of idea/s, a robust plan (which includes engagement with local and relevant foreign stakeholders), at least three meetings/workshops/activities per Start-up Action to clearly demonstrate that it can act as an environment for the partners to discuss and plan their studies or act as a cluster for the relevant research community, and with clear deliverables expected.

Applicants are encouraged to show a strong sense of leadership with regards to their studies: ideally, additional funding sources (particularly for international partners to get engaged) are identified and secured, the intentions on how to secure future funding (e.g. identifying the Horizon Europe funding call and link with the relevant mission goals), and demonstrating that the concept can continue to developing into other actions upon completion of the Start-up Action.

**3.0 Service Requirements**

The Council requests that interested Evaluators may assist in the following activities:

1. Evaluation of project proposals submitted in response to calls for proposals in line with the PARADISE Call’s policies, criteria and related information packages.
2. Evaluation of ongoing projects in cases where it becomes necessary to assess and re-evaluate their impact and feasibility based on specific information derived by the Council, Service Providers or Beneficiaries as well as other potential indicators.
3. Any consensus meetings required (only if required by the Council)

4**.0 Budget and Finances**

In line with legislative measures, all Evaluators engaged by the Council should have a valid VAT number. It is essential that applicants either provide a copy of their VAT certificate or if this has not yet been provided by the VAT department, a declaration that an application for a VAT certificate has been submitted.

Please note that the Council will require an invoice for any work carried out and an official receipt for all payments affected.

The table below provides additional information on the remuneration provided for each area including consensus meetings.

**Table 1**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Description** | **Turnaround Required** | **Remuneration for proposal Evaluation** | **Remuneration for consensus meeting attendance** [[1]](#footnote-1) |
| **Project Application Stage** |
| Scientific Opinion for New Projects  | Evaluations of proposal | 7 days | €80 | €20 evaluator+ €20 for rapporteur |

**5.0 Duration of Contract and Conditions**

Evaluators shall bind themselves to conduct such assignments in accordance with the terms of this Call. Any additional information or clarification, as may be requested by the Council, shall be deemed to form an integral part of the original assignment.

The Council may accept Evaluators who propose the provision of services in more than one domain. Applicants must have a proven and successful track record.

The selected Evaluators will be expected to sign a formal contractual undertaking for the provision of services within two weeks from being notified of the conclusion of the adjudication process.

With the exception of information that is already in the public domain, evaluators shall not divulge to third parties any of the information obtained in the course of this Call; or, in the event of a service allocation, during the course of evaluation, without the prior written consent of the Council. Information must be protected and used in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2001.

The agreement shall run for one (1) year, from 1st November 2020 until 31st October 2021 and be of a maximum value of five thousand Euro (€5000) (excl. VAT). The place of work will be the place where the evaluator has his official (permanent) address or at the Council Premises. Evaluators will also be expected to sign a Non-disclosure Agreement.

In limited instances, the selected Evaluators may be asked to participate in evaluation meetings at Council premises or remotely through Skype (or any other digital means at the discrepancy of the council) as part of their Service Agreement. This service is considered to form part of the Evaluation itself and will not necessitate additional remuneration.

The need for consensus meetings, which will be remunerated as per Table 1, will be held at the discretion of the Council. The decision will be taken on a case by case basis depending on the spread of scoring on a proposal and the technical aspects of the proposal.

Evaluation sheets with set criteria and guidelines will be provided per area upon the provision of an assignment.

Decisions taken by the Council with regards to the allocation of assignments to the selected Evaluators shall be binding and shall not be the subject of negotiation and/or discussion.

Evaluators must refuse work in the case of potential conflict of interest and may refuse work by providing reasonable justification.

The selected Evaluators shall ensure that all services are delivered within the time frames stipulated by the Council. Payment will be effected following the completion of the allotted assignment and upon presentation of an invoice. Evaluators are to produce an official receipt of payment within 5 working days. Failure to do so may lead to the termination of the contract.

If any disagreement or dispute arises out of the contract signed between the selected Evaluators and the Council, such matter may be referred to arbitration under the Arbitration Rules and Procedures established by the Laws of Malta.

**The Council reserves the right to terminate the contract at any time without the need to provide justification.**

**6.0 Evaluation Guidelines**

Evaluators should be guided by the following principles:

* *Independence:* Evaluation should be completed in one’s own personal capacity.
* *Impartiality:* All proposals should be treated equally and evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicant or service provider.
* *Objectivity:* Each proposal should be evaluated as submitted and not based on potential changes and/or alterations.
* *Accuracy:* Judgements should be taken against the official evaluation criteria and the proposal in question.
* *Consistency:* The same standard of judgment should apply to all proposals.
* *Confidentiality*: It is essential that:
* Evaluation matters, such as: the content of proposals, the evaluation results or the opinions of fellow experts, are not discussed with anyone.
* Applicants, partners, sub-contractors, service providers or any third parties are not contacted.
* Confidentiality of documents is maintained at all times.

Upon completion of the evaluation, all documents should be deleted or destroyed.

**6.1 Conflicts of Interest (COI)**

A COI exists if the Evaluator:

* was involved in the preparation of the proposal or provision of service;
* stands to benefit directly / indirectly if the proposal is positively evaluated;
* has a family / personal relationship with any person representing an applicant or service provider;
* is a director / trustee / partner of an applicant or service provider or involved in the management of either;
* is employed or contracted by an applicant.
* involved in proposal writing with a beneficiary – in this case he/she has to immediately let the Council know so that his/her contract is terminated.

Any breach of the above will lead to the termination of the Evaluator’s contract. In such cases the evaluation will also be declared null and void and any invoices / expenses will also be rejected. It is the Evaluator’s responsibility to declare an actual or potential conflict of interest prior to commencing any assigned work.

**6.2 Exclusion Criteria**

Evaluators shall be excluded from application and participation if:

* they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
* they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of *res judicata*;
* they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Council may justify;
* they have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity;
* they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 16(8) of the Malta Financial Services Authority Act.

**7.0 Instruction and Application**

Evaluators are to submit one (1) copy of their application by electronic mail clearly marked “PARADISE - Call for Evaluators” to paradise.mcst@gov.mt .

Applicants are to ensure that confirmation of receipt is provided in writing.

In the preparation, submission and any other process relevant to the submission and adjudication of this Call, potential Evaluators shall be guided by the following:

**Each application should include the following items:**

1. A covering letter clearly listing relevant research areas and association with the theme of the call;
2. A detailed Europass Curriculum Vitae;
3. A copy of certificates;
4. A profile of the Entity (if applying as part on an entity);
5. Copy of the VAT certificate.
6. Company registration number (if applying as part of an entity);
7. Annex 02;
8. Annex 03 (Enterprises only); and
9. Annex 04

**Notes:**

* Evaluators must, at minimum, hold a tertiary level of education.
* Evaluators must show proof of at least five years of professional experience in their research areas.
* Preference will be given to Evaluators holding prior evaluation experience at an international level.
* If the evaluation services are being provided under the auspices of an entity, a profile of the entity should be provided in addition to the professional profile and Curriculum Vitae of the person designated as the Evaluator within that entity.
* If the evaluation services are being provided under the auspices of an entity, the company’s registration and VAT number should be provided. With exception to this clause, if the Evaluator is self-employed, then only the VAT number is required.

Any requests for information or clarifications related to this Call are to be submitted via email at: paradise.mcst@gov.mt

**Interested Evaluators are requested to submit their response and all relevant documents by not later than noon on 26th October 2020.** All documents should be initialised on each page.

*Data Protection Clause: The information collected through this Call shall be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2001. The contents remain confidential and intended solely for the use of this purpose, and will not be disclosed or copied without your consent to anyone outside the Ministry for Employment and Education unless the law permits us to.*

**Annex 01 – Research Areas**

The PARADISE Call will take a bottom-up approach requiring areas associated with circular economy and remediation of plastic in the environments. In that context, the following areas are required for evaluation:

* Business Development
* Higher Education and Research
* Climate Change
* Environment
* Water
* Transport
* Sustainable Development
* Building Strategic Partnerships
* Other

**Annex 02 – Submission Checklist**

This checklist is intended to facilitate submission. Candidates are requested to submit a copy of the checklist together with all relevant documents in sequence.

* Evaluators should hold at least five years of professional experience in their preferred areas.
* Preference will be given to Evaluators holding prior evaluation experience both at an international level.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref** | **Submission Task** | **Submission** **Check Box** |
| 1 | A cover letter clearly listing areas of expertise and association to the theme of the call |  |
| 2 | A detailed Europass Curriculum Vitae |  |
| 3 | A copy of certificates |  |
| 4 | A profile of the Entity (if applying as part on an entity) |  |
| 5 | Copy of the VAT certificate. |  |
| 6 | Company registration number (if applying as part on an entity) |  |
| 7 | Annex 02; |  |
| 8 | Annex 03 (Enterprises only); and |  |
| 9 | Annex 04 (Scientific Opinion only) |  |

Note: An inability to provide any of the above will lead to categorical exclusion.

**Annex 03 – Statement on Conditions of Employment**

1. It is hereby declared that all employees engaged with the company shall enjoy working conditions including wages, salaries, vacation and sick leave, maternity and parental leave as provided for in the relative Employment Legislation. Furthermore, we shall comply with Chapter 424 of the Laws of Malta (Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act) as well as any other national legislation, regulations, standards and/or codes of practice or any amendment thereto in effect during the provision of services under this contract.
2. It is hereby declared that the service being provided under this Call will be carried out by the bidding entity employees or *bona fide* self-employed individuals or subcontracted third parties. No work will be carried out by persons designated as self-employed where their actual employment status in terms of the Employment Status National Standard Order LN 44/2012 is that of an employee without prior notification to the Council. Such notification must reach the Council with 2 days of allocation of an assignment.
3. It is hereby declared that all the employees of the bidder, whether providing services to the Council or not, have a written contract of service and are registered with the competent authority of Malta which is the Employment and Training Corporation. Copies of the written contracts of service of the employees or sub-contracted parties will be available at any time for inspection.
4. It is hereby declared that if the bidder is found in breach of any of the above declarations it is accepted that this application will be nullified and that we will have no right to be compensated for any damage we may have suffered or will suffer in the future in respect to this termination.
5. The Evaluator or legal representative agrees to all the conditions listed in this statement.

**Signature...........................................................................**

**Name of Signatory............................................................**

**I.D. No. .............................................................................**

**Name of bidder/contractor..............................................**

**Annex 04 – Expertise in Research Areas**

Using the recommendations in Annex 2, kindly provide a list of research fields in which you have the capacity to evaluate proposals. More than one research area may be selected. In the case where “Other [Research Field]” is selected kindly specify the unlisted research field.

Research Areas:

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1. Payments are applicable when meetings are requested by the Council and they hold for meetings requiring physical presence by all evaluators or when not possible remote meetings over skype or any other digital means. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)