



*Below are replies to questions raised during the information session held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Please note that the National Rules for Participation in the SINO MALTA Fund 2022 Call should still be referred to and will always prevail.*

## 1. What type of research is eligible for funding under the SINO-MALTA fund?

The SINO-MALTA Fund is a Research and Development funding programme. R&D is the systematic investigation, work, or research carried out in any field of science or technology through experiment, theoretical work or analysis undertaken to acquire new knowledge, primarily directed towards a specific practical aim or objective. R&D includes Fundamental Research, Industrial Research or Experimental Development in line with the definitions outlined in Section 1.3 of the National Rules.

## 2. Can you explain the application process, submission, and deadlines?

The application process for this Fund is a two-stage process. A pre-proposal application form is submitted at Stage 1 of the Call, and a full proposal application form is required at Stage 2 of the application process.

The submission deadline for the pre-proposal is **30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 23:59 CET**. The stage 2 submission deadline will be communicated to the applicants that successfully pass Stage 1, and are invited to submit a Stage 2 Full Proposal Application Form.

A complete pre-proposal application form must be submitted by the Maltese Lead Applicant, on behalf of the Project Consortium, to MCST via email on [international.mcst@gov.mt](mailto:international.mcst@gov.mt). Corresponding Annexes may be sent by the Maltese Project Partners directly to the Council via email. The pre-proposal application form must be signed by all the Maltese partners in a consortium.

## 3. What is eligible for funding under the Thematic Areas?

The SINO-MALTA Fund 2022 Call is inviting pre-proposals under three thematic areas: Health, Green Transitions and Digital Technologies. The areas are open (bottom-up) and do not preclude any specific topics within these areas. The applicants must indicate under which thematic area the application is being submitted within the application form.



#### 4. Should the research by the Chinese and research by the Maltese be different or complementary?

The research carried out by either side of the consortium must be complementary, and this has to be reflected in the application form. Additionally, only pre-proposals with an approved cooperation agreement signed by all partners and an approved Intellectual Property (IP) agreement signed by all partners will be considered. Furthermore, pre-/full proposals on either side must bear matching thematic areas.

#### 5. How can one find partners?

Interested applicants are invited to make use of plumtri's matchmaking SINO-MALTA Fund 2022 Call page by registering interest here: <https://bit.ly/3EYhBkR>. Kindly note that the page is accessible to plumtri registered users only.

One can also search for partners from the following page: <https://www.plumtri.org/partner-search>. To fill in a partner search request template, please send an email to [international.mcst@gov.mt](mailto:international.mcst@gov.mt).

#### 6. How is the budget divided between project partners?

The total maximum National Budget for this Call is of €600,000 – this is matched by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) in the People's Republic of China, therefore the total fund is €1.2 million. One project will be selected for funding from each of the thematic areas. The maximum requested budget for Maltese partners in a consortium is €200,000. Therefore, the Maltese partners in a project cannot request more than €200,000 in each application. Budgets for the Chinese partners will be requested through their application to MOST.

Please note that if no applications are successfully awarded under one of the thematic areas, the proposal that would have had the highest score within the remaining pool of proposals, from the other two thematic areas, will be selected for funding.

#### 7. Where can one find past SINO-MALTA Fund awarded projects?

The list of funded projects under the SINO-MALTA Fund can be found here: <https://mcst.gov.mt/internationalisation/sino-malta-collaboration/#1603267521237-fc9ede84-e82f>.

#### 8. What costs are eligible for funding for students?



Students can be engaged on the project and paid an annual stipend of €6,000 when reading for a Master's degree or an annual stipend of €8,000 when reading for a Doctoral degree. Note that for every engaged student, a full-time researcher must be employed by the applicant to specifically work on the awarded research project.

## 9. Can partners be added to the consortium between the pre-proposal and full proposal stage?

Partners can be added to the consortium, however, the cooperation agreement and IP agreement must be updated to include all partners of the consortium (both Maltese and Chinese) and signed by all partners. It is up to the consortium on whether the additional partner will contribute in kind.

## 10. What percentage of direct costs will overheads be covered?

Overheads (also known as eligible indirect costs) will be covered at 10% of direct eligible costs, excluding the costs of subcontracting as well as for items of equipment above €5000 and consumables above €5000. Note that for equipment, the capping of €500 is per piece, while for consumables, the capping of €500 is for the total amount of consumables per partner.

## 11. Is standard office equipment eligible for funding?

Standard office equipment is NOT eligible for funding.

## 12. When is the project expected to start if awarded?

Successful projects are envisaged to start at the earliest possible date in 2023. The earliest possible Start Date for projects will be fixed at the beginning of the contract negotiations with the national funding organisations and should ideally be within the first 3 months since the publishing of the results.

## 13. Is the pre-proposal pre-check mandatory?

The pre-proposal pre-check by MCST is NOT mandatory but is an administrative service offered by MCST to assist applicants.