



PRIMA Training and Mobility Award

**National Rules for Participation – Public Entities and Public
Research and Knowledge Dissemination Organisations that do not
carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107
TFEU**

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
1.1 Scope and Focus	2
1.2 National Contact Point.....	2
1.3 Definitions.....	3
2. Eligibility for Participation.....	4
2.1 Applicant eligibility	4
3. Submission of Applications.....	5
3.1 Application Process.....	5
3.2 Budget	5
4. Financing.....	5
4.1 Eligible Costs.....	6
4.2 Ineligible Costs	7
5. Selection Process and Evaluation.....	7
6. Post-selection Phase and Award Duration.....	8
7. Interpretation of Rules.....	8
8. Confidentiality of Submissions	9

1. Introduction

Funding Party: Malta Council for Science and Technology for and on behalf of the Foundation for Science and Technology,
Villa Bighi, Kalkara, KKR 1320
Malta

1.1 Scope and Focus

The [Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area \(PRIMA\)](#) is an initiative launched by 19 Euro-Mediterranean Countries, including 11 EU States (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) and 8 non-EU Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey) to participate in a EU joint research and innovation programme funding Research and Innovation (R&I) projects in the fields of Water Management, Sustainable Farming Systems, and the Agri-Food Value Chain.

The PRIMA programme is implemented through three sections. Section 1 Calls for R&I projects are funded directly by the European Commission whilst Section 2 Calls for R&I projects are funded directly by PRIMA Participating States (PS). Section 3 initiatives include activities that are organised, managed, and funded by PS, including any bilateral Calls that the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) launches with any of the PRIMA Participating countries.

Participation in PRIMA-related Calls for funding requires strong and complementary consortia. Accordingly, in 2022, MCST is launching the **PRIMA Training and Mobility Award** to support opportunities for **Malta-based Public Entity, Public Research and Knowledge Dissemination Organisations** (as defined below) to form collaborative links with **at least one foreign** counterpart from any one of the PRIMA Participating States listed above. The aim of this Award is to build local capacities and establish networks that could lead to future collaborations to submit R&I project proposals to Calls under the PRIMA programme.

To receive this support, applicants shall be required to demonstrate that the scope of the proposed action is to develop effective cross-border collaborations, undertake research activities and/or training activities in the thematic areas of PRIMA, leading to the submission of a proposal to any PRIMA-related Call. To benefit from this Award, applicants should describe the nature of the joint activities intended to support their participation in the PRIMA programme, with a clear aim and outcome(s). Hence, applicants are to demonstrate how the proposed activities (i) relate to the PRIMA thematic areas, (ii) contribute towards the goals of the PRIMA [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#) (SRIA), and (iii) have the potential to become self-sustaining or generate longer-term outcomes.

The activities that will be funded should promote internationalisation through at least one of the following:

- In-person short training and/or placements for local researchers in foreign entities for the purposes of fostering human capacity building and furthering R&I collaboration.
- The arrangement of strategic and targeted visits by local applicants to foreign entities in PRIMA Participating States in order to share best practices and/or participate in R&I activities of an exploratory and developmental nature.
- The organisation of knowledge-transfer and/or dissemination seminars or workshops in Malta, on specific PRIMA R&I thematic areas that would benefit from the participation of foreign experts.

1.2 National Contact Point

Correspondence should be directed to:

The Malta Council for Science & Technology
Villa Bighi, Kalkara KKR 1320, Malta
E-mail: prima.mcst@gov.mt

1.3 Definitions

Applicant means anyone eligible to apply in terms of these Rules for Participation and who consequently applies for funding under this Award. The Applicant will be required to submit the application and must also compile and submit report(s)/deliverables to the Council. Also known as the **Principal Investigator** and/or **Project Contact Point**.

Arm's length means that the conditions of the transaction between the contracting parties do not differ from those which would be stipulated between independent enterprises and contain no element of collusion. Any transaction that results from an open, transparent, and non-discriminatory procedure is considered as meeting the arm's length principle.

Council refers to the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST).

End Date means the date when the project/activity period, having commenced on the Start Date, expires. The **Project Period** is the time required to execute the project/activity as indicated in the Grant Agreement.

Letter of support is a document where the entity listed as foreign partner in the project/activity is showing their commitment in supporting the project/activity including (if applicable) the confirmation of additional funding.

Partner is defined as a foreign partnering entity that would have signed a letter of support to be involved in a proposed joint activity/project as part of this Award.

Public Entity is any Ministry, Department, Entity, Authority, Public Commission, Public Sector Foundation or a similar organisation that does not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU and that exercises public power, or else acts in its own capacity as public authority, where the activity in question forms part of the essential function of the State or is connected with those functions by its nature, its aim and the rules to which it is subject. However, the classification of a particular entity as an undertaking depends entirely on the nature of its activities, and the overriding criterion of consideration is whether it carries out an economic activity or not, e.g., an entity that is formally part of the public administration may nevertheless have to be regarded as an undertaking within the meaning of Article 107(1) of the Treaty. Thus, an entity that carries out both economic and non-economic activities is to be regarded as an undertaking only with regards to the former. In this case, if the economic activity can be separated from the exercise of public powers, than that entity acts as an undertaking in relation to that activity and the financing, the costs and the revenues of that economic activity shall be accounted for separately from the other non-commercial activities.

If an economic activity cannot be separated from the exercise of public power, the activities exercised by that entity as a whole, remain connected with the exercise of those public powers and therefore fall outside the notion of an undertaking.

Research and Development is defined as the systematic investigation, work or research carried out in any field of science or technology through experiment, theoretical work or analysis undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge, primarily directed towards a specific practical aim or objective, and includes:

- a) **Fundamental Research** means experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any direct commercial application or use in view.
- b) **Industrial Research** means the planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services. It comprises the creation of components parts of complex systems and may include the construction of prototypes

in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation.

- c) **Experimental Development** means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services. This may also include, for example, activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services. Experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set. This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product, and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes. Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

Research and Knowledge-dissemination Organisation means an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also pursues economic activities the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, in the quality of, for example, shareholders or members, may not enjoy preferential access to the results generated by it.

Retention Money is a percentage of the total Award that the Council disburses only upon successful completion of the proposed project/activities, following any necessary verifications and audits.

Start Date means the date which is stated in the Grant Agreement as the official start of the project/activity.

2. Eligibility for Participation

2.1 Applicant eligibility

Any Public Entity / Public Research and Knowledge-dissemination Organisation registered in Malta, that does not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU may apply and will be eligible for funding subject to the terms and conditions laid out in this document and in particular the conditions for eligibility.

Eligible applicants are to partner up with foreign entities established in PRIMA Participating States, and which have a proven track-record of excellence and experience in the R&I field. The foreign partner should be eligible for funding under the respective PRIMA PS funding organization's national rules. This will form the basis for cooperation.

Applications should be endorsed by the applying entity's legal representative.

Applicants who have other funded projects with the Council and are in default, and/or have gone beyond the timelines of the project, are not eligible to participate. Any application submitted by or including the participation of any legal person or legal entity having, in totality or in majority ownership, the same shareholders, partners or persons holding and / or exercising a controlling power in any other legal entity which will have been at any time prior to such application declared as non-compliant or defaulting on any other contract or agreement entered into with the Council, shall be automatically declared as inadmissible.

Funding under this Award is made available on the basis that the applicant has not benefited and will not benefit from any other grant or financial incentive of whatever nature, applied for and/or utilised for the same scope as that subject of the funding requested under this Award.

3. Submission of Applications

3.1 Application Process

Interested applicants are to submit their Application Form electronically to prima.mcst@gov.mt by **27th of July 2022 (23:59 CEST)**. The application must be dated and signed by the applicant and the legal representative. The official Application Form is available on the Council's website. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Submissions should include the following documents:

- i. Application Form associated with this Award.
- ii. Letters of support from all partner institutions, confirming any matching or additional funding (if applicable).
- iii. Full Curriculum Vitae of Principal Investigator/s from local and partner institution/s.
- iv. Other supporting documents related to the project/activity e.g., agenda of event, proposed activities, training etc.

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.

3.2 Budget

The total budget allocated for this Award is €25,000. The submitted applications will be evaluated, ranked, and awarded accordingly until the budget is exhausted.

Applicants may request up to a maximum budget of €5,000.

4. Financing

Financing is based on real costs. Each applicant is invited to provide a breakdown of the anticipated costs to carry out the proposed project/activities as part of the application form. The Council reserves the right to negotiate any amount quoted by the applicant should it be considered as being overestimated.

Funding for a successful proposed submission will be based on a cash advance of 70% of the requested amount of the Award and will be regulated through a contractual agreement establishing the terms and conditions governing the financing of the project.

Funding under this Award is made available on the basis that an applicant does not benefit from any other grant or financial incentive in respect of the expenses related to the execution of the project.

The re-imburement of the remaining 30% of the requested amount (i.e., the Retention Money) will take place upon successful completion of the proposed activities, subject to the following confirmations:

- i. Pre- / full proposal is submitted to any PRIMA-related Call for funding.

- ii. Pre- / full proposal has met the eligibility criteria of any PRIMA-related Call for funding and of the National Rules associated with them.
- iii. Any verifications and/or audits are concluded.

4.1 Eligible Costs

- Eligible travel costs include the most economical solutions for travel insurance, economy flights and public transport necessary for the execution of the proposed activity. The total amount for each flight should be estimated as costing no more than €1000 for EU countries and €2000 for non-EU countries. Eligible costs associated with travel are for a maximum of 2 trips, with a total duration of not more than 14 days. Eligible costs can be claimed by up to 2 people employed by or affiliated with the eligible Public Entity / Public Research and Knowledge-dissemination Organisation per trip.
- Subsistence allowance (inclusive of accommodation) - when subsistence costs are calculated, the local entity's pre-approved subsistence allowances should be used.
- Organisation of meetings, workshops and seminars in Malta and hosted by local applicants (including catering or up to 2 hosted meals per day).
- Promotional material that is essential for the effectiveness and success of the activities/collaboration.
- Costs associated with organisation of visits and access to premises, facilities and/or research sites in Malta.
- Other expenses – Details of such costs shall need to be provided in the Application Form and must be approved beforehand by the Council. These should not fall under ineligible costs.

Master and PhD students, as well as any technical personnel and support staff, need to be accompanied by a Senior researcher or the Principal Investigator - PI to be eligible.

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.

No double funding is permitted for the **same** activities carried out in this Award and/or in conjunction with other awards/schemes.

Furthermore, any 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 this Award. Proposals including such supplementary or funding being matched by partner entities will be favourably viewed as this showcases a strong and balanced partnership.

To apply under these National Rules, the applicant needs to adhere to the justifications found in the Application Form, as to why the activities to be undertaken do not meet the criteria of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (i.e., not falling under State Aid rules).

Additional Provisions

Eligible Costs are to conform to the following and are subject to the final audit scrutiny:

- Any expenses incurred during the course of the project must be consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Public entity partners are to follow Public Procurement Regulations in their entity.

- Commercial transactions between any Applicants or consortium partners, or between any Applicants or a consortium partner and a company with similar shareholding to a consortium partner, is not allowed. All transactions need to be carried out in line with the arm's length principle outlined in Section 1.3.

4.2 Ineligible Costs

- Consumables and Equipment cannot be funded under this Award.**
- Expenses related to loans, interests and recoverable value added tax.**
- Expenses that are not eligible under the *de minimis* Regulation.**
- Any other costs not listed as eligible costs.**

5. Selection Process and Evaluation

The applications received will be assessed by a selection panel set up by MCST against the following criteria:

i. Quality of Project/Activity

- Proposals will be evaluated on the clarity and quality of the collaboration activities proposed with the foreign partner(s). Activities must either be, or be supportive of, high quality international R&I with the potential to yield mutually concrete beneficial results and demonstrate innovation and interdisciplinarity in the selected field of interest. The involvement of early career researchers (at Master or PhD level) in the implementation of the internationalisation activities will be considered an advantage, to acquaint them with such practices of capacity building, and establishing their international network.
- Proposed project/activity must be in line with the PRIMA SRIA, PRIMA Annual Work Plan and/or PRIMA-related Calls Texts.

ii. Strength of Partnership and Leadership

- Projects/activities must be led by recognised experts with a demonstrated track record in R&I and good leadership ability.
- Evidence of past collaborative work between the partnering entities (i.e., joint projects, publications, and any other relevant past achievements) would be a testament of the strength of the partnership.
- New partnerships between local and foreign entities in the interest of furthering R&I collaboration are highly encouraged with the aim of fostering closer ties between local and foreign entities established in the various PRIMA Participating States. A convincing case should be made for the benefits of the partnership(s), including the potential for long-term partnership.

iii. Outcomes and Sustainability

- Proposed activities must have significant potential outcomes including the mandatory submission of a grant bid to Calls under the PRIMA programme. Other outcomes could also include joint publications, popular dissemination material and so on. Such outcomes 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 increased odds of success for securing funding, or which demonstrate a clear benefit to enhancing the international dimension of local research and innovation activity.

6. Post-selection Phase and 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 if the amount in the 'breakdown of costs' should appear to have been overestimated. The Council reserves the right not to proceed with signing of the Grant Agreement if it results that doing so would be too high an exposure risk to the Council.

The deadline for completion of the activities funded through the award is **6 months from the starting date of the Grant Agreement**, although projects/activities may be completed at any point within this time frame. Any activities/deliverables related to the Award must take place between the Start and End Dates stipulated in the Grant Agreement.

Upon completion of the activities, the applicant is to submit a final report within 30 days according to a standard template provided by MCST. The final report will need to be accompanied by all relevant documentation, including receipts demonstrating how the Award was spent. The Council 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 retain the Retention Money and if applicable, request a reimbursement of the unspent funds. The Retention Money will only be disbursed to the successful Applicant once a final report is submitted, and all criteria for re-imburement (*vide* Section 4) have been satisfied.

Any requests for change of use of the award should be addressed in writing to prima.mcst@gov.mt with the subject heading – "PRIMA Training and Mobility Award - Request for modification". Such requests need to be endorsed by MCST prior to being affected. Requests for extension of the Award need to be sent electronically by the Applicant at least 2 months before the deadline of the Award. The Council will review the request and a reply will be communicated within 2 weeks. No response should be understood as a rejection of the request. Only one request for extension is allowed for each Award, and the extension period should not exceed 3 months, unless MCST is informed of any supervening circumstances and at its own discretion give alternative directives.

Applicants are reminded of the importance of retaining all documents proving expenditure of the awarded funds for submission with the final report. If the implementation of a project becomes impossible, MCST shall be entitled to take any action it deems necessary, including, but not limited to, the withdrawal of funding for the project and the collection of money already paid out. A similar course of action may be followed if a project is in default as a result of not meeting one or more of its obligations. In such cases, MCST will provide a notice indicating a rectification period of 1 month.

7. Interpretation of Rules

This document endeavours to establish comprehensive and unambiguous rules governing participation in this initiative. However, should circumstances arise where the rules are inadequate, unclear, ambiguous, or conflicting, the Council shall exercise its discretion in the interpretation of the rules through the setting up of an *ad hoc* committee.

8. Confidentiality of Submissions

Unless otherwise indicated, all application submissions shall be treated in strict confidence.

The data collected by the Council via the application for the assistance and its subsequent processing by the Council to evaluate data subject's request for assistance under the Award is in line with:

- i. The National Rules for Participation.
- ii. Data Protection Act, Chapter 586 of the Laws of Malta and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).
- iii. The legitimate basis to process personal data submitted by the data subject by virtue of his/her written application for assistance is Regulation 6 (1)(b) of the General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR"), as 'processing is necessary in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract'.
- iv. The data collected by the Council in a submitted application for aid will be retained for a period of ten (10) years from the last aid granted to the Entity represented by the data subject.

Further information may be found within the National Application Form.