



RESEARCH  
& INNOVATION  
FOUNDATION



**THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOUNDATION**

**PROGRAMMES**

**FOR RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND**

**INNOVATION**

**“RESTART 2016 – 2020”**

**GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS**

**(Two-stage Evaluation)**

<b>PROPOSAL DETAILS</b>	
<b>PILLAR</b>	II. SUSTAINABLE RTDI SYSTEM
<b>PROGRAMME</b>	DISRUPT
<b>CALL IDENTIFIER</b>	DISRUPT/0123



**Funded by the  
European Union**  
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Republic of Cyprus

## **GUIDELINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION FOR EVALUATORS**

1. The Proposal, which the Evaluator is called upon to evaluate, was submitted under the **“DISRUPT” Programme** of the Research and Innovation Foundation<sup>1</sup> **Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation “RESTART 2016-2020”**.
2. The objectives of the above mentioned Programme and all necessary definitions and procedures are described in:
  - the relevant **Call for Proposals**, and
  - the **Work Programme (relevant Programme description in Section II/Pillar II)**.
3. Before producing the Evaluation Report, Evaluators are expected to study the relevant Proposal thoroughly. This consists of:
  - Proposal Part A – General Information & Budget,
  - Proposal Part B – Technical Annex,
  - Annex I – Curricula Vitae, and
  - Annex II – Call Specific Information.
4. The Evaluation Procedure for the **“DISRUPT” Programme** is carried out in two (2) Stages:
  - In Stage I of the Evaluation Procedure each proposal is evaluated remotely by **two (2) Experts**, which: (a) are specialists in the proposal topic, and/or (b) have good knowledge of the business environment in the proposal field, and/or (c) have relevant experience in product/service development. Proposals securing a score that equals or exceeds the set threshold (12.00/15.00) qualify for Stage II.
  - Stage II Evaluation is carried out by an **Independent Evaluation Committee**, comprising Experts with business background and relevant experience in product/service development and involves face-to-face meetings with Project Team Members (pitching).
5. In **Stage I** of the Evaluation Procedure, each Evaluator fills his / her own Evaluation Report Form, which consists of 3 Parts. In Part I, the Evaluator should provide a fully justified assessment on whether the Proposal is **compatible with**:
  - (i) the objectives of the selected Programme, and
  - (ii) the objectives of the specific Call of Proposals, and
  - (iii) the proposed Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), and
  - (iv) the «Do No Significant Harm» Principle.

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<sup>1</sup> Since April 2019, the **Research Promotion Foundation** has been renamed to the **Research and Innovation Foundation** in order to reflect its expanded role as the executive arm of the new National Research and Innovation Governance System.

**The Evaluator should not proceed with the scientific evaluation of the 3 criteria should a Proposal fail the compatibility assessment, in any of the above compatibility criteria.**

6. The Evaluation of all Research and Innovation Proposals submitted to the RIF, under the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, is based on the following criteria:
- Excellence,
  - Added Value and Benefit, and
  - Implementation.

The content of the criteria is specified in each **Call for Proposals** so that it expresses each Programme's philosophy and aims, and differences pertaining to the interpretation, analysis and specialisation of each criterion and its weight over the total evaluation score. The description of each criterion is **available in Part I of the present document**. Evaluators are kindly requested to **read thoroughly the description of each Criterion** before assigning their scores.

The Evaluator should provide a score on each of the 3 evaluation criteria (assigning marks between 0,00 and 5,00 with an accuracy of 0,25 marks) as well as relevant comments and detailed justification. It is noted that each criterion carries a different weight, as shown on the respective part of the Evaluation Report Form.

It is noted that, **Evaluation Criteria are different to the ones used by the EIC Accelerator Programme of the European Commission**.

The **Evaluation Score** will be automatically calculated (in the relevant Table in Part III) by adding the scores assigned to each of the three criteria following the application of the relevant weights.

7. The table below provides an interpretation of the scores and should be applied for the evaluation of all Proposals:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Evaluation Interpretation</b>
<b>0</b>	The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
<b>&lt; 0,99</b>	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
<b>1,00 – 1,99</b>	The proposal addresses the criterion to a limited degree and there are significant weaknesses.
<b>2,00 – 2,99</b>	The proposal addresses the criterion partly and a number of shortcomings/weaknesses are observed.
<b>3,00 – 3,99</b>	The proposal addresses the criterion quite sufficiently but a small number of shortcomings/weaknesses are observed.
<b>4,00 – 5,00</b>	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

8. The **Final Evaluation Score** for each Proposal will be equal to the **average** of the Evaluation Scores assigned by the two independent Evaluators. In case the difference

between the scores of the two evaluations is **more than 3,00 marks**, then the Proposal will be sent for evaluation to a third Evaluator and the Final Evaluation Score will be determined as the average of the two closest evaluation scores. If the scores of the two evaluations are both lower than 12,00/15,00, then the proposal shall be considered ineligible and shall not be forwarded to a third evaluator, even the difference between them is more than 3,00 marks.

9. The best ranked applications according to their **Final Evaluation Score**, starting with the highest scoring proposal and in descending order requesting an aggregated financial support equal to the double of the Call budget available, and provided that they secure a **Final Evaluation Score** of at least 12.00/15.00, qualify to Stage II of the Evaluation.
10. **Comments provided by the Evaluators should be written in a manner that would justify and explain the specific score provided for each criterion.** Proposals should be judged on merit and scored as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made. If significant shortcomings are identified (including in budget issues such as size, structure, allocation, aid intensity etc.), this must be reflected by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. **No recommendations for improving Proposals should be provided.**
11. Please note that:
  - Proposal Part B – Technical Annex has a max page limit of 25 pages. Any excess pages must be disregarded and not taken into consideration when carrying out the evaluation.
  - Annexes should only include the information described in the Call for Proposals (e.g. Annex I should only include Curricula Vitae). Any extra information that might be included must be disregarded and not taken into consideration when carrying out the evaluation.
12. In Part II of the Evaluation Report, Evaluators are asked to provide supplementary comments (but no scores) with regards to:
  - the need for an Ethics Review for the Proposal under evaluation,
  - any potential negative impacts and/or risks to the environment stemming from the implementation of the proposed activities or the delivery of the Project's expected results/products, and
  - the degree to which the Proposal under evaluation is gender balanced.
13. A positive reply to the first question would mean that the Proposal should **undergo an Ethics Review** before a funding decision can be reached, whereas a positive reply to the second question should be **mirrored in the comments and scores** provided for individual criteria, if applicable.

14. Information relevant to both the evaluation criteria and the issues for which supplementary comments are requested (please refer to point 12 above) can be found throughout the Proposal and, thus, Evaluators are advised to study the Proposal thoroughly before starting their work. Please note that, for each criterion/supplementary issue, the most appropriate sections of the Proposal where the relevant information can be found, are indicated in Part I and Part II of this document.
15. In **Stage II** of the Evaluation Procedure, project team members of those Proposals that have qualified from Stage I, will be asked to present their Proposals to an Independent Evaluation Committee, comprising **Experts** with a business background and relevant experience in product/service development. It is noted that, these experts have not been involved in Stage I of the Evaluation Procedure.
16. The Members of the Committee will then have the opportunity to request clarifications and discuss the content of each Proposal among themselves as well as with the Project Team. The objective of each Committee is to judge each Proposal on its own merit, **based on the same evaluation criteria and weights used in Stage I**, and reach a consensual decision and funding recommendation as follows:
  - i. Proposal recommended for funding (excellent investment opportunity),
  - ii. Proposal not recommended for funding (not worth the investment).The committee will have allocated time for calibration. The committee will need to ensure that at the end of the evaluation period, the committed budget does not exceed the call allocated budget.

External Observers will be involved in all Committee sessions.
17. Following the completion of each Stage of the Evaluation Procedure, and in the context of transparency, the RIF will provide all applicants with their respective Evaluation Reports (without disclosing Stage I Evaluators' identification) and publicly announce the official results. The Committee's decision is final and without the possibility for a redress procedure.

## PART I – EVALUATION

### COMPATIBILITY WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The following should be considered in the assessment of this criterion:

- *Compatibility with the Objectives of the Programme.*
- *Compatibility with the Objectives of the Call for Proposals.*
- *Compatibility of the proposed type(s)\* of research and/or innovation activities with those allowed by the Programme/Call for Proposals.*
- *Compatibility with the proposed Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs)\*\* [\(Experimental Development activities should fall within TRL 6-8\)](#).*
- *Compatibility with the «Do No Significant Harm» principle as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852<sup>2</sup> on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation). The proposed methodology must not include or support activities that could cause significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the Taxonomy Regulation.*

The relevant information can be found in:

1. [Section “General Profile of the Project Proposal”](#) in “[Proposal Part A – General Information and Budget](#)”, and
2. [Sections B1, B3 and B5](#) in “[Proposal Part B – Technical Annex](#)”.

\*As [selected](#) in “[Proposal Part A – General Information and Budget](#)” and [analysed](#) in “[Proposal Part B – Technical Annex](#)”.

\*\* RIF would like to draw the Evaluators’ attention to the element of this Programme, which requires that Experimental Development Activities to be implemented in the frame of the Projects must fall within Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 6-8 in compliance with the relevant definitions adopted by the EU. Within this context, the Evaluators for each Proposal should provide a fully justified assessment on whether the relevant activities are compatible with the proposed TRLs.

The Technology Readiness Levels adopted by the EU are the following:

- [TRL 1 - basic principles observed,](#)
- [TRL 2 - technology concept formulated,](#)
- [TRL 3 - experimental proof of concept,](#)
- [TRL 4 - technology validated in lab,](#)
- [TRL 5 - technology validated in relevant environment,](#)
- [TRL 6 - technology demonstrated in relevant environment,](#)
- [TRL 7 - system prototype demonstration in operational environment,](#)
- [TRL 8 - system complete and qualified,](#)
- [TRL 9 - actual system proven in operational environment \(competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0852&from=EN>

## 1. EXCELLENCE (30%)

The following should be considered in the assessment of this criterion:

- **Quality of Project Objectives and Soundness, credibility and feasibility of the proposed idea.**

*Project Proposal refers to the development and integration of an innovation which significantly enhances the competitive advantage of an existing product or service (at a minimum a viable product/service (MVP)) for which beta testing by intended end users has already been completed and is available in at least one market, and with the proposed additional development/improvement, will be able to expand market share in existing and/or penetrate new international markets. For innovations in the field of biomedicine, it is expected that at least the in-vitro testing stage has been completed. The proposed project includes all necessary research, new product/service development and marketing activities to allow the penetration and/or sales expansion in international target markets.*

*The technical objectives of the proposal, including the new product/service development, as well as the activities to achieve these objectives should be able to attain the expected benefits of the proposed innovation. In parallel, the product/service promotion targets and the activities to achieve them should significantly increase the sales and profitability of the product/service through full penetration and/or expansion into international markets.*

- **Degree of Innovation and Originality of the Idea in relation to the existing knowledge, knowhow and practices (state-of- the-art) at international level.**

*The project offers a high degree of innovation compared to existing solutions, which is relevant to the features, functionalities and other benefits sought by buyers and end users.*

*The degree of innovation will be assessed based on the extent to which there are significant improvements in factors such as, for example, the usability, functionality, cost and ease of use of the product/service.*

*The relevant information can be found in [Section B1](#) in “Proposal Part B – Technical Annex”.*

## 2. ADDED VALUE AND BENEFIT (35%)

The following should be considered in the assessment of this criterion:

- **Economic impact and measures to maximize it.**
  - *International market penetration and the ability to scale production and sales of the product/service integrating the innovation will be assessed based on the following:*
  - *The Market Research highlighting the benefits, features, functionalities and other factors that define what constitutes a significant competitive advantage resulting from the integration of innovation into the product or service.*

- *The justification of substantial demand for the proposed innovation, including the willingness of end users to purchase the product/service. Specifically, it is expected that the proposal includes a description of the innovation's target users or customers, how their needs are met, the reasons why they will want to use or purchase this product/service compared to existing products/services already available in the market, as well as market factors and barriers that may affect purchase and use.*
- *The overall projected market size (existing or new), its expected growth rate and the market share the company is seeking.*
- *Competitive advantage analysis of existing competitive and/or substitute products or services and those that may emerge within the next five years.*
- *Strategic competitors' analysis of enterprises or other entities offering similar products/services and justification of how the proposed innovation will be able to successfully compete.*
- *Description of any support groups or other stakeholders' groups in the target markets that may support or try to prevent market entry and expansion.*
- *Description of the best marketing, sales and delivery channels to approach buyers and end users, and the marketing mix (4P/7P) to be adopted for each target-country.*
- *Description of any training, establishment, guarantee, financing needs and other factors that may be critical for the successful market entry in the target-countries.*
- *The feasibility of the work plan for the market penetration in the target-countries, based on the market research and the expected sales volume over a period of five years.*
- *The alignment of the work plan with the business plan and value chain of the company.*
- *Any existing cooperation of the company with vendors, sales channels, regulatory authorities, etc. in the target-countries.*
- *Learnings from any previous export experience of the company over the last five years.*
- *The impact on sellers and vendors of the company and other Cypriot companies expected to be benefited.*
- *The overall impact on the reputation and sales of Cypriot companies and products/services in the target-countries.*
- *The expected increase in employment for the beneficiary company and its Cypriot vendors.*
- *Employment opportunities for STEM graduates in the beneficiary company and its local vendors.*
- **Social Impact and measures to maximize it.**
  - *The ability of the proposed innovation to provide solutions to existing climate, environmental, health or other significant local or EU challenges.*
  - *The impact on the development and sustainability of the Cypriot and the broader EU*



research and innovation ecosystem, as evaluated by the European Innovation Scoreboard.

- **Scientific Impact and measures to maximize it.**
  - The ability to generate research and development results to be published in peer-reviewed journals or commercial publications.
- **Improvement of the country's performance:**
  - Improvement of Cyprus' ranking in relevant indicators of the European Innovation Scoreboard and/or the Global Innovation Index.
  - Improvement of the reputation of Cypriot industry/enterprises in the international markets.

The relevant information can be found in [Section B2](#) in "Proposal Part B – Technical Annex".

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION (35%)

The following should be considered in the assessment of this criterion:

- **Completeness and appropriateness of the content of the work packages**, taking into account the benefits expected to emerge, as well as other activities and milestones, the specialized equipment or other resources required and the timetable and the budget available for the implementation of the proposed activities and achievement of milestones.
- **Effectiveness of the proposed methodologies and approaches to be used for the implementation of the activities of the proposed plan, as justified by the following factors:**
  - The adoption of internationally-established stage gate, agile, and other methodologies for the development of innovative products/services.
  - The attention given to the "Voice of Customer" through use of practises such as customers' interviews, concierge testing, users' prototypes, usability testing, hack days, alpha and beta testing, or other methods appropriate for the proposed innovation and product/service.
  - The attention given to others in the company's value chain through methods such as concurrent engineering.
  - The attention given to design thinking.
  - The identification of possible risks and measures to avoid or mitigate them.
- **Completeness, quality and capacity of the host organisation (at the level of organisation and/or persons) for the implementation of the Project Proposal and the achievement of the proposed objectives, at all stages, including the product/service development, the value chain and the market entry, as justified by:**
  - the experience, the knowledge, the skills, and the credentials for the proposed team

members,

- *the experience, the knowledge and the skills of the senior management team (C-suite),*
- *the incentives provided by the host organisation to the core team,*
- *the experience, the knowledge, the skills, the capacity and ability of vendors, subcontractors or consultants which are important for the successful implementation of the proposed project and the success of the product or service in target-markets, and*
- *the Project's total quality management plan, or equal.*

***The relevant information can be found in:***

- 1. "Project Budget Overview" in "Proposal Part A – General Information and Budget",***
- 2. Sections B3-4 in "Proposal Part B – Technical Annex", and***
- 3. Annex I – Curricula Vitae.***

***Important Notes:***

- 1. If any inconsistencies between "Proposal Part A – General Information and Budget" and "Proposal Part B – Technical Annex" are observed, Part A should be the one considered as valid for evaluation purposes.***
- 2. The Business Plan should not be evaluated. It is provided to give the evaluators the context to the proposal.***

**PART II - SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS**

<b>QUESTION</b>
<p><i>Do you believe that any part of the Proposal under evaluation (e.g. methodology, Work Packages and activities, expected results, products etc.) requires to undergo an Ethics Review (e.g. a bioethical assessment by the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee)?</i></p> <p><i>The relevant information can be found in <a href="#">Sections B3 and B5</a> in “Proposal Part B – Technical Annex”.</i></p>
<p><i>Do you believe that the implementation of the proposed activities or the delivery of the expected results/products could have any potential negative impacts and/or pose risks to the environment?</i></p> <p><i>Please note that Project activities <u>must</u> comply with the «No Significant Harm Principle», as described on p.6 of the present document.</i></p> <p><i>The relevant information can be found in <a href="#">Sections B3 and B5</a> in “Proposal Part B – Technical Annex”.</i></p>
<p><i>Do you believe that gender or sex is a determinant factor in the Proposal under evaluation, and if yes, do you believe that a gender/sex dimension has been sufficiently and appropriately integrated into the research content (e.g. in the proposed methodology)?</i></p> <p><i>The relevant information can be found in <a href="#">Sections B3 and B4</a> in “Proposal Part B – Technical Annex”.</i></p>

**\*Note:**

*The RIF recognizes that evaluators play a critical role in ensuring excellence in the funded research and, therefore, acknowledges the importance of integrating in the proposals gender and/or sex analysis. Please take a minute to consult the following informative videos (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hlceez1Dx5E>) that have been developed by the Canadian Institute for Gender and Health to guide evaluators when assessing Health-related proposals. The information provided in the videos may also apply when assessing proposals in other thematic areas.*