



## FUNDING SCHEME

«RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation

## PROGRAMME

«INNOVATION VOUCHERS»

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

INNOVOUCHERS / 1022



**Funded by the  
European Union**  
NextGenerationEU



Republic of Cyprus



RESEARCH  
& INNOVATION  
FOUNDATION



## INTRODUCTION

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) announces the Call for Proposals for the «**Innovation Vouchers**» Programme within the framework of the «**RESTART 2016-2020**» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period **05/2022 – 09/2022** and invites potential beneficiaries to submit relevant Project Proposals (Proposals).

The present Call will be financed by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument, in the frame of the action C3.212 «Innovation Funding Programmes and Funding Schemes for the Enhancement of Growth and Competitiveness of startups, innovative companies and SMEs» of the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan. The Action is implemented under Policy Axis 3: «Strengthening the Resilience and Competitiveness of the Economy», and specifically the Component 3.2 «Enhanced Research and Innovation».

## GENERAL CALL INFORMATION

<b>Pillar</b>	<b>III. Transformation of RTDI System</b>
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Innovation Vouchers</b>
<b>Call Identifier</b>	<b>INNOVOUCHERS/1022</b>
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>EU Recovery and Resilience Facility</b>
<b>Call Budget</b>	<b>185.000 Euro</b>
<b>Maximun Funding Per Project</b>	<b>5.000 Euro</b>
<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>21 October 2022</b>
<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Open Call until 16 December 2022, 13:00, or until budget exhaustion.</b>

*The English version of the Call, even though an official translation endorsed by the Research and Innovation Foundation, is provided for information purposes only. Only the Greek version of the Call is legally binding and shall prevail in case of any divergence in interpretation.*

## OBJECTIVES

«Innovation Vouchers» Programme aims to encourage Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to engage in research and innovation activities and to strengthen cooperation between enterprises and knowledge intensive organizations. SMEs will be supported to develop innovative solutions in order to address challenges or problems they face, through the transfer of know-how from knowledge intensive organizations and access to laboratory infrastructures.

Furthermore, the Programme aims to the exploitation of academic research by the industry through the provision of advisory services by Research Organisations to enterprises, the



creation of appropriate conditions for cooperation, and the increase of private expenditure in Academic and Research Organisations.

Award of Innovation Vouchers also seeks to contribute to the mitigation of one of the major challenges encountered during the implementation of research and innovation funding schemes and measures, which is the difficulty to be exploited by a large number of SMEs.

## DESCRIPTION

«Innovation Vouchers» Programme, is a simple and effective instrument that will enable SMEs to realize the importance and benefits that could emerge from their involvement in research and innovation activities and, through the relevant cooperation, to exploit technical know-how from research and other knowledge intensive organisations that can support them to develop innovative solutions to address problems they face, while strengthening their capacity for research and innovation.

Innovation Vouchers are internationally considered as one of the simplest forms of business financing, aiming to support enterprises to acquire the necessary know-how and improve their capacity for innovation and development, through their cooperation with organisations who possess the necessary expertise (knowledge intensive organisations).

«Innovation Vouchers» Programme is characterized by a relatively simple proposal submission procedure, short timeframes for evaluation and announcement of results, as well as quick project implementation and direct problem solving.

For the establishment of the partnership, the RIF offers to interested SMEs, «Innovation Vouchers» which are redeemed by organisations that will provide them with specific innovation, technical or scientific services and know-how. The implementation of the projects is expected to have a positive impact on the competitiveness of the beneficiary enterprises.

Particularly, in the case of projects in the fields of emerging information technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, cloud computing, blockchain and Internet of Things (IoT), mutual benefits are expected to emerged through the cooperation, for both enterprises in adopting digital technologies, and for academic research through the use of data from industry.

## BENEFICIARIES

Enterprises

## SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

The Host Organisation of a project must be a Small or Medium Sized Enterprise (B1, B2).



Host Organisations can be only «autonomous enterprises», as declared/justified in the Model Declaration on the Information Relating to the Qualification of an Enterprise as an SME and other documentation, submitted by beneficiaries during their registration in the RIF's IRIS Portal.

In the frame of the INNOVOUCHERS/0722 and INNOVOUCHERS/1022 Calls for Proposals, each enterprise may receive funding as Host Organisation (HO), only in one Project.

The participation of Enterprises that have received funding as Host Organisations by the RIF, in previous projects in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, excluding «Innovation Vouchers» - INNOVOUCHERS/1217 Call, «Proof of Concept for Technology/Knowhow Applications», and «Participation in International Brokerage Events» Programmes, is not allowed.

The participation of Partner Organisations and Foreign Research Organisations is not permitted.

The Innovation Vouchers can be redeemed by the following knowledge intensive organisations:

- Organisations which upon Legal Status Check by the RIF, have been classified as «Research Organisations» for the purposes of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.
- Higher Education Public and Private Academic Institutions in Cyprus.
- Accredited organisations by the Cyprus Organisation for the Promotion of Quality<sup>1</sup>, which possess the appropriate laboratory/experimental equipment to conduct measurements, tests and/or analyses.
- Enterprises that have acquired a «Certificate of Innovative Enterprise» by the Deputy Ministry of Research Innovation and Digital Policy of the Republic of Cyprus<sup>2</sup>.
- Enterprises from Cyprus that have been funded by the RIF in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, or by the EC's Framework Programmes (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe), as Host Organisations/Coordinators for the implementation of research and innovation activities.

The participation of the same enterprise as Beneficiary – Host Organisation and Knowledge Intensive Organisation, in different proposals in the fame of the present Call, is not allowed.

Upon the completion of the Projects, each SME is obliged to proceed with a communication action (social media post, article in local media, video, informative event etc) to present the project results, describe the cooperation with the Knowledge Intensive Organisation and highlight the benefits emerged as a result of the project. For the communication actions,

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.meci.gov.cy/meci/cys/cys.nsf/index\\_2?Openform](http://www.meci.gov.cy/meci/cys/cys.nsf/index_2?Openform)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.dmid.gov.cy/dmid/research.nsf/euprogramms\\_el/euprogramms\\_el?OpenDocument](https://www.dmid.gov.cy/dmid/research.nsf/euprogramms_el/euprogramms_el?OpenDocument)



beneficiaries are advised to follow the information and communication guidelines for projects funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility<sup>3</sup>.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The projects concern the purchase of services as follows:

- Contracted Research,
- Technical consulting services,
- Measurements, tests and analyses,
- Access to research/laboratory infrastructures, and
- Design and development of prototype.

The Innovation Voucher cannot be used for:

- Personnel training,
- Purchase of equipment,
- Purchase of software / configuration of software (off the shelf solutions),
- Development of common software and mobile applications such as websites, e-commerce, accounting systems, ERPs, etc,
- Marketing or branding of products,
- Usual business consulting services (i.e. preparation of business plans), accounting or legal services, and
- Market Research.

In the cases of cooperation between Research/Academic Organisation, the Research/Academic Organization may have the right to publish new knowledge emerged as a result of the project, provided that there is an agreement with the enterprise in place.

## DURATION OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The deposit of a Voucher at the RIF for redemption, must be done within a period of six (6) months of its Issue Date. After the six (6) months period, the Voucher will be considered as invalid.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/All/7691B6DB05763648C225879D00271ABB?OpenDocument>



Extension of the project duration up to one (1) month, could be awarded only in exceptional circumstances.

The Voucher's Issue Date is agreed between the RIF and the Project Coordinator (PC) during the Contract Preparation phase, and can be set up to one (1) month from the Invitation for Contract Preparation date. If otherwise, the RIF has the right to terminate the Contract Preparation procedure.

## **BUDGET**

€ 185.000

## **MAXIMUM FUNDING PER PROJECT**

€ 5.000

Aid intensity amounts up to 100% of eligible expenses.

## **ELIGIBLE COSTS**

Cost for External Services for the abovementioned services.

Funding is awarded as a one-off payment, in the form of De Minimis aid (Commission Regulation, No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013).

VAT is not eligible. Beneficiaries are responsible to pay the VAT to the knowledge intensive organisation.

It is noted that according to the EU Regulation No 1407/2013 for De-Minimis Aid, enterprises active in the sectors of fishery and aquaculture and primary production of agricultural products, cannot be funded.

Furthermore, according to the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme, activities relating to the active involvement of farmers in the cultivation of cooperation culture and the adoption of innovative methods and practices in order to solve problems in the field of Agriculture, are not eligible for funding.

## **RESTART 2016-2020 WORK PROGRAMME**

All general rules and procedures for the participation of organisations and individuals, the eligible activities and costs, as well as the specific information regarding the «Innovation Vouchers» Programme, as well as the other RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, are included in



the **RIF's Work Programme for the «RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 09/2022**, which is the main reference document and an important information source for interested parties and can be found on the Research and Innovation Foundation's **IRIS (Innovation Research Information System) Portal** (<https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary>).

## SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

In the frame of the present Call, the following specific conditions apply:

- During the submission of proposals, Beneficiaries – Host Organisations, should submit to the RIF an official proof for the registration of the updated data regarding their ultimate beneficial owners in the Competent National Registry / Archive (including the registration number), as per «The prevention and suppression of money laundering and terrorist financing Law of 2007 (188(I)/2007)» described in Chapter 4.4 – Contract Preparation, of Section III, of the relevant Work Programme.
- Funded Projects should comply with the «Do No Significant Harm» principle, according to which they must not include or support activities that could cause significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives, as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852, on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment, as Described in Chapter 8.6 – Broader Legal Framework, of Section III of the relevant Work Programme Document. According to the above, in the frame of the present Call activities which fall under non-eligible activities as these are described in the aforementioned Chapter of the Work Programme, are excluded.

## SUBMISSION

Proposals are submitted through the Research and Innovation Foundation's **IRIS Portal** (<https://iris.research.org.cy>).

The Project Coordinator and all local participating organisations in the Project Consortium, should register in advance on the IRIS Portal.

Potential applicants are advised to use the «**Guide for Applicants**», which contains guidelines and clarifications regarding the Submission procedure and the «**IRIS Portal User Manual**» which can be found on the IRIS Portal (<https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary>).

*The Research and Innovation Foundation encourages in all its Calls for Proposals:*

- *the participation of women as Project Coordinators, and*
- *the gender-balanced formation of projects.*



### The Project Proposal consists of the following parts:

1. Part A – General Information & Budget (electronic form (fields) to be completed online through the IRIS Portal).
2. **Part B** – Technical Annex (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format).
3. Annex II – Call Specific Information (documents to be uploaded as an Annexes on the IRIS Portal in PDF format, duly completed and signed as requested):
  - (a) A Written Declaration (Form K.E.2) issued in accordance to Regulation 3(2) of the 2009 and 2012 Regulations for the Control of State Aid (De Minimis Aid), duly filled and signed,
  - (b) Declaration of the Host Organisation,
  - (c) Declaration for confirmation of non-debts to state Authorities,
  - (d) Single Undertaking Declaration, and
  - (e) Official Proof for the registration of updated data of their ultimate beneficial owners in the Competent National Registry / Archive.

## PROJECT SELECTION

### Evaluation Procedure

For the evaluation of Proposals to be submitted under the «Innovation Vouchers» Programme, upon submission of each proposal an internal evaluation procedure is carried out by RIF staff (first-in-first-served), according to the Call requirements. During the internal evaluation procedure, the RIF may request additional documentation.

### Evaluation Criteria

Not applicable.

### Selection

Prioritised by order of submission to the RIF (non-competitive procedures apply) on condition that proposals have been deemed eligible for funding following the internal evaluation procedure, until the total requested funding of approved Proposals, equals the total Call budget.

## REDEMPTION

Upon the completion of the assigned work by the Knowledge Intensive Organisation and up to six (6) months from the Voucher's Issue Date, the Host Organisation submits to the RIF a brief Report using the «Redemption Form» document, which is available in the IRIS Portal.





The original invoice by the Knowledge Intensive Organisation is attached in the «Redemption Form».

The «Redemption Form» will be examined by the RIF in relation to the objectives and the regulations of the Programme and provided that the necessary conditions are met, the cost of the Innovation Voucher will be redeemed to the Knowledge Intensive Organisation. According to the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme, the RIF may conduct on-the spot verifications, when deemed necessary.

If the total cost, according to the invoice issued, is lower than the value of the Innovation Voucher then the actual cost will be paid.

## **INFORMATION – CONTACT DETAILS**

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### **RIF Support Service**

Email

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Telephone

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*The Research and Innovation Foundation may at its discretion, proceed to the extension or revocation of the present Call by applying the same publication procedure.*