



FUNDING SCHEME

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

PROGRAMME

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

RESEARCH STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES
STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES/1222



Co-funded by
the European Union



Republic of Cyprus



RESEARCH
& INNOVATION
FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) announces the Call for Proposals for the «European Partnerships» Programme within the framework of the «RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period May 2022 – March 2023 and invites potential beneficiaries to submit relevant Project Proposals (Proposals).

The present Call will be co-financed by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in the frame of the Operational Programme «ΘΑΛΕΙΑ» 2021-2027 under Priority 1: «Competitive, Smart and Digital Economy» and the Specific Objective (1i): «Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies».

Within the framework of the "Research Infrastructures" Programme, two Calls for Proposals will be announced as follows: "Strategic Research Infrastructures " and "Small-Scale Research Infrastructures".

GENERAL CALL INFORMATION

Pillar	I. SMART GROWTH
Programme	Research Infrastructures
Call Identifier	STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES/1222
Source of Funding	Operational Programme «ΘΑΛΕΙΑ» 2021-2027 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
Call Budget	12.500.000 Euro Budget per Thematic Priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health: 2.500.000 Euro• Environment (including Renewable Energy Sources and Advanced Materials): 2.500.000 Euro• Shipping – Marine Transportation: 2.500.000 Euro• Agriculture - Food: 2.500.000 Euro• Information and Communication Technologies (including space technologies): 2.500.000 Euro
Minimum Funding Per Project	1.500.000 Euro
Maximun Funding Per Project	2.500.000 Euro
Publication Date	19 December 2022
Submission Deadline	4 April 2023, 13:00

**** In case there is available budget, the RIF may transfer any available budget to the Call "Small-Scale Research Infrastructures".***

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

The "Research Infrastructures" Program aims to create of new large-scale research infrastructures that will be used for the implementation of research projects by the Consortium. In particular, the funded projects should promote collaboration between stakeholders of the R&I ecosystem (research organisations, enterprises or other organisations) in order to effectively share the research infrastructure.

In addition, through the implementation of the Program the following are expected:

- the creation of clusters for the development of new centres of excellence with significant prospects in the coming years,
- the accessibility of the R&I ecosystem to state-of-the-art research equipment that enhances research excellence and innovation capacity in specific thematic areas.
- creating a critical mass of researchers in cutting-edge sectors and creating jobs for young scientists;
- the possible attraction of high-level research staff to Cyprus,
- to promote effective research collaboration at national level, and
- expanding the potential of involved organisations to attract additional competitive funds for research and innovation from other funding sources.

DESCRIPTION

The Call " Strategic Research Infrastructures" concerns the funding of projects aimed at creating new large-scale research infrastructures that will be used for the implementation of a research project by the Consortium. The new research infrastructures will implement high-level cutting-edge research and the proposed projects will focus on subjects that fall under selected thematic priorities, which are listed below. Through the proposed research projects, effective collaboration between stakeholders and departments of the same organisation (where applicable) should be promoted to maximize the use of infrastructure.

Specifically, funded projects under the Program "Research Infrastructures" can concern:

- Acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment to upgrade the research capacity of an existing team/unit or
- Creation of a new team/unit (incl. recruitment of staff) through the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment.

According to the “Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01” and article 2 (91) of the General Block Exemption Regulation ‘research infrastructure’ means facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields and covers scientific equipment or sets of instruments, knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structured scientific information, enabling information and communication technology-based infrastructures such as grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature essential to conduct research.

The Consortium should:

- justify there is not already a research infrastructure equivalent to the proposed one in Cyprus,
- justify the need to establish such infrastructure in Cyprus, and
- document the need and possibility of its extensive use (through the provision of relevant access) by the research and business community.

The proposed Research Infrastructures should have the ability to gradually penetrate the modern international research scene of their field and/or serve the research needs of Cypriot society, economy and industry. The Coordinator can be any high-level researcher who is either already an employee of the Host Organisation or an external one who will be called upon to undertake this role.

The proposed research infrastructure should:

- (a) provide access on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis to other stakeholders of the ecosystem according to the state aid regulation¹ and the RESTART 2016-2020 Framework. In this context, letters of expression of interest for the use of the infrastructure by additional entities not participating in the research project should be included. It is understood that the Host Organisation shall respect and comply with all applicable laws, policies and/or regulations relating to open access to publicly funded research infrastructures.
- (b) be used for the implementation of a research project by the Consortium of at least three independent organisations. At least one of the participating organisations in the consortium must be from the private sector.

The proposals submitted should fall under one of the following Thematic Priorities.

- **Health**
- **Environment (incl. Renewable Energy Sources and advanced materials).**
- **Shipping – Marine Transportation**
- **Agriculture – Food**
- **Information and Communication Technologies (incl. space technologies)**

1

MANAGEMENT & EXPLOITATION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Ownership of background and foreground Intellectual Property (IP), as well as relevant conditions for the use of IP, shall be settled accordingly through bilateral or other agreements among Consortium Partners.

BENEFICIARIES

Research Organisations, Enterprises, Other Organisations

SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

The Host Organisation (HO) must be a Research Organisation (A1, A2) or an Enterprise. (B.1, B.2, B.3).

Research Organisations (A), Enterprises (B) or Other Organisations (C) may participate as additional Partner Organisations.

The consortium must include at least three Organisations. At least one of the participating organisations in the consortium must be from the private sector (cat. B1, B2, B3, C1, A2-privately funded research center).

It is noted that according the relevant Work Programme, in the cases where a minimum Consortium is required, it must consist of legal entities, independent of one another, none of them being under the direct or indirect control of the other or under the same direct or indirect control.

Participation of Large Enterprises (including Private Universities) is only permitted when an SME is also participating in the Cypriot Consortium, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

The participation of Foreign Research Organisations (FRO) is permitted.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Projects must include at least two of the following type of activities: Basic Research, Industrial Research, experimental development.

Projects must fall within Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 1-8 in compliance with the relevant definitions adopted by the EU².

² 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,

DURATION OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

36 Months

BUDGET

€ 12.500.000

MINIMUM - MAXIMUM FUNDING PER PROJECT

€1,500,000 - €2,500,000

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Personnel costs, Cost for Foreign Research Organisations, Instruments and Equipment Costs, Costs for External Services, Costs for Travelling Abroad, Consumables, Other Specific Costs, Overheads.

It is noted that in cases of expenses incurred in the context of a contract between a Contracting Authority and Foreign Research Organisations, the "Law Providing for the Regulation of Public Procurement Procedures and Related Matters of 2016 – 73(I)/2016" applies.

Aid Intensity is calculated separately for each organisation and according to the type of activity, according to Table III.1, in chapter 3.2 of the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme, with the exception of the Basic Aid Intensity for Small Enterprises, which is 65% for Industrial Research activities.

Regarding the category " Instruments and Equipment Costs ", the following applies:

- "Instruments and Equipment Costs " should refer to one piece of equipment or a larger number of pieces which will constitute the total infrastructure. The " Instruments and Equipment Costs " of the Host Organisation (HO) should be at least 50% of the requested funding. Expenses for Instruments and Equipment can also be made by the Partner Organisations (PA), in addition to the expenses of the Host Organisation.
- For organisations (HO and PA) that are exempted from Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid (Categories A and C2) in the category " Instruments and Equipment Costs "

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)

the concept of depreciation does not apply and for funding purposes 90% of the full cost of purchasing the equipment is eligible. These costs are excluded from the calculation of overhead costs.

- For organisations (HO and PA) that are not exempted from Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid, the funding of the "Instruments and Equipment Costs" will be made on the basis of Article 26 of Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid (Category of Aided Activities "Investment Aid for Research Infrastructures") and the concept of depreciation does not apply. For funding purposes the aid intensity in this Category is 50%. These costs are excluded from the calculation of overhead costs.

During the implementation of the Projects, it is noted that the following restrictions will apply:

- It is not allowed to transfer budget to and from the Category of Aided Activities "Investment Aid for Research Infrastructures".
- It is not allowed to transfer budget from one research activity to another in the Category of Aided Activities " Aid for research and development projects " (e.g. from Basic Research to Industrial Research, etc.).

It is noted that, all beneficiaries that have not previously participated in the RESTART 2026-2020 Programmes, should make use of the simplified cost Method «Standard Scales of Unit Costs» for the calculation of personnel costs.

Funding payments are made in instalments as follows:

- Pre-Financing, which corresponds to 60% of the Requested Funding, is paid upon Contract signature.
- Interim Payment, which may correspond to up to 20% of the Requested Funding, taking into consideration the eligible costs of the first period and on the condition the Interim Progress Report is approved by the RIF. In particular, the second funding instalment is paid, as a rule, only in the event that the eligible costs for the first period exceed 70% of the pre-financing.
- Final Payment, which may correspond to up to the balance of the Requested Funding, taking into consideration the eligible costs of the project, the Final Aid Intensity and on the condition the Final Progress Report has been approved by the RIF.

It is noted that Article 26 of Regulation (EC) 651/2014 provides the following:

- Where a research infrastructure pursues both economic and non-economic activities, the financing, costs and revenues of each type of activity shall be accounted for separately on the basis of consistently applied and objectively justifiable cost accounting principles.
- The price charged for the operation or use of the infrastructure shall correspond to a market price.
- Access to the infrastructure shall be open to several users and be granted on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis. Undertakings which have financed at least 10 % of the investment costs of the infrastructure may be granted preferential access

under more favourable conditions. In order to avoid overcompensation, such access shall be proportional to the undertaking's contribution to the investment costs and these conditions shall be made publicly available.

- The eligible costs shall be the investment costs in intangible and tangible assets³.
- The aid intensity shall not exceed 50 % of the eligible costs.

Compliance with the above will be checked by the Foundation through a monitoring and claw-back mechanism, as provided for by the relevant regulation.

For organisations (HO and PA) that are not exempted from Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid, and request funding in the "Instruments and Equipment Costs" category (Category of Aided Activities "Investment Aid for Research Infrastructures") have the obligation to submit to the RIF, for the duration of the Project, a certificate from an independent external approved auditor at the stage of the Payment Request:

- That all the conditions of Article 26 are fulfilled, and
- Where a research infrastructure pursues both economic and non-economic activities, the financing, costs and revenues of each type of activity shall be accounted for separately on the basis of consistently applied and objectively justifiable cost accounting principles, and
- That the applicable aid intensity is not exceeded as a result of an increase in the share of economic activities compared to the situation envisaged at the time of awarding the aid.

SERVICES OF THE CENTRAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OFFICE (KTO)

In order to support the exploitation of research results, the interaction between the Host Organisation and the Central Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) for the preparation of a customised Action Plan for the Provision of Services by the KTO, is obligatory in the frame of the present Call. It is noted that, the adoption of the Action Plan and the acquisition of the Services are not mandatory.

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 – 03/2023**, which is the main reference document and an important information source for interested

³ For the purposes of this Call, only expenditure on instruments and equipment in the context of the creation of new research infrastructures is covered.

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:

- Each Entity as Host Organisation can submit only one proposal concerning the acquisition of a **specific infrastructure** in one of the Calls STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES/1222 and SMALL SCALE INFRASTRUCTURES/1222. In the event that the HO submits more than one proposal concerning the same or similar research infrastructure then neither of the two proposals will be sent for scientific evaluation.
- Each person, acting as Project Coordinator, can submit only one (1) proposal in the frame of both of the STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES/1222 και SMALL SCALE INFRASTRUCTURES/1222 Calls for Proposals. In the event that a person submits more than one proposal then neither of the two proposals will be sent for scientific evaluation.
- Projects to be funded must have a start date by December 31st 2023 at the latest.
- Aid Intensity is calculated separately for each organisation and according to the type of activity, according to Table III.1, in chapter 3.2 of the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme, with the exception of the Basic Aid Intensity for Small Enterprises, which is 65% for Industrial Research activities.
- The Host Organisation is required to register the updated data regarding its ultimate beneficial owners in the Competent National Registry / Archive, as per «The prevention and suppression of money laundering and terrorist financing Law of 2007 (188(I)/2007)» The RIF maintains the right to proceed with the appropriate checks in the competent Registries to verify the registration of the data and it is possible to request for the submission of official proofs. Furthermore, in case where requested funding exceeds 150.000 Euro, by the organisation of the 2nd Stage of the Evaluation, the Host Organisation will be required to also submit the data (Name and Surname, ID / Passport Number and Date of Birth) of its ultimate beneficial owners through the relevant Declaration.
- 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.

SUBMISSION

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

It is noted that, the Project Coordinator and all local participating organizations of the Cypriot Consortium, should register in advance on the IRIS Portal.

Potential applicants are advised to read the **specific for the Programme «Guide for Applicants»**, which contains guidelines and clarifications regarding the Submission procedure which can be found on the IRIS Portal under the relevant Call for Proposals and the general «Guide for Applicants» and «**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*
- *a gender-balanced participation in 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). *It is noted that the template provided for this Call must be submitted, without any differentiation. The Part B template can be found on the IRIS Portal, under the relevant Call for Proposals (Call Documents).*
3. Annex I – Curricula Vitae (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format and includes the CVs of the Coordinator and the key personnel of the project team – Optional Submission).
4. Annex II – Call Specific Information (documents to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format – Obligatory Submission):
 - (a) *Letters of Expression of Interest from other stakeholders for the use of the proposed research infrastructure.*
 - (b) *Open Access Policy.*
5. Annex III – Call Specific Information (documents to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format – Obligatory Submission):
 - (a) Declaration by the Legal Representative of the HO that "The HO has submitted only one proposal concerning the acquisition of the specific infrastructure in both of the *Calls* STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES/1222 and SMALL SCALE INFRASTRUCTURES/1222" (Obligatory submission)

PROJECT SELECTION

Evaluation Procedure

For the evaluation of Proposals to be submitted under the « Strategic Research Infrastructures» Programme, a Proposal Eligibility Check and a combination of methods of remote scientific

evaluation by two (2) independent evaluators and evaluation by Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC), will take place, as described in the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme May 2022-March 2023.

It is noted that in case the requested documents have not been submitted and a thematic priority in Part B is not selected and the proposal will be deemed ineligible during the preliminary check.

During Stage 'A of the Evaluation, each proposal is remotely evaluated by two (2) experts, which are specialists in the proposal topic. Proposals which secure an Evaluation Score of at least 13.00/15.00 qualify to Stage 'B of the Evaluation.

The evaluation of Proposals in Stage 'B is carried out by five Scientific Evaluation Committees (SEC), one for each Thematic Priority. In the frame of Stage 'B of the Evaluation, a member/members of the project Team present the Project, in person, to the members of the Committee, who will have the opportunity to ask for clarifications and discuss the content of the Proposal between them and also with the representatives of the project Team. The final decision regarding the selection of a proposal for funding, is at the discretion of the Committee. After completion of the procedure, the relevant Evaluation Report will be communicated to the Project Coordinator, stating the rationale behind the Committee's decision. The Committee's decision is final and cannot be appealed against.

Evaluation Criteria

Prior to the scientific evaluation of each Proposal according to the evaluation criteria, evaluators are requested to assess the Proposal's compatibility with:

- Compatibility with the Objectives of the Programme, and
- Compatibility with the Objectives of the Call for Proposals, and
- Compatibility of the proposed type(s)* of research with the proposed Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) and those allowed by the Call for Proposals, and
- Compatibility with the selected priority area, and
- Compatibility with the "Research Infrastructures" definition, as defined in the Article 2 (91) of GBER, and
- Compatibility with the «Do No Significant Harm» principle.

The evaluator will not proceed with the assessment of the evaluation criteria should the Proposal fail the compatibility assessment.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Excellence – Weight 30%

- Quality of Project Objectives.
 - Contribution of the project objectives and their implementation towards the specific sector to which the project is applied.

- Correlation of the scientific project objectives to the proposed infrastructure to be developed and acquired.
- Degree of Project Innovation and Originality in relation to the existing knowledge (state-of-the-art) at international level.
- Soundness, credibility and feasibility of the proposed concept.

2. Added Value and Benefit – Weight 40%

- Scientific and/or technological and/or social and/or economic impact at national level and measures to maximize it.
 - Satisfactory justification of the need and importance of acquiring this infrastructure for the Cypriot research and innovation ecosystem including the potential of extensive use and access to it.
 - Contribution towards the sustainable development of the specific sector as well as the Cyprus economy in general.
 - Contribution of the project towards the development of the research human capital.
 - Potential attraction of future research funds (e.g. Horizon Europe).
- Effectiveness of the proposed measures for the exploitation (including management of Intellectual Property Rights) and dissemination of results for achieving maximum Project visibility.
- Facilitation of access of the infrastructures/equipment to be acquired by other research teams/ organizations.
 - Interest of the ecosystem in the proposed Research Infrastructure and provision of access.

3. Implementation – Weight 30%

- The technical validity and completeness of the proposed equipment to achieve the results of the project.
- Completeness and appropriateness of the Work Packages' content, the allocation of the various activities, the timetable and the budget.
 - Relevance of the proposed budget (including the research infrastructure cost) to the content and the actual needs of the proposed project.
- Effectiveness of the proposed methodology for the implementation of the deliverables.
- Completeness, quality and capacity of the Consortium (at the level of organizations and/or persons) for the implementation of the Project Proposal and achievement of the proposed objectives.

- Adequacy of the Host Organisation (operating regulations, institutional framework, financial capacity, etc.) and its staff to support the utilization and maintenance of the infrastructure that will be acquired immediately and over time.
- Effective collaboration between the consortium members
- Competence and experience of the participating organizations (Host Organization and Partner Organizations) to implement research and innovation projects, especially in the proposed project scientific field.
- Adequacy of the research team: Research merits of the Project Coordinator (e.g. publications, invited lectures, awards and prizes, secured research funding) as well as of the other researchers.
- Justification of the need for the participation of the Foreign Research Organisations for the implementation of the project (where applicable).
- ◊ Quality of the proposed open access plan and proposed implementation timeline.
- ◊ Suitability and adequacy of the proposed coordination and management activities, including identification and handling of potential risks.
- Completeness and reliability of the Contingency Plan for the project implementation.

Selection

Proposals that have been deemed eligible for funding following the evaluation procedure, will be selected for funding.

It is noted that, the total funding of approved projects, will not exceed the total Call budget.

In case the available budget is not allocated, the RIF may transfer any remaining available budget to the Call "Small-Scale Research Infrastructures".

INFORMATION – CONTACT DETAILS

RIF Support Service

E-mail

support@research.org.cy

Telephone

+35722205000

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.