

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

2022 CALL FOR EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROJECTS UNDER THE MIT PORTUGAL PROGRAM

The present Announcement for Call for Proposals (ACP) is intended for Exploratory Research Projects (PeX) in the scope of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) [Portugal Program](#), submitted under a call for proposals, with terms disseminated at www.fct.pt, prepared under the terms set by the Regulation for Projects Exclusively funded by National Funds, hereinafter designated by [FCT Projects Regulations](#), published in Regulation No. 999/2016, of October 31st.

1. AIMS AND PRIORITIES

The consolidation and reinforcement of the National System of Science and Technology (NSST) constitute priorities of national policy for science and technology that aims to increase the national and international competitiveness of science and technology, and its contribution to innovation and transfer of knowledge. In this context, it is particularly relevant the promotion and strengthening of the scientific and technological institutions through the participation of research teams in Projects.

Considering these goals, and assuming broad cooperation between NSST entities and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), FCT launches the Exploratory Research Call for funding applications oriented towards scientific research in a holistic approach through integrated and multidisciplinary projects with a vision of scale evolution, in the following thematic areas:

- Climate Science & Climate Change
- Earth Systems: Oceans to Near Space
- Digital Transformation in Manufacturing
- Sustainable Cities
- Data Science

The PeX should take an “exploratory approach”, i.e., adopt a research theme in one of the emerging areas of the [MIT Portugal Program](#) that can be identified as a future research area, with high impact for Portugal as a living laboratory in the development and validation of new solutions, and that promotes the competitiveness of the Portuguese economy.

The application should aim to develop research activities between Portuguese universities and the MIT towards the development of intelligent solutions, promoting knowledge/research value, promoting the sustainable thinking, integrating human factors and technology, and stimulating multidisciplinary approaches.

All applications must fully comply with the terms of reference defined in the [Terms of Reference](#) for the MIT Portugal Program - 2022 Call for Proposals document.

2. SUPPORTED ENTITIES

The following non-entrepreneurial Portuguese entities of the R&I are individual or co-promotion beneficiaries:

- Higher education institutions, their institutes and R&D units;
- State or international Laboratories with head office in Portugal;
- Non-profit private institutions whose main objective is R&D activities;
- Other non-profit private and public institutions developing or participating in scientific research activities.

Funding for the MIT research team participating in the project will be provided directly by MIT through the [Call for Seed Projects](#) held at MIT.

3. CRITERIA FOR SUPPORTING PROJECTS

The call aims to support R&D projects framed into Exploratory Research Projects (PeX) type. These projects are scientific or technological research projects that explore ideas or concepts with significant originality and/or innovative potential. PeX should value impact, i.e., propose potential solutions to real-world problems, going beyond research papers' output.

Projects may be presented “individually” (only one beneficiary) or in “co-promotion” (two or more beneficiaries). Projects in co-promotion must be led by an entity listed in 2.

The project shall have a maximum duration of **12 months**, renewable for a maximum of 3 months, in duly justified cases.

The maximum funding per project is 50 thousand euros.

The submitted projects must:

- be led by a research group from an institution listed under Section 2 of this call;
- have the participation of a MIT researcher (with [Principal Investigator status](#)) in the project's Research Team.

The project consortium may include collaborative Institutions, that may also invest in the exploratory research project and whose participation may contribute relevant expertise to the project. However, such entities will not be funded under this call.

This call exclusively funds the participation of Portuguese research teams from entities as listed in Section 2.

4. FORM OF SUPPORT AND FUNDING RATE

Supports to be granted are non-refundable.

Projects will be funded by National funds through the FCT budget.

5. BUDGET ALLOCATION

The budget allocation for this call is of **€ 400,000** (four-hundred thousand euros) distributed as follows:

Group	Thematic Areas	Budget Allocation
1	Climate Science & Climate Change	€ 100.000
2	Data Science	€ 100.000
3	Earth Systems: Oceans to Near Space Digital Transformation in Manufacturing Sustainable Cities	€ 200.000
Total		€ 400.000

If the budget allocation stipulated for the areas “Climate Science & Climate Change” and “Data Science” is not exhausted, the remaining amount will be transferred to the set of the thematic areas “Earth Systems: Oceans to Near Space”, “Digital Transformation in Manufacturing” and “Sustainable Cities”.

6. PROJECTS AND BENEFICIARIES ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility conditions for projects and beneficiaries are those indicated in the [FCT Project Regulations](#), articles no. 5 and 6:

6.1 Project

- Applications which have been submitted in previous editions of the same call with an ongoing decision process are not allowed to apply;
- Multiple applications of the same projects are not accepted:
 - In different scientific areas of the same call;
 - In different calls in which there is temporal overlap within the submission of applications

- In the case of applications to calls with different theme scopes, and which take place indifferent periods of application submission, the funding recommendation within one of them is a condition for exclusion from the decision process of the remaining ones.

6.2 Principal Investigator in Portugal

- Can only submit one proposal as PI in this call;
- Must identify a co-responsible for the project, the Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI), that will replace the PI when he/she is unable to fulfil his/her duties;
- Must have a Doctoral degree. The document certifying the doctoral degree must be attached to the application;
- Should also have an employment contract or grant contract with the Principal Contractor. In the absence of such a link, at the time of the Acceptance Document a written agreement between the parties must be submitted, according to point c) of item 1 of Article 6 of [FCT's Project Regulations](#);
- Who have a final scientific report rejected within two years before the opening of the call, for reasons attributable to them, is not allowed to submit an application;
- Cannot be in a situation of unjustified non-fulfilment of the regulatory requirements regarding the presentation of reports on scientific execution of projects concluded and financed through FCT and in which acted as PI.

6.3 Co-Principal Investigator

- Cannot apply as PI of a proposal to the present call;
- Can only submit one proposal, to the present call, as Co-PI;
- Who have been PI of projects with a final scientific report rejected within two years before the opening of the call, for reasons attributable to them, is not allowed to submit an application.

6.4 Members of the Research Team in Portugal

The remaining members of the Portugal research team shall be dedicated to the project, according to their participation.

6.5 MIT Team

The MIT researcher must have Principal Investigator status. This participation must be confirmed by means of a "Collaboration Letter" to be submitted with the application.

6.6 Principal Contractor

- The Principal Contractor of the project must be one of the national entities of the R&D system listed in section 2;
- Applications will not be accepted if the Principal Contractor is in unjustified situation regarding the return of funding transferred to the Principal Contractor in previous projects with the same Principal Investigator.

7. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The following expenses are eligible:

a) Direct Costs for Portuguese institutions:

- Human resources** dedicated or related to the development of R&D activities regarding the project's execution in all mandatory components by the applicable labor legislation, including expenses with grant holders directly supported by the beneficiaries.
- Expenses with **missions** in Portugal and abroad, directly attributable to the project, fulfil the legal regulations that rules public expenditure, namely the Decree-Law No.106/98 of April 24th and the Decree-Law No. 192/95 of July 28th, in its current wording;
- Acquisition of scientific and technical tools and equipment**, indispensable to the project if within its useful lifetime;
- Amortization of technical and scientific tools and equipment**, indispensable to the project and of which the useful lifetime falls within the execution period but does not end within that period;
- Subcontracts** directly related to the project scientific task's execution;
- Expenses related to the national and international record of **patents, copyrights, open-access publications, utility models and designs, national models or trademarks** when associated with other forms of intellectual protection, namely fees, state-of-the-art searches and consulting expenses;
- Expenses with the **demonstration, promotion and disclosure of project's outputs**, for dissemination actions of public knowledge and public disclosure of the results, namely publication fees in compliance with the national policies for the Open Access;
- Acquisition of other goods and services** directly related to the project execution, including costs with **consultants** that do not establish subcontracts.

b) Indirect Costs for Portuguese institutions, with a fixed rate of 25% of direct eligible costs with exclusion of subcontracting.

Non-eligible expenses for Portuguese institutions are indicated in Article 9 of [FCT Projects Regulation](#).

The conditions of eligibility indicated in point 2 of the [Budget Execution Norms](#) should also be taken into consideration.

8. PAYMENTS AND EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION

The advance payment will be 75% of the funding approved.

The remaining amount, until the approved funding for each project, will be paid after the scientific and financial components of the project are closed and by means of a final refund payment.

The expenditure justification should be made via electronic submission of the identifying lists of expenses paid, and in a specific form provided through FCT "[Portal de Ciência e Tecnologia](#)".

9. SELECTION METHODOLOGY

An international panel of independent reviewers, mainly affiliated to foreign institutions, will carry out the evaluation. The selection and ranking of projects are based on a Project Merit Indicator (MP) using the following criteria, which are described in greater detail in the [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#) and in the [Terms of Reference](#) for the Exploratory Research Projects Call for Proposals 2022:

- A. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the project from an international standpoint;
- B. Scientific merit of the research team;
- C. Feasibility of the plan of work and reasonability of the budget;
- D. Contribution to the knowledge accumulation and competencies of the National Scientific and Technological System;

The Merit of the Project (MP), is calculated according to the following formula:

$$MP = 0.45 A + 0.20 B + 0.20 C + 0.15 D$$

The criteria A, B, C and D are scored using a 9-point scale system (1- minimum; 9-maximum) with decimal numbers. The final score of MP is rounded to two-decimal places.

If information made available in the application does not allow for evaluating a given criterion, then the respective criterion will receive a score of 1.0 (one).

For a proposal to be eligible for funding, a minimum score of MP equal to or higher than 5.00 points is required.

The applications will be ranked by the panel, by group of thematic areas defined in point 5 of the announcement and in decreasing order of the MP score. In case of ties (projects with the same MP score), the ratings assigned to criteria A, B, C and D will be used sequentially and in decreasing order to provide the final ranking of the projects.

10. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be presented to FCT, in English, from October 11 to November 17, 2022, at 17:00 Lisbon time, using a specific on-line form and submitted through [myFCT](#) platform.

Applications are composed by the on-line form.

The principal investigator, co-principal investigator, the core elements, as well as the remaining elements of the research team, are responsible for submitting an updated version of their CV in English on the [CIÊNCIAVITAE](#) platform.

The Statement of Commitment for the Principal Contractor will be available on [myFCT](#) platform, for agreement by the head of the Principal Contractor or someone appointed by him/her, following the deadline for submission of applications and up to 02 December 2022 at 17:00 (Lisbon time).

11. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, thus no applicant may be privileged, benefited, damaged, or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty. This includes ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic disease, nationality, ethnicity or race, land of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs or trade union affiliation.

12. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

The call is governed by this Announcement, by the Regulation of Projects Financed Exclusively by National Funds, approved by Regulation No. 999/2016, of 16 October, and by other applicable national and community legislation.

FCT recommends a timely reading of all the documentation supporting the application, namely, the Guidelines for Proposals Writing, the [Terms of Reference](#) for the Exploratory Research Projects Call for Proposals 2022, the [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#), [CIÊNCIAVITAE Guide](#) and the [Ethics Self-Assessment Guide](#).

13. CONTACT POINT

For inquires of scientific nature, please contact the MIT Portugal program at: info@mitportugal.org.
For specific information related to the application submission, please contact us at:
concursosprojetos@fct.pt.

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