

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROPOSALS SUBMISSIONS

2022 Call for Exploratory Research Projects under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program

The present Announcement for Call for Proposals (ACP) is intended for Exploratory Research Projects within the scope of Carnegie Mellon 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.

This Call is designed to assist teams of researchers from the NSST entities, the Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and industry partners in bootstrapping high-impact potential research activities of strategic relevance for the [Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program](#) (CMU Portugal). The Call encourages recent Ph.D. graduates that are faculty at Portuguese Universities or researchers with an appointment in Portuguese research institutions to submit a research proposal.

Considering these goals FCT launches the Exploratory Research Call (ERPs) for funding projects that aim to stimulate and promote Portugal's international competitiveness and innovation capacity in Science and Technology (S&T), in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The proposals should be high-risk/high-reward and show promise and a strategy for significant future expansion of the project's goals. ERPs are aimed at formulating and launching the basis for longer-term projects, i.e., they will not be required to achieve, within their scope, the fully developed and ambitious final results that will be typical of longer-term projects. However, the proposals must be very concrete on the activities and outcomes that the consortium proposes to carry out and achieve within the ERPs scope and clearly link them to its longer-term objectives. The ERPs should value impact, e.g., by building systems that address real-world problems beyond just research papers.

Under this Call, the Program is seeking proposals, namely in the area of ICT, focusing on the opportunities provided by the data economy as a driver of growth and change.

All proposals must comply entirely with the terms of reference defined in the document [Terms of Reference for the 2022 Call for Exploratory Research Proposals \(ERPs\) under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program](#).

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 offices 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.

The participating researchers from Carnegie Mellon University will be funded by the program's CMU counterpart, through Amendment No. 8 to the Research and Education Collaboration Agreement between FCT and CMU.

3. CRITERIA FOR SUPPORTING PROJECTS

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 submitted proposals must include:

- One or more Portuguese research institutions from different entities as identified in section 2;
- One partner CMU faculty team.

The project consortium may include Collaborative Institutions, that may also invest in the exploratory project, bringing relevant competencies to the project. However, such entities will not be funded by this Call.

This Call will fund only resources and activities in Portuguese beneficiaries.

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

4. FORM OF SUPPORT AND FUNDING RATE

The funding to be granted under this ACP shall be non-reimbursable in accordance with number 1 of Article 7 of the [FCT Projects Regulations](#). National funds will fund the projects through the FCT budget.

5. BUDGET ALLOCATION

The budget allocation for this call is EUR 400.000, for projects starting in 2023. The maximum budget for Portuguese research institutions in each ERP cannot exceed:

- 70.000 euros for consortia with more than one Portuguese research institution;
- 50.000 euros for projects with a single Portuguese research institution.

Depending on the proposals' quality, up to 8 (eight) new awards are expected to be financed. However, the actual number of exploratory projects funded will depend on the quality of the submitted proposals and funding available.

The participating researchers from Carnegie Mellon University will be funded independently by the CMU Portugal Program at Carnegie Mellon University. The CMU Portugal Program will fund the participating CMU research teams' activities at Carnegie Mellon University at a level similar to the Portuguese team.

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 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 and cannot present an application as Co-PI;
- 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; The Co-PI can only be identified as such in only one proposal and cannot present an application as PI;

- 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](#);
- Anyone who had 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. CMU Team

The lead PI at CMU must hold a faculty appointment at CMU. A confirmation statement, together with the CV and the document that certifies the Ph.D. degree, should be attached to the application. The lead PI at CMU can only submit one proposal as PI in this call.

6.4. Principal Contractor

- The Principal Contractor of the project must be one of the national entities of the Portuguese R&I system mentioned in point 2;
- Applications will not be accepted if the Principal Contractor is in an 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 labour 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 scientific and technical 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 the 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 CMU Portugal 2022 Call for Proposals – [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#) and in the [Terms of Reference for the 2022 Call for Exploratory Research Proposals under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program](#):

- A. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the project from an international standpoint, and alignment with the goals of Phase III of the CMU Portugal Program;
- B. Scientific merit of the research team;
- C. Impact of the project results in a real-world problem and potential for opening longer-term research avenues;
- D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonableness of the resources and budget.

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

$$\mathbf{MP = 0.45 A + 0.2 B + 0.2 C + 0.15 D}$$

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 the 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 or higher than 5.00 points is required.

For selection and decision-making regarding funding, projects will be ranked by the MP score obtained in the review process in decreasing order. 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 by 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 must include the on-line form and the following documents, also submitted electronically:

- The document that certifies the Ph.D. degree of CMU Principal Investigator;
- A detailed two pages CV of the team leader at CMU.

The PI, co-PI, 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, following the deadline for submission of applications and up to 2 December 2022 at 17:00 (Lisbon time).

CMU teams should submit no later than the deadline of the Call to the CMU Portugal Office at CMU (mflohr@andrew.cmu.edu):

- 1) their budget
- 2) the abstract of their proposal, identifying the Portugal and CMU team members (including department affiliation and email) and partner institutions.

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.

Before submitting a proposal, applicants are advised to read the documents of the Call, namely: [FCT Projects Regulation](#), the [Guidelines for Exploratory Research Projects Proposals Writing](#), the [Terms of Reference](#) for the 2022 Call for Exploratory Research Proposals (ERPs) under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program, the [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#), the [CIÊNCIAVITAE Guide](#) and the [Ethics Self-Assessment Guide](#).

13. CONTACT POINT

For inquiries of scientific nature, please contact the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program at research@cmuportugal.org. For specific information related to application submission, please contact concursosprojetos@fct.pt.

Madalena Alves
President, Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.