

# ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROPOSALS SUBMISSIONS

## CALL FOR EXPLORATORY PROJECTS UNDER THE MIT PORTUGAL PROGRAM – 2021

Under Article number 10 of the Regulations for Projects Exclusively Funded by National Funds, hereinafter designated by [FCT Projects Regulation](#), published by Regulation No. 999/2016, of October 31st, Scientific Research and Technological Development Exploratory Projects are submitted under a call for proposals, with terms disseminated at the website of the *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.* – FCT (<https://www.fct.pt>).

This Announcement for a Call for Proposals, hereinafter referred to as ACP, has been developed in accordance with the provisions of Article 11 of [FCT Projects Regulation](#), and reads as follows:

### 1. AIMS AND PRIORITIES

Exploratory Research Projects (ERP) are intended to support teams of researchers from the National Science and Technology System (SCTN) entities, public and private partners, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

These projects are 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

The ERP 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 promote the competitiveness of the Portuguese economy.

The ERP should integrate different areas of knowledge, assuming broad cooperation between SCTN entities and the MIT.

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 - 2021 Call for Proposals”](#) document.

## 2. SUPPORTED ENTITIES

Only research teams from the following Portuguese entities may apply for funding:

- 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

This call is intended to fund Exploratory Projects developed by entities of the National Scientific and Technological System (SCTN), defined on Section 2 of the ACP.

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.

In addition to the entities mentioned above, the project consortium may include other public or private entities, profit or non-profit, 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.

Projects will have a duration of 12 months, renewable for a maximum of further 3 months, in duly justified cases.

At the end of each exploratory project, a final report shall be submitted according to Article 24 of the [FCT Project Regulations](#).

## 4. FUNDING AND BUDGET ALLOCATION

The funding to be granted under this ACP shall be non-reimbursable in accordance with number 1 of Article 7 of the [FCT Project Regulation](#).

The projects will be funded by National funds through the FCT, I.P., budget.

Depending on the quality and merit of the projects, up to 8 (eight) project proposals are expected to be funded.

The budget allocation for this call is EUR 400.000, for projects starting in 2021.

The maximum funding limit for each project is EUR 50.000 (fifty thousand euros).

An advance payment of 75% of the approved funding for the funded projects will be made by FCT, I.P., after the Terms of Acceptance document return.

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

The expenditure should be made by electronic submission of a single payment request, in a proper form available on the FCT, I.P Internet [Portal](#).

## 5. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Considering the provisions of Article 8 of [FCT Projects Regulation](#), the following expenses are eligible:

a) Direct Costs for Portuguese institutions:

- **Human resources** dedicated or related to the development of R&D activities with regard to the project's execution in all mandatory components by the applicable labour legislation, including expenses with grant holders and working contracts directly supported by the beneficiaries.

Regarding employment contracts, human resources expenses are based on the costs incurred in carrying out the project, based on the monthly base salary declared for the social protection of the worker, which may be increased by the mandatory social food allowance and occupational accident insurance under legally defined terms. The basic salary shall be the set of all remunerations of a permanent nature subject to taxation and declared for the purpose of social protection of the worker.

The Research Fellowships are tendered and contracted by the beneficiary entities in the context of the supported projects, which must comply with the [FCT Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowships](#) ( Law n.º 40/2004 of 18 August, in its present version);

- **Missions** in Portugal and abroad, and directly attributable to the project;
- **Acquisition of scientific and technical tools and equipment**, indispensable to the project if within the project during their 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, 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**, such as publication fees in order to meet 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 under the Exploratory Research Call are indicated in Article 9 of [FCT Projects Regulation](#).

## 6. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications should be presented to FCT, in English, from **19 May to 29 June 2021, at 17:00 Lisbon** time using a specific on-line form and should be submitted through the [FCT platform](#) following the Announcement of the Call for Proposals.

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**.

Applications to this call must include the on-line FCT form, and the following documents, also submitted electronically:

- “Collaboration Letter” from the MIT researcher associated with the project, describing his/her contribution to the project proposal;
- A document that certifies the PhD degree of the of Principal Investigator (PI);
- Timeline file for project tasks.

Scanning of the Declaration of Commitment for each application must be submitted on the [FCT platform](#) until **13 July 2021**, at 17:00 Lisbon time.

Before submitting a proposal, applicants are advised to read all the documents of the call, namely: the [FCT Projects Regulation](#), the [Guidelines for Exploratory Research Projects Proposals Writing](#), the [Terms of Reference for the Exploratory Research Projects Call for Proposals 2021](#), the [Guide for Peer Reviewers](#), [CIÊNCIAVITAE Guide](#) and the [Ethics Self-Assessment Guide](#).

## 7. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The eligibility conditions are those indicated in Article 6 of the [FCT Project Regulations](#) and those indicated in the present call.

### 7.1. Principal Investigator

The lead Portugal Principal Investigator (PI):

- Submit only one proposal as PI in this call for projects;
- 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;
- 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;
- Proposals will not be accepted from lead Portugal PIs affiliated with institutions on a situation of unjustified fault with FCT requirements regarding the delivery of scientific and/or financial execution reports from previous financed projects;
- Proposals will also not be accepted from lead Portugal PIs who have been PI of any project with a final scientific report rejected within two years before the opening of the Call, for reasons attributable to them.

## 7.2. Members of the Research 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.

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

## 7.3. Proponent Institution

The Principal Contractor of the project should be one of the national entities of the R&I system mention in Section 2 of this ACP.

Applications will not be accepted if the Principal Contractors are in unjustified situation regarding the return of funding transferred to the Principal Contractor in previous projects with the same Principal Investigator.

## 8. SELECTION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will be carried out by an international panel of independent reviewers.

The selection and ranking of projects is based on 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 2021](#):

- 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:

$$\mathbf{MP = 0.45 A + 0.20 B + 0.20 C + 0.15 D}$$

Each criterion is scored using a 9-point scale system (1 – minimum; 9 – maximum) and rated using this scale with 0.1 increments. 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 (one).

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

For the purpose of selection and decision-making regarding funding, projects will be ranked by 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 descending order to provide the final ranking of the projects.

## 9. Publication and Complementary information

This Announcement and other relevant materials and information, in particular the Regulations for Projects Exclusively Funded by National Funds, are available at [FCT's website](#).

For inquires of scientific nature, please contact the MIT Portugal program at [info@mitportugal.org](mailto:info@mitportugal.org).

For specific information related to the application submission, please contact [concursoprojetos@fct.pt](mailto:concursoprojetos@fct.pt).

### **Helena Pereira**

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