



Call for SR&DT Projects Cooperation between Portugal and the European Organization for Nuclear Research

GUIDE FOR PEER REVIEWERS

MARCH 2024



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1. About FCT

FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia) is the Portuguese public agency under the responsibility of the Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education that supports science, technology, and innovation, in all scientific domains.

FCT's mission is to continuously promote the advancement of knowledge in science and technology in Portugal, following high international standards in quality and competitiveness, and encourage its dissemination and contribution to society and to economic growth.

FCT pursues its mission by funding, through competitive calls with peer review, fellowships, studentships and research contracts for scientists, research projects, research centres and infrastructures. FCT ensures Portugal's participation in international scientific organisations, fosters the participation of the scientific community in international projects and promotes knowledge transfer between Research and Development (R&D) centres and industry. Working closely with international organisations, FCT coordinates public policy for the Information and Knowledge Society in Portugal and ensures the development of national scientific computing resources.

The results of FCT accomplishments are, the outcome of the work carried out by individual scientists, research groups and institutions funded by FCT.

2. Call for SR&DT Projects: Cooperation between Portugal and CERN

The consolidation and reinforcement of the National System of Science and Technology (NSST) constitute a priority of the national policy for science and technology. It aims at increasing 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 in the field of High Energy Physics and other related fields relevant to Portugal's participation in the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

Considering these goals, FCT launches this call under the Cooperation Agreement between Portugal and the CERN to promote ground-breaking ideas by supporting SR&DT projects, that must fall within one of the following thematic areas:

- Computation for particle physics
- Experimental and theoretical particle and astroparticle physics
- Instrumentation for particle physics
- Technologies associated with experimental particle physics

This call will be funded by the PRR (Recovery and Resilience Plan)'s Science Plus Capacity Building Measure, consolidating the vision of the PRR as an instrument for the Country's structural transformation.

The support to be granted are non-refundable, applying the option of real costs.

The **beneficiary entities** can apply **individually** or in **co-promotion** and must be a legal entity belonging to the non-business entities of the R&D System, namely: higher education institutions, their institutes, and R&D units; state, international or associated laboratories with a head office in Portugal; non-profit private institutions whose main object is R&D activity, including Collaborative Laboratories (CoLab) and Centres for Technology and Innovation (CTI); other non-profit public and private institutions developing or participating in scientific research activities.

For this call, 2 million euros are available to fund research projects that must meet the following requirements:

- The maximum duration of the grant is **24 months**.
- The maximum funding for project is **200.000,00** euros.

The call aims to support IC&DT projects associated with official scientific collaborations or those recognised by CERN, as well as technology-based projects in the field of applied sciences in collaboration with activities supported by CERN.

Projects associated with major long-term international collaborations, or the use of CERN experimental facilities will be privileged.

It should also be privileged projects that promote the transfer of technology generated at CERN, or that aim to prospect and carry out research and experimental development projects, with companies' participation, in collaboration with CERN.

All proposals, written in English, are submitted online via **myFCT** web platform (detailed information in Annex I).

The call is open from 12 March to 23 April 2024.

Each applicant can only submit one application as PI.

A maximum of up to 4 Core CVs can be presented: for the PI and 3 other team members (researchers considered as more relevant for the project).

Evaluators should **only** use the **PI Narrative CV** and the **Team CV Synopsis** to assess the scientific merit of the team. Any detailed information provided in the attached CIENCIAVITAE CVs is to be used as a complement.

3. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of the application will focus on the relevance and quality of following criteria:

- A. Scientific merit (A1) and innovative nature (A2) of the project from an international standpoint – **40%**;
- B. Scientific merit of the PI and the research team – **35%**;
- C. Feasibility of the workplan and the expected indicators (C1), as well as the budget adequacy (C2) – **25%**.

5.1 Criterion A (40%)

This criterion aims to assess the scientific merit and innovative nature of the project from an international standpoint, considering two sub-criteria:

- A1 – Scientific merit of the project (50%)
- A2 – Innovative nature of the proposal (50%)

A1 – Scientific merit of the project (50%)

This sub-criterion is intended to evaluate the scientific merit of the proposal, considering the following dimensions, in an integrated manner:

- Relevance and clear identification of the project objectives and challenges addressed based on the state-of-the-art.
- Potential contribution of the research project to the advancement of knowledge.
- Potential impact of the project's outcomes on the economic, technological, and societal dimensions.

A2 – Innovative nature of the proposal (50%)

The sub-criterion A2 aims to assess the innovative nature of the proposal, considering the following aspects:

- Originality of the project proposed and breakthrough potential beyond the current state-of-the-art (e.g., novel concepts or development between or across disciplines).
- Methodological innovation and replication potential.

5.2 Criterion B (35%)

B – Scientific merit of the Principal Investigator and the research team

The criterion B evaluates the scientific merit of the Principal Investigator and the research team, analysing their curricula in an integrated way and valuing the quality of their research achievements.

The scientific merit of the Principal Investigator, his/her contributions to science and society, and the research team profiles should be evaluated using the information provided in the Narrative CV and Team CV synopsis fields (the CIÊNCIAVITAE CV, written in English, should only be used to confirm the information provided in those fields), considering the following parameters:

- Career profile of the PI (education, key qualifications, professional path and periods of leave from research, such as parental leave, long-term absence due to illness, volunteering, etc.);
- Contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge, including publications, key data sets, software, intellectual property (patents, licences, trademarks, copyrights, novel assays and reagents), conference presentations, research and policy publications, or other scientific, technological, cultural or artistic achievements;
- Contributions to the development of individuals and/or research teams, including project participation, leadership or management, supervision of students, collaborative initiatives, and team support;
- Contributions to the research community and the broader society;
- Scientific experience, productivity and skills of the research team to adequately execute the proposed project in its specific area, **focusing on the last 5 years of activities**, and considering the team's configuration and the availability and commitment of its members.

According to the FCT's commitment to The Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, as set out by the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), evaluation panels are advised not to use metrics as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual outputs and applicant's contributions.

When assessing this criterion, the evaluation panel should also consider the information provided by the applicant in terms of their quality, relevance, and impact, rather than in a quantitative way and its specificities in terms of the scientific area(s) and subarea(s) of each application.

5.3 Criterion C (25%)

This criterion is intended to evaluate the feasibility of the project considering the adequacy of its several dimensions, including the proposed objectives, team, resources, and budget to achieve the expected outputs, divided into two sub-criteria:

- C1 – Feasibility of the work plan and proposed indicators (50%);
- C2 – Budget adequacy (50%).

C1 – Feasibility of the work plan and proposed indicators (50%)

Sub-criterion C1 assess the feasibility of the project considering the proposed objectives and expected outcomes, taking into account the following:

- Feasibility of the research project, considering the theoretical framework, the proposed research methodology and innovation, particularly its planned tasks and deliverables;
- Clear identification of the proposed activities and timelines, institutional and management resources of the Principal Contractor, and PI's and team members commitment to the project;
- Relevance of the major long-term international collaborations, or the use of CERN experimental facilities;
- Valorisation of the actions that promote the transfer of technology generated at CERN, or that aim to prospect and carry out research and experimental development projects, with companies' participation, in collaboration with CERN;
- Valuation of the potential of the predicted indicators (e.g., publications, communications, reports, seminars and conferences organization, patents, etc.);

- If applicable, analysis of the risks associated to the different stages of the project should be considered, with special focus on the identified critical points and the corresponding contingency plan.

C2 – Budget adequacy (50%)

Sub-criterion C2 intends to analyse the reasonability of the budget.

4. Scoring System

The scoring system uses a **9-point scale, using 0.1 increments**. The maximum score is 9 and the minimum is 1, as presented in Table I.

Table I – Qualitative descriptors associated to the 9-point scale

Evaluation	Score	Strengths & Weaknesses
Excellent	9	Exceptionally strong with no weaknesses
Very good	8	Very strong with some negligible weaknesses
	7	Strong with some minor weaknesses
Good	6	Some strengths with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Some strengths but with at least one moderate weakness
Adequate	4	Few strengths with several minor weaknesses
	3	Few strengths and major weaknesses
Poor	2	Very few strengths and serious weaknesses
	1	Cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information

The Merit of the Project (MP) is given by:

$$MP = 0.40 (0.50*A1 + 0.50*A2) + 0.35 B + 0.25 (0.50*C1+ 0.50*C2)$$

Criteria A, B and C 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.

In cases where the information provided in the application does not allow a sustained score for a specific evaluation criterion, a score of 1.0 (one) will be assigned.

For a proposal to be eligible for funding, the following **minimum score** is required:

- **MP \geq 5.00 points**

The **eligible applications will be ranked** by the evaluation panel **by decreasing order** of the **MP score**.

In case of ties (projects with the same MP score), the **ratings assigned to sub-criteria A2, B, A1, C1 and C2** will be used **sequentially and by decreasing order** to provide the final ranking of the projects.

5. Evaluation Process

5.1 Constitution of the Evaluation Panel

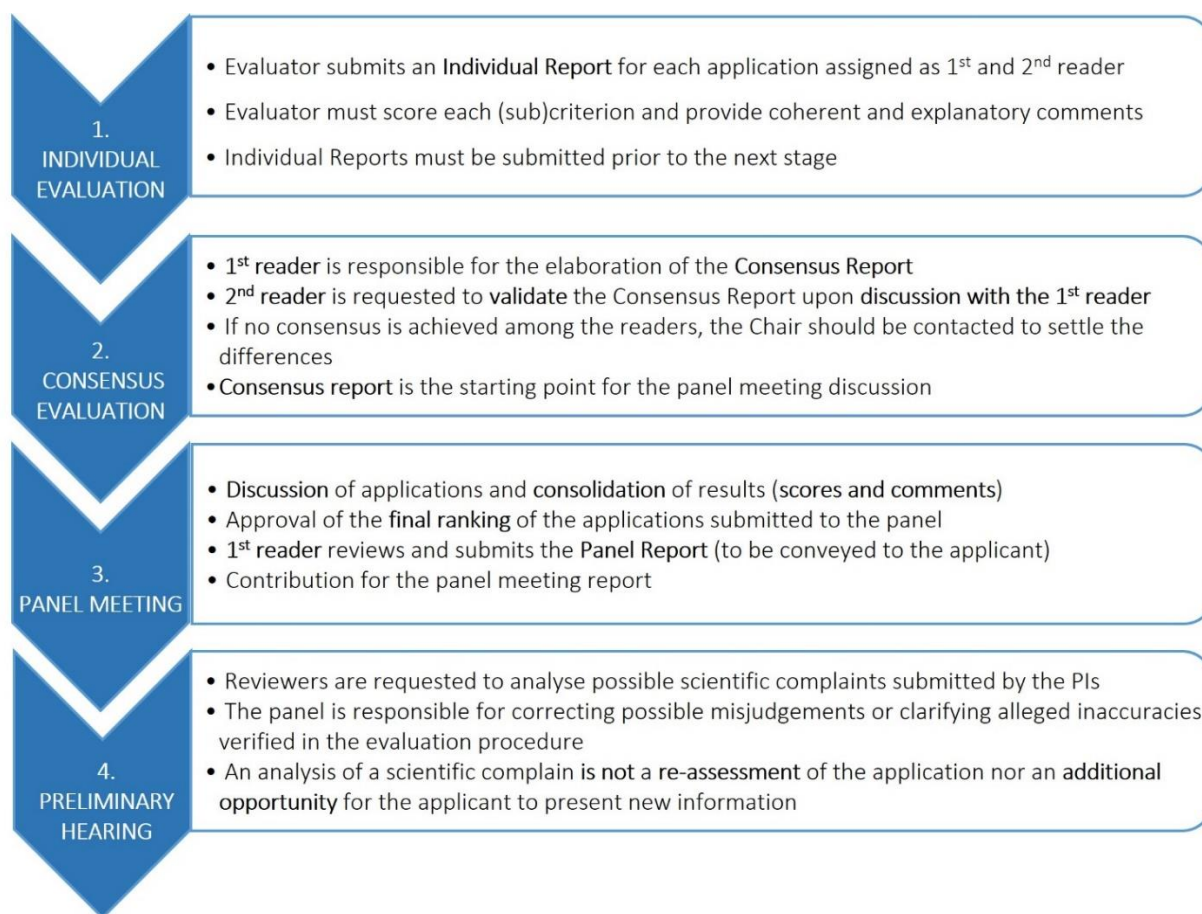
- The evaluation panel is constituted by experts mainly affiliated with foreign institutions, independent and of recognized merit, considering the number and the scientific areas of the applications, an adequate gender balance and a fair geographic and institutional distribution of evaluators.
- The panel has a **Chair** who is **responsible for the following tasks**:
 - Ensure that the evaluation process is carried out transparently, independently and fairly.
 - Assign each application to two panel members (1st and 2nd readers), considering any declared **Conflict of Interest (Col)**, as well as the **matching of scientific expertise** within the topic of the application.
 - Keep the evaluation process within the defined timeframe and contact panel members in case of any delay.
 - Support the FCT team with the resolution of any Col identified during the evaluation process.
 - If necessary, assist FCT with the constitution of the panel by suggesting possible reviewers to be invited.
 - Suggest external reviewers to be invited by FCT to provide an assessment of an application, whenever a specific expertise is not covered by the panel.
 - Assure the quality of the reviewers' reports (particularly the Consensus and the Panel Reports) and alert them whenever not complying with the following: comments should be coherent with scores, considering the descriptors of the scoring system (see section 4),

provide substantive arguments and identify both strengths and weaknesses for each evaluation (sub)criterion.

- Moderate the Panel Meeting.
- Prepare the panel meeting report that should address work methodology, conflicts of interest and final ranking.
- Coordinate the support to be given to FCT and panel members during the period of preliminary hearings, if necessary.

5.2 Evaluation Stages

The evaluation process comprises **4 stages**:



5.3 Evaluation Timeline

The evaluation timeline is established by FCT's Board of Directors and conveyed to the evaluation panel Chair and members. The date of the final videoconference panel meeting of the panel is established in advance by FCT.

5.4 Feedback to be communicated to applicants

All the reviewers should comply with the following additional guidelines in the elaboration of the evaluation reports.

Each report must include:

- Score and comments for each evaluation criteria, including strengths and weaknesses.
- A comment on the proposed budget; suggested changes in the budget must be justified.
- A comment concerning ethical issues, if applicable.
- Confidential comments to the evaluation panel and /or FCT, if necessary.

Comments must:

- Be coherent with the scores considering the descriptors presented in Table I (section 4).
- Be clear and consistent, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the application for each (sub)criterion.
- Use dispassionate and analytical language, avoiding dismissive statements about the applicant, the proposed science, or the scientific field.
- Be impeccably polite.
- Address the proposed work plan and not the work the reviewers consider should have been planned.

Comments must not:

- Give a description or a summary of the application.
- Make use of the first person or equivalent: "I think..." or "This reviewer finds..."; alternatively, panel members are advised to use expressions such as "The panel ..." or "It is considered...".
- Ask questions, as the applicant will not be able to answer them.
- Provide recommendations or advice for improving the application.
- Have contradicting statements.
- Mention quantitative details that can easily originate factual mistakes.

The quality of the comments to be communicated to the applicants is of paramount importance to the evaluation process, therefore being a crucial task of the evaluation panel.

6. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

6.1 Confidentiality Statement

The privacy and confidentiality must be fully protected and ensured at all times during the evaluation process. All reviewers involved in the evaluation are asked to be bound to the Terms of Reference.

Within the context of the call, a set of personal data are collected and the information regarding this are provided to the data supplier for compliance with the principles established in Regulation EU 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of April 27, 2016 (GDPR) and the 58/2019 Law from August 8, in the Application Guide.

6.2 Conflict of Interest (Col)

Disqualifying Conflict of Interest

With the present Call

Researchers are hindered to participate as Chair, Panel member or External reviewer if they:

1. Have submitted any application as PI, team member or consultant;
2. Have first-degree relationships, domestic partnership or are married with a PI of an application.

With an application

Panel members cannot evaluate nor participate in the panel meeting discussion of an application in the following circumstances:

1. Personal or financial interest in the application's success.
2. Current or planned close scientific cooperation.
3. Research cooperation within the last three years before the opening date of the call, *e.g.*, joint publications.

4. Dependent employment relationship or supervisory relationship (e.g., supervisor-student relationship up to and including the postdoctoral stage) within the three years before the opening date of the call.
5. Affiliation or pending transfer to any of the departments or research centres involved in the project.
6. Researchers who are active in a council or similar supervisory or advisory board of the applying institutions are excluded from participating in the review and decision-making process for applications involving these institutions.

Potential Conflict of Interest

The panel member should notify FCT and clarify if he/she is able to perform an unbiased evaluation or if the conflict should rather be considered as disqualifying. A potential conflict of interest exists in the following circumstances:

7. Relationships other than first-degree, marriage or domestic partnership; other personal ties or conflicts.
8. Participation in university bodies other than those listed under no. 6, e.g., in scientific advisory committees in the research environment.
9. Preparation of an application or implementation of a project with a closely related research topic (competition).
10. Participating in an on-going scientific or inter-personal conflict with the applicant(s).

In case a conflict of interest is detected during the evaluation process, the reviewer is required to inform the panel Chair and the FCT team of this situation, so that the application may be swiftly reassigned. Depending on its nature, this information will be presented in the panel meeting report.

Annex I – Components of the Application

Applications must be written in English and are submitted online via a dedicated FCT Web Platform ([MyFCT](#)).

Multiple applications of the same project are not allowed. New applications grounded on a previous project should contain substantial modification and update.

Each application comprises the following sections:

General Data

Project Description

- Project Title (PT/EN) (**max. 255 characters**)
- Project acronym (**max. 15 characters**)
- Keywords (PT/EN) (**max. 4 keywords**)
- Thematic area
- Justification of the thematic area (**max. 1000 characters**)
- Main scientific area (Scientific Domain / Scientific Area / Scientific subarea)
- Timetable (start date and duration)

Institutions

Principal contractor

- Institution
- Research unit (**max. 3**)
- Institution description and its competencies for the development of the project (**max. 1500 characters**)

Participating institutions

- Institution
- Research unit (**max. 3**)
- Institution description and its competencies for the development of the project (**max. 1500 characters**)

Collaborative Institutions

- Country
- Institution Name
- Institution description and its competencies for the development of the project (**max. 1500 characters**)

Research team

Principal Investigator

- Ciência ID
- Name
- Institution to which the PI is associated in the scope of the research project
- Total cost (in euros) (if applicable)
- Employment relationship (if applicable)
- *Curriculum Vitae* (CIÊNCIAVITAE platform)

PI Narrative CV

- Career profile (max. 2000 characters)
- Contributions to Science and Society:
 - Contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies or knowledge (**max. 2000 characters**)
 - Contributions to the development of individuals and/or research teams (**max. 3000 characters**)
 - Contributions to the research community and the broader society (**max. 3000 characters**)
 - Selected outputs and/or activities (**max. 2500 characters**)

Members

- Name / Ciência ID
- Institution to which you are associated in the scope of the research project
- Role
- CV
- Total cost (in euros) (if applicable)
- Employment relationship (if applicable)
-

Hirings (if applicable)

- Type
- Institution to which you are associated in the scope of the research project
- Total cost (in euros)

Consultant (if applicable)

- Name / Ciência ID
- CV
- Framework of consultant's participation (**max. 1000 characters**)

Team CV Synopsis (**max. 6000 characters**)

- Research team CV synopsis – *Provides the framework and skills of the research team and their coherence with the proposed work plan. It should focus on the last 5 years of effective scientific activity of the research team, indicating the most relevant scientific achievements of the research team and demonstrating its competence and skills in the area of the proposed project.*

Work plan

Abstract

- Abstract in Portuguese (**max. 5000 characters**)
- Abstract in English (**max. 5000 characters**)
- Abstract for publication (PT/EN), if different (**max. 5000 characters**)

State of the art and Objectives (**max. 6000 characters**)

Research plan and methods

- Research plan and methods (**max. 10000 characters**)
- Identify whether the work plan requires advanced computer resources to be provided by FCT (Y/N)
- Identify whether the work plan requires space in a research data repository to be provided by the FCT (Y/N)

Bibliographic references (**max. 10000 characters**)

Past publications (the most representative 5 publications of the team's work under this proposal)

- Order
- Publication (**max. 600 characters**)
- URL

Tasks

- Task denomination (**max. 150 characters**)
- Task description and expected results (**max. 4000 characters**)
- Assigned to
- Person*month
- Start date
- Duration (months)

Project timeline and management

- Milestones list
 - Denomination
 - Milestone description (**max. 300 characters**)
 - Tasks
 - Date
- Timeline (attached file)
- Management (**max. 3000 characters**)

Ethical issues (if applicable)

Ethical Issues (when applicable) are properly identified and addressed, according to the Ethics Self-Assessment Guide

- Are there Ethics Issues identified in this project?
 - Select the ethical declarations you consider appropriate (if applicable)
 - Justification (if applicable) (**max. 3000 characters**)
-

Other projects

List of the submitted proposals or approved projects (led by PI) through peer-review and initiated in the last 5 years (concluded or running projects)

- Project reference
- PI in actual application
- Project status
- Project title (in English)
- Principal contractor
- Funding entity
- Total funding
- Start date
- Duration (months)
- Relation with the current proposal – list of the main objectives of the project that you consider relevant for this application (**max. 2000 characters**)

Attachments

- Control List DNSH – mandatory submission
- *If needed, the PI may attach the following documents to the proposal: support letters, formulas, schemes, diagrams, graphs or images. No other documents than the ones previously mentioned should be considered in this section.*

Indicators

Expected output indicators

- Description

Dissemination

- Dissemination actions of the scientific activity planned in the project (**max. 3000 characters**)

Budget (for detailed information about each item see Annex II)

Principal contractor

- Item
- Rationale for requested funding (**max. 3000 characters**)
- Year

Participating institutions

- Item
- Rationale for requested funding (**max. 3000 characters**)
- Year

Funding plan

- Global budget (automatic filling)
- Funding Plan (automatic filling)

Statement of Commitment of PI

Validate and submit

Annex II – Budget

Budget rationale for requested funding (max. 3000 characters / item) – the following items are eligible for funding:

a) **Direct costs:**

i. **Human resources rationale:**

Expenses with **Human Resources** dedicated or related to the development of R&D activities related to the project execution in all mandatory components by the applicable labour legislation, including charges with grant holders directly supported by the beneficiaries;

- With regard to 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 Research Fellowship Holder Statute (Law no. 40/2004 of 18 August, in its present version) and FCT Regulation for Research Studentships and Fellowships.

ii. **Missions**, expenses with travel, accommodation, registration fees, etc., in Portugal and abroad, and directly attributable to the project.

iii. **Scientific and technical tools and equipment** (acquisition or amortization) indispensable to the project if used within the project during their useful lifetime.

iv. **Patent registration**, expenses related to the national and foreign record of **patents**, copyrights, usefulness models and drawings, national models or brands when related to other forms of intellectual protection, namely rates, research to the status of the technique and consulting expenses.

v. **Demonstration, Promotion and Publication**, expenses with the **demonstration, promotion and disclosure of the project's outputs**, namely dissemination fees within the fulfilment and pursuant to national policies of open access.

vi. **Adaptation of buildings and facilities**, when essential to the development of the project, namely for environmental and security reasons.

vii. **Acquisition of other goods and services** directly related to the project's execution, including costs with consultants that do not establish subcontracts.

b) **Indirect costs (overheads)**, with a flat rate of 25% of eligible direct costs, excluding subcontracting. The percentage bound in this item is automatically checked by the submission tool. Applications cannot be locked if this condition is not verified.

For the present Call, the **non-eligible costs** are the ones stated in the art. 9 of the [FCT Projects Regulation](#) in this current version.

Salaries of public servants are not funded under this call.

Annex III - Portuguese to English Translation and Explanations

Agregação = Aggregation. This is an academic title. It attests:

- i.) the quality of the academic, professional, scientific and pedagogical curriculum;
- ii.) the capacity to carry out research supervision;
- iii.) the capability to coordinate and carry out independent research work, issued to PhD holders with a research and academic path, after a public exam by a jury involving discussion of the CV, of a submitted curricular proposal and the presentation and discussion of a lecture.

Doutoramento = PhD, doctoral degree

Mestrado = Master's degree

Licenciatura = BA (3, 4 or 5 years graduate course)

Bolsa = Grant, fellowship

Bolseiro = Grant holder, fellow

BII = Bolsas de Iniciação à Investigação = Research Initiation Grants

- Research Initiation Grants are intended for students enrolled in a Higher Professional Education, a 1st cycle of a Higher Education institution, an Integrated Master or Master to initiate their scientific training, within research projects to be developed in national institutions;
- These grants are also aimed at holders of a graduate degree, enrolled in courses that do not award an academic degree, integrated in an educational project of a higher education institution developed individually or jointly in their institutes or R&D units;
- These grants have a minimum duration of three months and may be renewable up to a maximum of one year.

BI = Bolsas de Investigação = Research Grants

- Research grants are intended for students enrolled in an Integrated Master, Master or Doctoral degree, for obtaining the respective scientific academic degree, through the development of scientific training integrated or not in R&D projects;
- These grants are also aimed at holders of a graduate degree or master, enrolled in courses that do not award an academic degree, integrated in an educational project of a higher education institution developed individually or jointly in their institutes or R&D units;
- These grants are, in principle, one year in length, and cannot be awarded for periods of less than three consecutive months;
- The grants may be renewable for additional periods up to:

- One year, for grants awarded to graduated degree or master holders enrolled in courses that do not award an academic degree;
- Two years, for grants awarded to students enrolled in master's courses;
- Four years, for grants awarded to students enrolled in doctoral degrees;
- These grants may be national, mixed (in Portugal and abroad) or abroad, depending if the work plan occurs exclusively, partially or not at all in national institutions;
- For mixed research grants, the work plan performed in a foreign institution may not exceed 2 years.

BIPD= Bolsas de Investigação Pós-Doutoral = Postdoctoral Research Grants

- Postdoctoral Research Grants are intended for doctoral degree holders for the development of R&D activities;
- BIPDs are temporally restricted in order to stimulate the scientific employment and the use of researcher contracts as a rule instrument for their hiring, as well as to promote the development, in National Scientific and Technological System entities, of careers aiming at scientific research;
- BIPDs may only be granted provided that the following requirements are cumulatively met:
 - The doctoral degree has been obtained in the last three years before the submission date of the application grant;
 - The postdoctoral research is carried out in a host entity different than the one in which the research work was done to achieve the doctoral degree;
 - The research activities do not require post-doctoral experience;
 - The research activities have a development and execution period equal or less than three years.
- These grants are, in principle, one year in length, renewable for up to a total of three years, and cannot be awarded for periods of less than three consecutive months;
- Once the contract grant is finished, a new contract grant cannot be settled between the same host entity and the same fellow.

