

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Call for Exploratory Research Projects in all Scientific Domains 2024

DECEMBER 2024



Announcement for Proposal Submissions

This Announcement for Proposal Submissions is aimed at Exploratory Research Projects, 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 Regulation](#), published in Regulation No. 999/2016, in its current wording, *i.e.*, amended and republished by Regulation no. 5/2024 and corrected by the Declaration of Rectification no. 366/2024/2, published in the *Diário da República*, 2nd series, no. 100, of May 23, 2024.

1. Aims and Priorities

The consolidation and reinforcement of the National System of Science and Technology (NSST) are key priorities of the national science and technology policy. These efforts aim to enhance national and international competitiveness in science and technology, foster innovation, and facilitate knowledge transfer. They also align with the global aspirations outlined in the United Nations' *Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. In this context, promoting and strengthening scientific and technological institutions through the active participation of research teams in projects is particularly significant. To support these goals, FCT launches this call to fund exploratory research projects (ERPs) across all scientific domains, focusing on original projects for younger researchers, and on ideas or concepts with a high degree of novelty that demonstrate disruptive potential, compared to previous work, for more experienced researchers.

2. Supported entities

The following non-business Portuguese entities of the R&I system are individual beneficiaries:

- i. Higher Education Institutions, their Institutes, and R&D units;
- ii. State, international or associated Laboratories with head offices in Portugal;
- iii. Non-profit private institutions whose main objective is R&D activities, including Collaborative Laboratories (CoLab) and Centres for Technology and Innovation (CTI);
- iv. Other non-profit private and public institutions developing or participating in scientific research activities.

3. Type and modality of Projects to be Funded

The call aims to support R&D projects that fall under the type of exploratory research projects across all scientific domains, organized according to the list of scientific areas, subareas, and evaluation panels provided in the Annex I. The projects should focus on scientific or technological research activities aimed at exploring ideas or concepts that demonstrate originality and/or innovation potential.

Within this call, proposals are presented as individual projects submitted by a single beneficiary.

The maximum duration of the projects is **18 months**, extendable by up to 6 months in duly justified cases.

The maximum funding per project is **€ 60.000,00** (sixty thousand euros).

4. Form of Support and Funding Rate

National funds will finance the projects through the FCT budget.

The funding to be granted under this call shall be non-reimbursable, applying the option of simplified costs in the form of a *lump sum*. The contribution is paid upon presentation of evidence and results that demonstrate the effective completion of the project as contractually agreed.

Regardless of the project's approved funding amount, the initial advance payment for the project is 75% of the approved funding. The remaining amount, up to the approved funding for each project, is paid upon closing of the scientific and financial components of the project, through a final reimbursement payment method.

Within the scope of this call, the indirect costs are a fixed rate of 25% of all the estimated direct eligible costs. The expenses for the adaptation of buildings and facilities are limited to a maximum of 10% of the project's total eligible expenses.

For budget definition purposes, refer to the terms defined in the "[Methodology for Applying Simplified Costs – Lump Sums](#)," as well as to Articles no. 8 and 9 of the [FCT Projects Regulation](#).

5. Budget allocation

The budget allocation for this call is **€ 24 million**.

6. Projects and Beneficiaries Eligibility Criteria

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

6.1 Project

- a) Applications which have been selected for funding by FCT or by other funding agencies are not allowed to apply;
- b) Multiple applications of the same project are not accepted:
 - In the present call.

- In different calls in which there is temporal overlap within the submission of applications.
 - In the case of applications to calls with different thematic areas, and which take place in different periods of application submission, the funding recommendation within one of the calls is a condition for exclusion from the decision process of the remaining ones.
- c) Related proposals, from the same team, submitted to FCT or to other funding agencies should be declared in the application.

“Multiple applications” are proposals that fully or partially share the work plan.

6.2 Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator (PI) must comply with the following rules:

- a) Have physical allocation to the project.
- b) Hold a doctoral degree by the application deadline, with supporting documentation to be submitted during the contractualization phase.
- c) Should 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 no. 6 of FCT Projects Regulation, in which all the institutions must be localized in Portugal.
- d) Can only submit one proposal as PI in this call.
- e) Can only participate in one additional application as team member.
- f) Cannot be the PI of:
 - i. A project selected for funding in the "Call for Exploratory Projects in All Scientific Domains 2023";
 - ii. An application submitted in the "Call for Exploratory Projects in All Scientific Domains 2023" that received a merit of the project score of less than 5.00;
 - iii. Projects with a rejected final scientific report due to reasons attributable to the applicant, within the two years prior to the opening date of this call.
- g) 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 Research Team Member

Each researcher (who is not a PI of an application) may participate as a team member in a **maximum of two applications** submitted under 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 PI.

7. Selection Methodology

The evaluation is conducted by panels of independent experts affiliated with foreign institutions, organized by scientific domain, scientific area, and subarea (corresponding to an adaptation of the FOS classification from the OECD's revised Field of Science and Technology Classification in the Frascati Manual), as detailed in Annex I.

Each application is assessed by the evaluation panel corresponding to the combination of the main scientific area and subarea selected by the PI in the application form. Transferring the application to a different evaluation panel is not allowed.

The methodology for selecting and ranking applications is based on the Merit of the Project (MP) indicator, which relies on the following evaluation criteria, detailed in the Guide for Peer Reviewers:

- A. Scientific quality (A1) and innovative nature (A2) of the project from an international perspective.
- B. Scientific merit of PI and the research team (B1), including the impact of project execution on the PI's career development and/or research (B2).
- C. Feasibility of the work plan and proposed performance indicators, as well as budget reasonableness.

The Merit of the Project is calculated according to:

$$\text{MP} = 0.40 (0.50 \text{ A1} + 0.50 \text{ A2}) + 0.35 (0.60 \text{ B1} + 0.40 \text{ B2}) + 0.25 \text{ C}$$

Scores for each criterion are assigned on a scale from 1 to 9, with increments of 0.1. The MP result is rounded to two-decimal places.

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

For selection and funding decisions, projects with a final MP score of 5.00 or higher, are considered eligible and will be ranked.

Evaluated projects will be ranked in descending order of the MP score obtained in the evaluation process, by evaluation panel. As a tiebreaker between applications with the same MP score, the scores assigned to criteria A2, B1, A1, B2, and C will be used successively and in descending order.

For each evaluation panel, a percentage of the total budget allocation for the call is calculated based on the total funding requested by eligible applications assigned to each evaluation panel.

PIs of applications that receive a MP score below 5.00 are prohibited from applying as a PI in the next edition of the call in all scientific domains.

8. Submission of Applications

Applications must be submitted in **English**, between **December 19, 2024** and **5.00 p.m. (Lisbon time)** of **February 25, 2025** through a specific electronic form available on [myFCT](#) platform.

The PI and the team members must have their *curriculum vitae* completed on the [CIÊNCIAVITAE](#) platform.

The Statement of Commitment from the Principal Contractor will be available on the [myFCT](#) platform for agreement by the head of the Principal Contractor or their designated representative following the deadline for submission of applications and up to **March 11, 2025 at 5.00 p.m.** (Lisbon time).

9. 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.

10. 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 October 31, in its current wording, and by other applicable national and community legislation.

Before submitting a proposal, applicants are advised to read the documents of the Call, all available at the Call's webpage.

11. Data Protection

In the context of this call, personal data is collected, and its processing is conducted in compliance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council, dated April 27, 2016 ("GDPR"). Additionally, data processing complies with the provisions of Law 58/2019 dated August 8, ensuring the implementation of the GDPR in the Portuguese legal framework.

FCT acts as the controller for the personal data collected under this call. The personal data processing is used for the Program Management and Funding Instruments

The FCT data processing adheres to the principles of lawfulness, fairness, transparency and time of storage limitation. The legal basis for such processing, in accordance with Article 6 of the GDPR, lies in points b), c), and e), which stipulate that processing is necessary for the performance and execution of a contract, compliance with legal obligations, and the exercise of public interest tasks conducted the by FCT.

For detailed information regarding the personal data processing to be performed by FCT within the scope of this call, please consult the Data Protection and Privacy document.

12. Contacts

For information related to this call, please contact concursoprojetos@fct.pt.

Madalena Alves

President of the Board of Directors, Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P.

Annex I – Scientific Domains, Areas and Subareas and Evaluations Panels

This section lists the Scientific Domains, Areas and Subareas, according to OECD’s revised Field of Science and Technology – FOS, and the corresponding Evaluation Panels. Each evaluation panel oversees the applications from a set of scientific subareas, as indicated in the table below.

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Exact Sciences	Mathematics	Pure Mathematics	Mathematics
		Applied Mathematics	
		Statistics and Probability	
		Other Subareas of Mathematics	
	Computer and Information Sciences	Computer Sciences	Computer and Information Sciences and Informatics
		Information Sciences	
		Bioinformatics	
		Informatics	
	Physical Sciences	Atomic, Molecular and Chemical Physics	Physics
		Condensed Matter Physics	
		Particles Physics	
		Nuclear Physics	
		Fluids and Plasma Physics	
		Optics	
		Acoustics	
		Astronomy	
		Other Subareas of Physical Sciences	
	Chemical Sciences	Organic Chemistry	Chemistry
		Inorganic Chemistry	
		Physical Chemistry	
		Polymer Science	
		Electrochemistry	
		Colloid Chemistry	
		Analytical Chemistry	
		Nuclear Chemistry	
		Other Subareas of Chemical Sciences	

Scientific Domain	Scientific Domain	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Natural Sciences	Earth and Related Environmental Sciences	Geosciences, Multidisciplinary	Earth Sciences and Engineering
		Mineralogy	
		Palaeontology	
		Geochemistry	
		Physical Geography	
		Geology	
		Volcanology	
		Meteorology and Atmospheric Sciences	
		Climatic Research	
		Oceanography, Hydrology and Water Resources	
		Geophysics	
	Environmental Sciences	Environmental Sciences	
Natural Sciences	Biological Sciences	Cell Biology	Experimental Biology and Biochemistry
		Biochemistry	
		Biochemical Research Methods	
		Microbiology	
		Molecular Biology	
		Biophysics	
		Genetics and Heredity	
		Reproductive Biology	
	Developmental Biology	Biological Sciences	
	Plant Sciences and Botany		
	Zoology, Ornithology, Entomology		
	Marine Biology, Freshwater Biology and Limnology		
	Ecology		
	Biodiversity Conservation		
	Biology		
	Evolutionary Biology		
	Other Biological Topics		
	Behavioural Sciences Biology		
	Mycology		
Virology	Clinical Medicine, Immunology and Infection		

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Engineering and Technology	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering
		Architecture Engineering	
		Construction Engineering	
		Transport Engineering	
		Municipal and Structural Engineering	
	Electrical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Information Engineering	Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Electrical and Electronic Engineering
		Robotics	
		Automation and Control Systems	
		Communication Engineering and Systems	
		Telecommunications	
		Computer Hardware and Architecture	
	Mechanical Engineering	Mechanical Engineering	Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Systems
		Applied Mechanics	
		Thermodynamics	
		Aerospace Engineering	
		Nuclear Engineering	
		Audio Engineering and Reliability Analysis	
		Engineering Systems	
		Renewable Energies	
	Chemical Engineering	Chemical Engineering	Chemical Engineering
		Chemical Process Engineering	
	Materials Engineering	Materials Engineering	Materials Engineering
		Ceramics	
Coating and Films			
Composites			
Paper and Wood			
Medical Engineering	Medical Engineering	Bioengineering and Biotechnology	
	Medical Laboratory Technology		

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Engineering and Technology	Environmental Engineering	Environmental Engineering	Environmental Biotechnology and Engineering
		Geotechnics	Earth Sciences and Engineering
		Petroleum Engineering, Energy and Fuels	
		Remote Sensing	
		Mining and Mineral Processing	
		Geological Engineering	
		Marine Engineering	Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Systems
		Sea Vessels	
		Ocean Engineering	
	Environmental Biotechnology	Environmental Biotechnology	Environmental Biotechnology and Engineering
		Bioremediation, Diagnostic Biotechnologies (DNA Chips and Biosensing Devices) in Environmental Management	
		Environmental Biotechnology related Ethics	
	Industrial Biotechnology	Industrial Biotechnology	Bioengineering and Biotechnology
		Bioprocessing Technologies, Biocatalysis and Fermentation	
		Bioproducts, Biomaterials, Bioplastics, Biofuels, Bio-derived Bulk and Fine Chemicals and Bio-derived Novel Materials	
	Nanotechnology	Nanomaterials	Nanotechnology
		Nanoprocesses	
		Nano-Optics and Nanophotonics	
		Modelling at Nanoscale	
	Other Engineering and Technologies	Food and Beverages	Animal and Veterinary Sciences and Agro-Food Biotechnology

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Medical and Health Sciences	Basic Medicine	Immunology	Clinical Medicine, Immunology and Infection
		Neurosciences	Neurosciences
		Medicinal Chemistry	Chemistry
		Pharmacology and Pharmacy	Basic Medicine
		Anatomy and Morphology	
		Human Genetics	
		Toxicology	
		Physiology	
		Pathology	
		Oncobiology	
		Other Subareas of Basic Medicine	
	Clinical Medicine	Andrology	Clinical Medicine, Immunology and Infection
		Obstetrics and Gynaecology	
		Paediatrics	
		Cardiac and Cardiovascular Systems	
		Peripheral Vascular Disease	
		Haematology	
		Respiratory Systems	
		Critical Care Medicine and Emergency Medicine	
		Anaesthesiology	
		Orthopaedics	
		Surgery	
		Radiology, Nuclear Medicine and Medical Imaging	
		Transplantation	
		Dentistry, Oral Surgery and Medicine	
		Dermatology and Venereal Diseases	
		Allergy	
		Rheumatology	
		Endocrinology and Metabolism	
Gastroenterology and Hepatology			
Urology and Nephrology			
Oncology			
Ophthalmology			

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel	
Medical and Health Sciences	Clinical Medicine	Otorhinolaryngology	Clinical Medicine, Immunology and Infection	
		Psychiatry		
		Clinical Neurology		
		Geriatrics and Gerontology		
		General and Internal Medicine		
		Other Clinical Medicine Subjects		
		Integrative and Complementary Medicine		
	Health Sciences	Health Care Sciences and Services	Health and Sport Sciences	
		Health Policy and Services		
		Nursing		
		Nutrition, Dietetics		
		Public and Environmental Health		
		Epidemiology		
		Occupational Health		
		Sport and Fitness Sciences		
		Social Biomedical Sciences		
		Medical Ethics		
		Substance Abuse		
		Tropical Medicine		Clinical Medicine, Immunology and Infection
		Parasitology		
		Infectious Diseases		
	Medical Biotechnology	Health-related Biotechnology	Bioengineering and Biotechnology	
		Technologies - Manipulation of Cells, Tissues, Organs or the Whole Organisms		
		Technologies - Identification of the Functioning of DNA, Proteins and Enzymes and its relation with the Disease		
		Biomaterials		
		Medical Biotechnology related Ethics		
	Other Medical Sciences	Forensic Science	Clinical Medicine, Immunology and Infection	

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Agricultural Sciences	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Agriculture	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
		Forestry	
		Fishery	
		Soil Science	
		Horticulture and Viticulture	
		Agronomy, Plant Breeding and Plant Protection	
	Animal and Dairy Science	Animal and Dairy Science	Animal and Veterinary Sciences and Agro-Food Biotechnology
		Husbandry	
		Pets	
	Veterinary Science	Veterinary Science	
	Agricultural Biotechnology	Agricultural Biotechnology and Food Biotechnology	
		GM Technology (Crops and Livestock) and Livestock Cloning	
		Marker Assisted Selection	
		Diagnostics	
		Biomass Feedstock Production Technologies, Biopharming	
	Agricultural Biotechnology related Ethics		

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Social Sciences	Psychology	Psychology (including Human-Machine relations)	Psychology
		Psychology, Special (including Therapy for Learning, Speech, Hearing, Visual and other Physical and Mental Disabilities)	
	Economics and Business	Economics, Econometrics	Economics and Business
		Industrial Relations	
		Business and Management	
	Educational Sciences	Education, General (including Training, Pedagogy, Didactics)	Educational Sciences
		Education, Special (to Gifted Persons, those with Learning Disabilities)	
	Sociology	Sociology	Sociology
		Demography	
		Anthropology	
		Ethnology	
		Social topics (Women's and Gender Studies; Social Issues; Family Studies, Social Work)	
	Law	Law, Criminology, Penology	Law and Political Science
		Other Subareas of Law	
	Political Science	Political Science	Law and Political Science
		Public Administration	
		Organisation Theory	
	Social and Economic Geography	Environmental Sciences (Social Aspects)	Social and Economic Geography
		Cultural and Economic Geography	
		Urban Studies (Planning and Development)	
Transport Planning and Social Aspects of Transport			
Other Subareas of Social and Economic Geography			
Media and Communications	Journalism	Media and Communication	
	Information Science (Social Aspects)		
	Library Science		
	Media and Socio-Cultural Communication		
	Other Subareas of Media and Communications		

Scientific Domain	Scientific Area	Scientific Subarea	Evaluation Panel
Humanities	History and Archaeology	History	History and Archaeology
		Archaeology	
		History of Science and Technology	
	Languages and Literature	General Language Studies	Languages and Literature
		Specific Languages	
		General Literature Studies	
		Literary Theory	
		Specific Literatures	
		Linguistics	
		Other Subareas of Languages and Literature	
	Philosophy, Ethics and Religion	Philosophy	Philosophy
		Ethics	
		Theology	
		Religious Studies	
	Arts	Arts	Arts
		Design and Architecture	
		Performing Arts Studies (Musicology, Theatre Science, Dramaturgy)	
		Folklore Studies	
		Studies on Film, Radio and Television	
		Art History	
Other Subareas of Arts			

