

**ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS**

**2024 Call for Exploratory Research Projects  
under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program**

NOVEMBER 2024

**Carnegie Mellon**  
**Portugal** 



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## ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

This Call for Proposal Submissions is aimed at Exploratory Research Projects within the scope of Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program, submitted under a call for proposals, with terms disseminated at [www.fct.pt](http://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, 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, no. 100, of May 23, 2024.

### 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 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 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 2024 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, including Collaborative Laboratories (CoLab) and Centers for Technology and Innovation (CTI);
- 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. 9 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, 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 project completion, through a final reimbursement payment method.

For budget definition purposes, refer to the terms defined in the “[Methodology for Applying Simplified Costs – Lump Sums](#),” as well as to Articles 8 and 9 of the FCT Projects Regulation.

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

## 5. BUDGET ALLOCATION

The budget allocation for this call is EUR 400.000, for projects starting in 2025. 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.

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 Projects 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 in different periods of application submission, the funding recommendation within one of them is a condition for exclusion from the decision process of the remaining ones.

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

### **6.2. Principal Investigador (PI) in Portugal**

- Can only submit one proposal as PI in this call;
- Must have a doctoral degree. The document certifying the doctoral degree must be presented during the contracting stage;

- 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 Projects 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 team member at CMU must hold a faculty appointment at CMU. A confirmation statement, together with a 2-page CV should be attached to the application form.

### **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.

The members of the CMU Portugal Program governance structure (Board of Directors, External Review Committee and Program Directors) are not allowed to participate as PI, team members, or consultants.

## **7. SELECTION METHODOLOGY**

An international panel of independent reviewers, affiliated to foreign institutions, will carry out the evaluation. The selection and ranking of projects are based on the Merit of the Project (MP) using the following criteria, which are explained in more detail in the CMU Portugal 2024 Call for Proposals and in the Terms of Reference for the 2024 Call for Exploratory Research Proposals under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program:

- A. Scientific merit (A1) and innovative nature (A2) of the project from an international standpoint and alignment with the goals of Phase III of the CMU Portugal Program – **40%**;
- B. Scientific merit of the PI and the research team (B1), including the impact of project execution in developing the PI's career and/or research (B2) – **35%**;
- C. Feasibility of the workplan and the expected indicators (C1), including the project's impact in a real-world problem, as well as the budget adequacy (C2) – **25%**.

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

$$MP = 0.40 (0.50 \cdot A1 + 0.50 \cdot A2) + 0.35 (0.60 \cdot B1 + 0.40 \cdot B2) + 0.25 (0.50 \cdot C1 + 0.50 \cdot C2)$$

The 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. 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. As a tiebreaker between applications with the same MP score, the classifications assigned to criteria A2, B1, A1, B2, C1, and C2 will be used successively in descending order to provide the final ranking of the projects.

## 8. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be presented to FCT, in English, from **2 December 2024** to **22 January 2025**, at 17:00 Lisbon time (WET time zone), using a specific on-line form and submitted through [myfct](#).

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

- A detailed 2-pages CV of the team leader at CMU;
- Confirmation statement, describing the faculty appointment at CMU

The 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](#).

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 **February 5, 2025** at 17:00 (Lisbon time, WET).

CMU teams should submit no later than the deadline of the Call to the CMU Portugal Office at CMU through the [online submission form](#):

- 1) their budget;
- 2) the abstract of their proposal, identifying the Portugal and CMU team members (including department affiliation and email) and partner institutions using the [CMU PI ERP Abstract Template](#).

## 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, 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, no. 100, of May 23, 2024, 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 Regulations](#), the Guidelines for Exploratory Research Projects Proposals Writing, the Terms of Reference for the 2024 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.

## 11. PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

In the context of this Call for Exploratory Research Projects under the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program, personal data is collected, and its processing is carried out in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), approved by Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council, dated April 27, 2016, regarding the protection of individuals concerning the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data, in effect since May 25, 2018, repealing the Directive 95/46/CE, dated October 24, 1995. Additionally, data processing complies with the provisions of Law 58/2019 of August 8, 2019, ensuring the implementation of the GDPR in the Portuguese legal framework.

FCT and the CMU Portugal Program act as joint controllers for the personal data collected under this call. The personal data processing is used for the Program Management and Funding Instruments and adheres to the principles of lawfulness, fairness, transparency and storage limitation.

For detailed information regarding the personal data processing to be performed by FCT, please consult the *Personal Data Protection* document.

## 12. CONTACT POINT

For inquiries of scientific nature, please contact the Carnegie Mellon Portugal Program at [research@cmuportugal.org](mailto:research@cmuportugal.org). For specific information related to application submission, please contact [concursoprojetos@fct.pt](mailto:concursoprojetos@fct.pt). For specific information related to the Carnegie Mellon team lead requirement or submission, please contact [CMUPortugal@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:CMUPortugal@andrew.cmu.edu).

Madalena Alves

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





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