



RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION PROGRAMMES

WORK PROGRAMME

Programmes during period:
May 2022 - December 2024

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INTRODUCTION

This document is the Research and Innovation Foundation's (RIF)¹ Work Programme for Calls for Proposals to be announced during the **May 2022 - December 2024**² period and is part of the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme for Research, Technological Development and Innovation³.

The RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme is the principal reference document and an important information instrument for interested organisations and persons regarding the Foundation's Programmes supporting Research, Technological Development and Innovation activities. The document consists of the following parts:

Part I "Call", includes the Public Call of the Research and Innovation Foundation towards interested organisations and persons to participate in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, as well as the general description of the objectives, basic principles and structure of the Programmes.

Part II, "Programmes", includes the description of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, categorised in three main Strategic Pillars.

The description of each Programme comprises its objectives and specific aims, beneficiaries, the Call for Proposals' schedule, as well as the general characteristics of each Programme, such as budget, permitted activities, project duration and funding, eligible costs, and other specific participation restrictions.

Part III, "Procedures and Participation Rules", includes the description of general rules and procedures of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, regarding the participation of organisations and natural persons.

It specifically contains information for beneficiary participation, activity and cost eligibility, proposal evaluation, selection and funding procedures, project management and monitoring, basic dissemination principles, protection and exploitation of research results, as well as the legal framework governing the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

During the present Programming Period, the Research and Innovation Foundation is entitled to issue circulars with regards to the procedures and participation rules of RESTART 2016-2020

¹ Since April 2019, the Research Promotion Foundation was renamed to Research and Innovation Foundation in order to reflect its expanded role as the executive arm of the new National Research and Innovation Governance System.

² For Calls for Proposals to be announced from 24 November 2023 onwards, some modifications to definitions apply in order to comply with Regulation 2023/1315 amending GBER 651/2014.

³ <https://iris.research.org.cy/file/public/d3653de8-b198-ed11-817b-005056ba9cc4>

Programmes and retains the right to update the content of the present Work Programme in consultation with relevant authorities, especially in matters of Call for Proposals' scheduling and budget allocation.

The English version of the present Work Programme, even though an official translation endorsed by the Research and Innovation Foundation, is provided for information purposes only. Only the Greek version of the Work Programme is legally binding and shall prevail in case of any divergence in interpretation.

SECTION I - CALL

CALL

The Board of Directors of the Research and Innovation Foundation, taking into consideration the following:

- the priorities set by the Foundation’s Charter and in particular its guidelines in accordance with its basic purposes and objectives,
- the RIF’s Strategic Plan,
- the National Board’s for Research and Innovation (NBRI) Strategy,
- the strategic policy goals, the main objectives and the priorities stated in the programming documents for the utilisation of Cohesion Policy resources 2021-2027, and specifically the “Partnership Agreement” and the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”,
- the priorities, targets and milestones of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (“Cyprus_tomorrow”),
- the National Policy Statement for Strengthening the Business Ecosystem in Cyprus, that was adopted by the Council of Ministers on the 14th of December 2015,
- the objectives, aims and priorities of the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus (S3Cy) that was adopted by the Council of Ministers on the 26th of March 2015, as well as the proposed matrix of measures and policies and the Action Plan,
- the objectives, aims and updated priorities of the revised Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus for the 2023-2030 period, that was adopted by the Council of Ministers on the 30th of March 2023,
- the trends and development in matters of research, technological development and innovation at a European level and Cyprus’ commitments in the frame of the National Reform Programme for the achievement of the “Europe 2020” strategy targets,
- Cyprus’ opportunities and commitments that derive from its compliance with international conventions, agreements and protocols for transnational cooperation as well as from its participation in international and European programmes or organisations for the support of research and innovation activities,
- the comments, suggestions and opinions of research organisations, Enterprises, researchers and other stakeholders (organisations and persons) from Cyprus, collected periodically, and
- the overall experience the Foundation has gained over time, especially through the management and implementation of Research, Technological Development and Innovation Programmes and its cooperation with similar foreign organisations,

decided:

- in December 2020 and September 2021, the announcement of new Calls for Proposals under the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes that will be co-funded by the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus through the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”, and
- in September 2021 the announcement of new Calls for Proposals under the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes that will be funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU through the Recovery and Resilience Plan - RRP ("Cyprus_tomorrow").

Depending on the financial mechanism in which they are included, these Calls will follow:

- either the provisions of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and the Council, and Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and the Council on the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund,
- or the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), as amended by the Regulation (EU) 2023/435 of the 27th February 2023 which includes, inter alia, provisions relating to the new REPowerEU Chapter in RRP.

In addition:

- the Community Framework for State Aid will apply and specifically Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17th June 2014⁴ (as amended or replaced - last amendment according to the European Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/1315 of the 23rd of June 2023)⁵ declaring certain aid categories, compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty Text with EEA relevance, as well as Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18th December 2013 (as amended or replaced - last amendment according to the European Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 of the 13th of December 2023⁶) on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union to De Minimis aid, and
- the internationally accepted standards of ethics in Science, the provisions of the 2001 Law “on the Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine” and other provisions supplementing this Convention, as well as other relevant Laws of the Republic of Cyprus will be respected.

⁴ Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty Text with EEA relevance

⁵<http://www.publicaid.gov.cy/publicaid/publicaid.nsf/All/6B5E883AFAB5AADFC2257B8F00360DC6?OpenDocument>

⁶ Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 of 13 of December 2023

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302831&qid=1704451373927

On the basis of the abovementioned considerations and decisions, the Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) invites all interested entities, organisations, enterprises and natural persons that meet the requirements of the present Work Programme and those of the specific Programmes, to submit proposals for the implementation of quality projects and activities within the framework of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

Submission of proposals should take place after the announcement by the RIF of the relevant Call for Proposals for each Programme which may include specific terms and conditions for participation, and/or provide possible additional information.

BASIC PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

The RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes comprise a multi-annual development framework of Programmes for the support of Research, Technological Development and Innovation in Cyprus, which is co-funded by national and European resources and is implemented in conjunction with other national initiatives and Programmes.

The vision of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes is to promote the field of Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) as a principal factor for Cyprus' economic development, thus contributing in addressing major economic and social challenges and setting the conditions for sustainable growth, in accordance with the "Europe 2020" strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The design of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes focuses on particular objectives, as well as on the Priority Sectors identified through the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus (S3Cy)⁷. At the same time, the Calls for Proposals to be announced during the May 2022 - December 2024 period fall under:

- the Cohesion Policy Programme "THALIA 2021-2027" for the utilisation of ERDF resources under Priority Axis 1 "Competitive, Smart and Digital Economy", and
- the Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 ("Cyprus_tomorrow") for the utilisation of Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) resources under Policy Axis 3 "Strengthening the

⁷ The Council of Ministers approved the Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus on its meeting on 26 March 2015. As mentioned, the preparation and adoption of Smart Specialization Strategy is an ex-ante conditionality set by the European Commission to the Member States during the programming period 2014-2020, for the exploitation of resources from the European Structural and Investment Funds for enhancing Research and Innovation (R&I) in areas where each country has a competitive advantage. The updated Strategy was approved by the Council of Ministers at its meeting on 30/03/2023 and covers the 2023-2030 period. This update is a key reform of Cyprus' Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) and also ensures the continued use of resources from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the field of R&I.

resilience and competitiveness of the economy” and the new REPowerEU Chapter while some Calls for Proposals will be funded by national funding

The main objectives of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, which reflect on the three (3) main Strategy Pillars, are the following:

1. **Smart development, with focus on selected priority sectors**, through supporting the effectiveness of the RTDI System in Cyprus, its association with the productive base of the Economy, the enhancement of its extroversion and the reinforcement of its links and interoperability between its components.
2. **Ensuring the sustainability and dynamics of the Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) system** and to reinforce its future perspectives, focusing on excellence and on the support of human resources, especially those of the younger generation.
3. **Support the operational framework of the RTDI system and production of added value resulting from research and innovation activities**, through the development of supportive instruments and pilot measures, the encouragement for dissemination and exploitation of research results, and the cultivation and promotion of appropriate culture.

The three Pillars of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes are classified in Sections, each Section comprising of specific Programmes of specialised objectives, described in detail in the present Work Programme.

The design of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes is governed by the following horizontal objectives:

- The effective utilization and further development of **Human Resource** potential in Cyprus, and especially the younger generation of researchers.
- The enhancement of the cooperation between the **Production System and the RTDI System** as this is considered to be the keystone for the developmental process and the maximisation of the return of public investment in the field of RTDI.
- The enhancement of **Extroversion and Development of International Collaborations** to the benefit of the fulfilment of Cyprus’s strategic objectives.

At the same time, **Innovation** is viewed in its broad sense, as an essential component of the economic process, in gaining competitive advantage for Enterprises, and in overcoming social challenges.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The General Principles applicable in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes are the following:

Open Participation

The RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes are addressed to entities and natural persons that are legally established and are active or will be established and active (it only concerns start-ups for participation in Business Innovation Programmes) in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus, in the EU, or any other state recognised by the Republic of Cyprus. The Programmes and the Competitions, depending on their objectives and activities, are open for participation to entities such as research organisations, higher education institutions, scientific and professional organisations, enterprises, business associations, public services, public benefit organisations, and natural persons such as academic staff, scientists, researchers, technical staff, students and pupils.

Competitive Procedures

The funded projects are selected on a competitive basis and, generally, after evaluation which is carried out by external experts in accordance with three evaluation criteria which apply to all Programmes: Excellence, Added Value and Benefit, and Implementation. Certain Programmes are excluded from competitive procedures, and the selection of projects is based on meeting minimum requirements and criteria as described in the Calls for Proposals, and on a first-come, first-served basis.

Confidentiality

All Proposals and any attached documents, information and data are confidentially handled by the RIF. To ensure confidentiality during the evaluation procedure, the external experts who evaluate the Proposals are obliged to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. Moreover, all necessary precautions are taken in order to ensure personal data protection.

Equal Treatment and Objectivity

All proposals submitted in the frame of Calls for Proposals of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes are equally treated and impartially evaluated according to their value, irrespective of the origin, identity and gender of participants.

Transparency

The selection of projects to be funded and the management of the funded projects, are subject to specific rules and procedures, clearly described in the present Work Programme, the Calls for Proposals, the respective Project Management guidelines and in the Project Contracts. All participants receive appropriate feedback regarding the outcome of the evaluation procedure of their proposals and progress reports.

Simplification and Efficiency

The procedures that apply to evaluation, selection and funding of proposals and to project monitoring, are such that participating bodies and the Foundation are subjected to the least possible administrative burden and to the point where project quality and compliance to participation and management rules is maintained.

Compliance with the Legislation and Ethical Issues

During project selection and implementation of funded projects, all necessary measures are taken to ensure that all Research, Technological Development and Innovation activities are carried out in accordance to national and Community/European legislation and in compliance to the fundamental principles and existing regulations regarding ethical and safety matters. Projects with defence or military purposes cannot be funded.

Broad Dissemination of Knowledge and Exploitation of Results

The exploitation of project results by participating organisations is one of the fundamental priorities of the Framework Programme RESTART 2016-2020, as a means of benefiting economy and society. Particular emphasis is given on the optimisation of the research results' promotion and the broad dissemination of knowledge to the international and local scientific and business communities, as well as to the general public.

Co-funding

RESTART 2016-2020 projects are generally co-funded by the Research and Innovation Foundation and the participating organisations. The level of funding (Aid Intensity) for participating organisations is determined in accordance with the Community Framework for State Aid.

Monitoring

The RIF monitors the implementation progress of funded projects, in accordance with relevant procedures, in order to ensure qualitative implementation of projects, promotion of notable results and quick release of funding. Participating bodies are fully responsible for the timely and qualitative implementation of projects and for proper management of public funding, in compliance with relevant regulations and procedures. The RIF may enforce measures and sanctions in cases of serious deviations to the implementation of planned project activities and/or improper financial management of projects.

STRUCTURE

The basic layout of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes is in direct association to the abovementioned vision and horizontal objectives.

At a first level, three (3) main **Strategy Pillars** are being set, which correspond to the main objectives of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, as follows:

- **PILLAR I “Smart Growth”**
- **PILLAR II “Sustainable RTDI System”**
- **PILLAR III “Transformation of RTDI System”**

At a second level, each Pillar is divided into **Sections**, each Section particularly aiming to achieve the objectives and priorities of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

At a third level, each Section comprises specific **Programmes** which are the instruments and implementation measures used to achieve the set objectives and priorities of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes. The Programmes may be implemented through **Competitions**.

RESTART 2016-2020 PROGRAMMES BUDGET

The total budget of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes amounts to **273.000.000 Euros** (including 10,200,000 Euros for the "CO-DEVELOP" Programme approved as a separate Measure by the State Aid Control Commissioner).

A total amount of 45.000.000 Euros is foreseen to be covered by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) of the 2014-2020 period and in particular by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In addition, amounts of 50.000.000 and 71.000.000 Euros are expected to be covered by the 2021-2027 ESI Funds and the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), respectively.

Table I.1 demonstrates the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes layout structure and the indicative budget allocation per Programme. It is noted that the RIF reserves the right to modify the overall budget of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes and adjust the allocation per Programme, depending on the progress of implementation and the absorption of the Programmes' budget, the number of proposals and projects eligible for funding, etc. Budget modifications are made on regular basis and are available to interested parties in the relevant Calls for Proposals.

The Programmes that will be co-financed by the ERDF for the 2021-2027 period and the Republic of Cyprus ("**THALIA 2021-2027” Cohesion Policy Programme**) will fall under PRIORITY 1 "Competitive, Smart and Digital Economy" and will serve the Specific Objective 1 (i) "Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies".

These actions seek to strengthen the intensity of Research and Innovation and to increase private and public investment in R&I with the ultimate goal **being** the country's development. In addition, they aim to increase and upgrade research infrastructures, strengthen the interconnection and cooperation **between** the research community and businesses in order to effectively exploit R&I results, create a critical mass of researchers and create new research positions, promote business innovation and support SMEs and start-ups, supporting competitiveness and enhancing extroversion towards international markets.

The Programmes to be funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) under the **Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) 2021-2026 ("Cyprus_tomorrow")** as amended in December 2023 by the EU Council's Implementing Decision⁸ will fall under Policy Axis 3 "Strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of the economy", and specifically in Section 3.2 "Enhanced Research and Innovation" of the Cyprus RRP as well as the new REPowerEU Chapter. These actions seek to strengthen links between research organisations and businesses, commercialise research results, increase the intensity of research and development (R&D) activity and investment by both public and private organisations, and provide access to all publicly funded research infrastructures across the ecosystem. In addition, it aims to strengthen financial support to start-ups and SMEs, the internationalisation of the local research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem, the development of local talent and the attraction of talent from abroad to work in R&I with a focus on specific thematic areas. The actions implemented under the new REPowerEU Chapter focus on issues related to the green transition and particularly the energy sector.

⁸ <https://cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/All/2623F3B96E3DD4ADC2258A9E002BCAAA?OpenDocument>

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Table I.1. STRUCTURE AND BUDGET FOR FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME RESTART 2016-2020					
PILLAR	SECTION	PROGRAMME	BUDGET (Euros)	ESIF INVESTMENT PRIORITY / RRF POLICY AXIS	ESIF SPECIAL OBJECTIVE / RRF SECTION
PILLAR I Smart Growth	R&I Partnerships	Integrated Projects	13.000.000	1b	1.b1
		Integrated Projects (<i>THALIA</i>)	7.000.000	1*	1(i)*
		Collaborative Development (CO-DEVELOP) (<i>RRF</i>)	10.200.000	3**	3.2**
		Collaborative Development (CO-DEVELOP) (<i>RRF</i>), including REPower EU	13.300.000	3**	3.2**
		Collaborative Development (CO-DEVELOP) (<i>THALIA</i>)	6.000.000	1*	1(i)*
		Dual Use Technologies (MoD) (<i>RRF</i>)	2.720.000	3**	3.2**
	Infrastructures	New Strategic Infrastructure Units- Young Scientists	11.000.000	1a	1.a1
		Research Infrastructures (<i>THALIA</i>)	17.500.000	1*	1(i)*
	Participation of Enterprises	Research in Enterprises	9.300.000	1b	1.b1
		Research in Enterprises (<i>THALIA</i>)	3.600.000***	1*	1.(i)*
		Research in Enterprises (<i>RRF</i>) including REPower EU	8.393.000	3**	3.2, 6**
		Research in STARTUPS	1.000.000	1b	1.b1
		Proof of Concept for Technology/Knowhow Applications	1.000.000	1b	1.b1
		Proof of Concept for Technology/Knowhow Applications (<i>THALIA</i>)	1.700.000	1*	1(i)*
		Proof of Concept for Technology/Knowhow Applications (HYDRO)	200.000	N/A	N/A
		Commercial Proof of Concept for Technological /Knowhow Applications	1.607.000	3**	6**
	Extroversion – Open Horizons	Bilateral Collaborations	1.600.000	N/A	N/A
		Bilateral Collaborations (<i>THALIA</i>)	2.900.000	1*	1(i)*
		International Collaboration- Dual Targeting	1.200.000	N/A	N/A
		EUREKA Cyprus	600.000	N/A	N/A
European Initiatives- National Development		8.000.000	N/A	N/A	
	European Partnerships (<i>THALIA</i>)	9.500.000	1*	1(i)*	
		Space Technologies	3.000.000	1*	1(i)*
PILLAR II Sustainable RTDI System	Excellence	Excellence Hubs	17.100.000	1a	1.a1
		Excellence Hubs (<i>THALIA</i>)	22.000.000	1*	1(i)*
		EUROSTARS Cyprus	2.500.000	N/A	N/A
		DISRUPT (<i>RRF</i>)	10.000.000	3**	3.2**
		DISRUPT	3.000.000	Δ/E	Δ/E
		Creation and Initial Development of STARTUPS with International Orientation (PRE-SEED)	6.500.000	1 st Call – 3**	1 st Call – 3.2**

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				2 nd Call – 1*	2 nd Call – 1(i)*	
				3 rd Call – 3**	3 rd Call – 3.2**	
				4 th Call – 3**	4 th Call – 3.2**	
		Development of Internationally Competitive Innovative Products and Services by STARTUPS (SEED)	11.000.000	1 st Call – 3** 2 nd Call – 1* 3 rd Call – 3**	1 st Call – 3.2** 2 nd Call – 1(i)* 3 rd Call – 3.2**	
		Development and Promotion of Internationally Competitive Innovative Products and Services by Existing Enterprises (INNOVATE)	19.900.000	1 st Call – 3** 2 nd Call – 1* 3 rd Call – 3** 4 th Call – 1*	1 st Call – 3.2** 2 nd Call – 1(i)* 3 rd Call – 3.2** 4 th Call – 1(i)*	
	New Researchers, New Ideas, New Opportunities	DIDAKTOR (Post-Doctoral Researchers)	9.400.000	1a	1.a1	
		POSTDOC (<i>THALIA</i>)	2.500.000	1*	1(i)*	
		Horizon 2020 – 2 nd Opportunity	5.500.000	1a	1.a1	
		Horizon Europe – 2 nd Opportunity EIC (<i>RRF</i>)	1.500.000	3**	3.2**	
		Horizon Europe – 2 nd Opportunity (MSCA) (<i>THALIA</i>)	2.500.000	1*	1(i)*	
		Horizon Europe – 2 nd Opportunity (ERC)	600.000	N/A	N/A	
		PhD in Industry	3.750.000	N/A	N/A	
		Social Innovation	1.500.000	N/A	N/A	
PILLAR III Transformation of RTDI system	Support Mechanisms	Innovation Vouchers	260.000	1b	1.b1	
		Innovation Vouchers (<i>RRF</i>)	605.000	3**	3.2**	
		Enterprises Capacity in Building New Product Development	930.000	3**	3.2**	
		Classified Labs – Dual Use Technologies	195.000	3**	3.2**	
		Industrial Property	400.000	N/A	N/A	
		Participation in International Brokerage Events	140.000	N/A	N/A	
		Encouragement of Project Coordination in Horizon 2020	1.000.000	N/A	N/A	
		BRIDGE2HORIZON (<i>THALIA</i>)	6.000.000	1*	1(i)*	
		VISION ERC	1.000.000	1*	1(i)*	
		ERC Visiting Research Fellowship	200.000	Δ/E	Δ/E	
		Strengthening Innovation Support Structures	300.000	3**	3.2**	
		Alternative Forms of Funding	Commercial Exploitation of Research Results	Stage A: 270.000 Stage B: 1.000.000	N/A	N/A
			Commercial Exploitation of Research Results by Enterprises	Stage A: 270.000 Stage B: 1.000.000	N/A	N/A
			Complementary Funding	4.000.000	N/A	N/A
		Culture	Nurturing an RTDI Culture	1.860.000	N/A	N/A

Notes:

*These Programmes will be co-financed by the ERDF for the 2021-2027 period and the Republic of Cyprus ("**THALIA 2021-2027**" Cohesion Policy Programme).

These Programmes will be funded by the RRF for the 2021-2026 period (Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026** - "Cyprus_tomorrow").

***200,000 Euro of national funding were added in the Call's budget for the financing of a proposal in the scientific field of hydrocarbons.

SECTION II - PROGRAMMES

PILLAR I: SMART GROWTH

Pillar I, “Smart Growth”, aims at smart development, focusing on the selected priority sectors, through the liaison of academic and research organisations with the productive base of the economy, the enhancement of the RTDI System’s quality and effectiveness, the enhancement of its extroversion and the reinforcement of its links and interoperability between its components.

Priority Sectors

The study of the Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus (S3Cy) highlighted the most prevailing productive activities in fields where Cyprus is realistically expected to play a major role in the next years. As the country has comparative advantages such as relevant infrastructure, technical knowhow and human resources in the priority sectors, these sectors may become levers for growth of the economy, while at the same time it is expected to support and adapt them to the current state-of-the-art, new technologies and needs, in order to promote entrepreneurship and innovation at the highest possible degree.

The **Priority Sectors** that have been selected through the study for Smart Specialisation Strategy for Cyprus (S3Cy) are the following:

- The Sectors of “Tourism” and “Energy” as the dominant priority sectors.
- The Sectors of “Agriculture- Food Industry”⁹, “Built Environment- Construction Industry”, “Transport- Shipping” and “Health”, as secondary priority sectors, and
- The Sectors of “Information and Communication Technologies”, “Sustainable Growth- Environment” and “Key Enabling Technologies (KET)” as important Horizontal Sectors which, beyond their intrinsic importance, deeply affect the qualitative development of the Priority Sectors.

Tables II.1a- II.1h describe the **Priority Sectors, Sub-Sectors and Focus Areas**. The description of the Focus Areas is **explanatory and not restrictive**.

Priority Sectors with Thematic Focus

Table II.1a PRIORITY SECTOR “TOURISM”	
A.	Sustainable Tourism Development
A.1	The Social, Economic and Environmental Dimension of Tourism
A.2	Assessment and Monitoring of Tourist Bearing Capacity
B.	Specific Forms of Tourism

⁹ In the frame of the “Agriculture- Food Industry” Sector only activities relating to research and development in this sector, will be funded by the Research and Innovation Foundation through the European Regional Development Fund. Activities relating to the active involvement of farmers in the cultivation of cooperation culture and the adoption of innovative methods and practices in order to solve problems in the field of Agriculture, will be financed by the relevant Programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

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B.1	Promoting Special Forms of Tourism- Enriching Tourism Experience <i>Indicative areas: Conference and Incentive Tourism, Sport Tourism, Cycling Tourism, Golf Tourism, Wedding and Honeymoon trips, Hiking Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Religious Tourism, Health Tourism (Medical & Wellness), Agro-Tourism, Educational Tourism (Learning), Cruising, Gastronomic Tourism & Wine Tourism, Diving Tourism and Gambling Tourism</i>
B.2	Mitigating Seasonal Variation through the development of special forms of Tourism
C.	Digital Age and Tourism
C.1	Optimising the Tourist experience through the use of ICT
C.2	Social Networks and electronic booking systems as competitive advantages
D.	Organisation, Management and Promotion of the Tourism Product
D.1	Tourism Satellite Account Tables- Instrument for monitoring competitiveness
D.2	System Organisation for Managing and Promoting the Tourism Product

Table II.b PRIORITY SECTOR “ENERGY”	
A.	Development of New or Optimised Technologies for Renewable Energy Sources
A.1	Solar Energy <i>Indicative areas: Solar Photovoltaic Technologies, solar, crystalline-silicon-based solar cells, thin films and deposition techniques, development of solid aggregate PV systems, advanced materials, and procedures of creation/transportation of results during processing, concentrated solar energy, high concentration technologies, thermal solar energy storage, co-production of electricity and desalinated water using solar energy.</i>
A.2	Technologies for Solar Heating and Cooling <i>Indicative areas: Heat Pump Technologies for heating and cooling, co-production and biomass systems for hot water and heating, photovoltaic systems and co-production systems for energy production, integration of solar systems in buildings, research for the development of new materials for storage, optimised transportation of heating, insulation and optimised collectors.</i>
A.3	Wind Energy <i>Indicative areas: Modelling and simulation studies for new procedures and optimised use of wind energy for the production of electricity, research for materials used in wind systems, fluid mechanics for wind application, and new CFD modelling techniques.</i>
B.	Innovative Applications of Renewable Energy Sources
B.1	Solar Thermal Technologies <i>Indicative areas: Solar heating and cooling, great scale systems, district heating systems, co-production of electricity and desalinated water using solar energy, seasonal heating storing.</i>
B.2	Solar Photovoltaic <i>Indicative areas: Efficiency studies, integration systems in new and existing buildings, new photovoltaic architecture systems for increased efficiency, photovoltaic collectors, reliability of natural characteristics of solar cells.</i>
B.3	Innovative Renewable Energy Sources applications in tourism, agriculture, livestock, fish-farming, etc.
C.	Exploitation of Hydrocarbons
C.1	Natural Gas Storage
C.2	Natural Gas Use
D.	Efficient Use- Energy Saving
D.1	Developing Innovative and cost Effective Technologies for Optimised Use of Energy in New and Existing Buildings
D.2	ICT Systems for Monitoring Energy Consumption and Optimising Efficiency in Urban Environments and Transportation
D.3	Networks for Energy Transportation and Distribution <i>Indicative areas: managing, monitoring, distribution, network control, smart networks, measuring sensors, data management for optimal system control. Optimal integration of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) in the electricity distribution system, new technologies for energy transformation, optimised management coordination of various types of RES.</i>

Table II.1c PRIORITY SECTOR “AGRICULTURE- FOOD INDUSTRY»	
A.	Competitiveness of Agricultural and Livestock Production
A.1	New Technologies, ICT and Robotics in Agricultural and Rural Production
A.2	Utilisation of Biotechnology in Agriculture, Aquaculture and Livestock <i>Indicative areas: increase of efficiency of plants and livestock, use of biological resources in agriculture and livestock systems, molecular genetics and reproduction of plants</i>
A.3	Protected Designation of Origin, Geographical Indication and Traditional Products
B.	Food Quality and Safety
B.1	Addressing Nutritional Chain Risks in all stages: Farm, Harvest, Transport, Processing, Market, Consumer
B.2	Food Quality and Safety <i>Indicative areas: monitoring indicators, risk analysis and critical control point systems, food metabolic profile, etc.</i>
C.	Livestock Development
C.1	Optimal Animal Management and Nutrition Practices to Ensure Safety and Quality of livestock Products
D.	Climate Change: Agriculture and Food
D.1	The Impact of Climate Change on Agro-climatic Zones of Cyprus <i>Indicative areas: complete monitoring system, simulation and observation models for the monitoring of agriculture and livestock with the use of GPS</i>
D.2	Food Systems Risk Analysis <i>Indicative areas: imbalances due to natural phenomena and its relation with the market-quantification of impacts on resource availability for sufficient production, food quality and safety</i>
E.	Environmental and Socio-Economic Dimension
E.1	Effective Use of Biodiversity and Ecosystems <i>Indicative areas: evaluation of interactivity and viable management of food production, effective use in intensive agricultural systems, etc. Sustainable management of resources and waste: management of soil, water resources, animal waste, recycled water, etc.</i>
E.2	Optimal Use of Water Resources <i>Indicative areas: measures to face pollutants, ensuring the quality, best use and saving of water supplies.</i>
E.3	Exploitation of Renewable Energy Sources in Agricultural Production

Table II.1d PRIORITY SECTOR “BUILT ENVIRONMENT- CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY”	
A.	Sustainable Urban Development
A.1	Urban Networks, Infrastructures and Connectivity <i>Indicative areas: knowledge, mobility, transports, ICT, energy, utility projects, waste management, etc.- implementations of previous urban technologies</i>
B.	Contemporary Construction and Infrastructure Design
B.1	High Energy Efficient and Environmentally Friendly Buildings
B.2	Cultural Heritage Buildings <i>Indicative areas: maintenance, restoration, integration, promotion and reutilisation of the cultural heritage buildings in the urban built environment and urban life</i>
B.3	Upgrading Existing Buildings <i>Indicative areas: optimised use of existing buildings, anti-seismic upgrade and energy efficiency upgrade, modification of use, use of smart managing systems, accessibility, etc.</i>
C.	Planning and Management of Building and Infrastructure Construction

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C.1	Exploiting Sustainable Construction Methods <i>Indicative areas: use of building materials with high additional value, reduction of resource consumption, reduction of environmental impacts and increase of reutilisation of available resources</i>
D.	Construction Materials
D.1	Development of Innovative and Smart Construction Materials <i>Indicative areas: materials with high additional value, with reutilisation ability, based on knowledge and on the needs of each client</i>
D.2	Exploitation of Local Raw Materials in the Manufacture of Construction Materials

Table II.1e PRIORITY SECTOR “TRANSPORT-SHIPPING”	
A.	Contemporary Public Transport
A.1	Development of Urban Transport Systems and Modern Public Transport <i>Indicative areas: increase of attractiveness and quality of urban public transports, traffic management in the urban and interurban network, optimised functioning and maintenance of transport infrastructure</i>
A.2	Energy Saving <i>Indicative areas: use of alternative fuel forms, “green” cars, etc.</i>
B.	Maritime Transport/Shipping
B.1	Managing, Planning and Developing Ports <i>Indicative areas: improving the quality of function, better use of capacity, etc.</i>
B.2	Maritime and Coastal Tourism
C.	Sustainable Transport Development
C.1	Intelligent Transport Systems
C.2	Safe Transport Development <i>Indicative areas: road safety, avoiding marine accidents, optimisation of security level of air transports</i>

Table II.1f PRIORITY SECTOR “HEALTH”	
A.	E-Health
A.1	Integrated Health Information System <i>Indicative areas: Complete national system for management, monitoring and evaluation of illnesses, Electronic Patient Register</i>
A.2	Safety and Quality Assurance of Health Services <i>Indicative areas: Development of National Quality and Safety Indicators, Evaluation of Patients, Customers and Professionals Satisfaction, National Quality Clinical Control System- traceability</i>
A.3	Digital Mapping of Health <i>Indicative areas: Geographic distribution of diagnostic centres and specialties, Information systems for management and connection of medical centres, biological databases- advanced computational instruments and software: data mining, management, efficient use of information taken off the biological data, implementation of computerised system of medicine management</i>
B.	Clinical and Genetic Investigation and Treatment of Diseases
B.1	Monitoring- Management- Care <i>Indicative areas: Modern Systems of Primary Patient Care (with non-transmittable diseases): monitoring, primary care, management after cure, palliative care, etc. Early stage detected and curable forms of diseases: frequency, mortality, detection in later stages, check-ups</i>
B.2	Diagnosis- Prevention/ Risk Factors/ Treatment <i>Indicative areas: Prevention/ Treatment (diagnosis, cure) – Causes of the appearance of diseases in the Cypriot population, understanding quality/quantity connections between diet and phenotype/genotype, gene-expression and risk factors, exposure to environmental factors, psychological disorders, treatment of diseases and increase of productivity, quality, safety and effectiveness of intervention and early detection programmes, modern mapping methods</i>
B.3	Molecular and Medical Genetics (Medical Translational Research) <i>Indicative areas: Research on the human genome of the Cypriot population and utilisation in treatment of diseases, complete approach for the understanding and cure of mechanisms involved in</i>

	<i>diseases- gene therapy, advanced DNA and protein sequence, structure and modelling technologies, ability to comprehend the complicated biological mechanisms that lead to pathology, playing an important role in supporting the process of discovery of new medicinal and treatment targets</i>
B.4	Promoting Public Health and Quality of Life Indicative areas: <i>Healthy and active ageing, the impact of exercise, nutrition and climate change- Biomonitoring and Risk Assessment, Impacts of the financial crisis on public health</i>
C.	Development of Safe and Effective Pharmaceuticals.
C.1	Molecular Diagnosis and Development of Specialised Pharmaceuticals
D.	Medical Tourism
D.1	Development of Preventive Medicine, Climatic Therapy, Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery and In-Vitro Fertilization.

Horizontal Priority Sectors

The emphasis of horizontal sector “Sustainable Growth- Environment” is placed upon the following areas, which present important prospects and challenges:

Table II.1g HORIZONTAL PRIORITY SECTOR “SUSTAINABLE GROWTH-ENVIRONMENT”	
1	Adjustment to Climate Change- Prevention and Management of Risks: Monitoring and Management Systems, Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Mitigation of Desertification
2	Rational Management of Nature Resources with Emphasis on Water Resources and the Protection of Ecosystem and Biodiversity
3	Conservation, Promotion and Exploitation of Cultural Heritage
4	Sustainable Blue Growth

In the “Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)” horizontal priority sector, the emphasis is placed, but not limited to, on the following areas:

Table II.1.h HORIZONTAL PRIORITY SECTOR «INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES”	
Information Technologies:	
(a)	Software: innovative software, multimedia and graphics applications, knowledge and content management technologies- bigdata, language technologies, new internet applications- cloud services
(b)	Hardware: smart systems, optimisations of hardware and processing power, high efficiency computational systems, system interoperability, Artificial Intelligence, robotics, sensors
Communication Technologies:	
(a)	Networks: security, high capacity, flexibility network management
(b)	Wireless and Satellite Communication: new generation wireless and mobile networks, mobile broadband networks, 4 th generation network applications, remote sensing
(c)	High Speed Transmission Media: optical fibres, light wave networks
Horizontal ICT Applications:	
(a)	Digital Tourism and Culture: tele-service, web observatories, product management and promotion, digitalisation of cultural heritage, 3D representation
(b)	Digital Education: e-learning, computer assisted and interactive learning

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(c)	Digital Health and Quality of Life: health management, systems, tele-medicine, tele-examination, digital integration and assistance, ICT assisted independent living, innovative diagnostic imaging approaches
(d)	Promotion of Ecological Technologies: smart distribution systems, water management, environmental monitoring, smart energy applications
(e)	Digital Governance, Labour and Entrepreneurship: tele-working, e-commerce, citizen service systems, integrated public service management systems.

For Calls for Proposals that will be announced **after the 30th March 2023**, day of approval of the updated Smart Specialisation Strategy by the Council of Ministers, the updated Priority Sectors and focus areas will apply (where required).

The Priority Sectors that have been identified through the S3Cy for the 2023-2030 period are divided into 4 categories, as follows:

- Technological priority areas: include Digital Technologies and Advanced (Innovative) Materials
- Ecosystems: include the sectors of Agrifood, Renewable Energy, Maritime and Shipping
- Emerging ecosystems: currently include only the Space sector
- Enablers: include Health and the Environment

The updated Priority Sectors and related focus areas are presented in detail below:

Table II.2 Revised S3Cy Priority Sectors	
Technological Priority Areas	
1	Digital Technologies
1.1	High Performance Computing and Quantum Technologies
1.1.1	Validation and demonstration projects (TRL 4-6) of next generation quantum sensing technologies and devices, next generation quantum sensors from medical diagnostics and imaging to high-precision navigation and monitoring.
1.1.2	Explore the possibilities offered by the existing HPC environment in Cyprus to develop applications on societal challenges and in areas such as energy, environment, climate, and health, prediction and simulation of natural disasters, disaster prevention and crisis management, urban development etc.
1.2	Cybersecurity
1.2.1	Innovative solutions of Cyber-physical security. Support of improvement of approaches (TRL 3-4) and applications (TRL 5-8) on specific environments such as energy production systems, natural resources and critical environmental infrastructures and industrial environments.
1.3	Digital Tourism
1.3.1	Use augmented, virtual reality or extended reality, IoT, AI technologies and big data to develop applications and services for the promotion of tourism and the improvement of the tourist experience at all stages.
1.3.2	Use augmented, virtual reality or extended reality, IoT, AI technologies and big data to develop advanced decision support systems for management of tourism businesses and policy makers.
1.4	Education, Culture and Creative Industries
1.4.1	Develop innovative solutions to facilitate the integration of emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, Virtual/Augmented Reality, smart objects, wearables, data analytics, artificial intelligence in next generation media.
1.4.2	Develop innovative solutions to facilitate the integration of emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, Virtual/Augmented Reality, smart objects, wearables, data analytics, artificial intelligence in the promotion of cultural content.

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1.4.3	Develop innovative solutions to facilitate the integration of emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, Virtual/Augmented Reality, smart objects, wearables, data analytics, artificial intelligence in gaming for the creation of new experiences.
1.4.4	Develop innovative solutions to facilitate the integration of emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, Virtual/Augmented Reality, smart objects, wearables, data analytics, artificial intelligence in education activities.
1.5	Smart City Applications
1.5.1	Development of innovative solutions based on software, IoT, big data analytics, AI and blockchain technologies to addresses social and economic needs in an urban environment in areas such as mobility, energy saving, safety, community, the 15-minutes city, citizens participation etc. Funding of this area explores synergies with the participation in the “Driving Urban Transitions” (DUT) European Partnership, which offers the opportunity to research teams to tap on high-quality research results and practices and apply them to the Cypriot urban environment.
1.6	Advanced Manufacturing and Processing
1.6.1	Develop innovative approaches and methods for smart manufacturing and processing by incorporating approaches of real time big data processing, IoT and AI, decision support and expert systems, neural networks etc.
1.6.2	Scaling down advanced manufacturing technologies to meet the needs and size of SME, e.g. in the food sector.
1.7	Acceleration of testing and demonstration applications on smart cities, cyber-physical security or agritech
1.7.1	Support testbed infrastructures and specific test cases that could include big data sandboxes, data analysis and AI testbeds, IoT testbeds, immersive and virtual technologies testbed, Integration testbeds for applications on smart cities, cyber-physical security or agritech.
2	Advanced materials
2.1	Novel, safe, environmentally friendly, and commercially viable methods of recycling a wide range of composite materials and reuse of secondary raw materials
2.2	Methods of processing of nano and composite materials
2.3	Innovative materials with improved characteristics for industrial, construction, energy and health applications
2.4	Use of nanomaterials for articles and components for earth observation and the aviation and space industry
2.5	Innovative materials for environmentally friendly buildings and buildings with better performance under stress (earthquakes, extreme environmental conditions)
Ecosystems	
3	Agrifood
3.1	Diversify and improve the competitiveness of the agrifood ecosystem by supporting the development of new products and services for the farming sector, increase the quality and nutritious value of local produce and food products and diversify the local production by developing new products based on indigenous super foods
3.1.1	<p>Develop products and services for farming, based on digital and data technologies. The local market for digital applications in farming is small due to the sector's low absorptive capacity, the small size of the farms, and the fragmentation of the cultivated land. However, despite its small size, the Cypriot market offers opportunities to local producers to test and improve their products before entering the vast and growing international market.</p> <p>The research will focus on developing applications integrating earth observation technologies, big data, IoT, sensors, IA and blockchain technologies for developing applications and services (TRL 5 to 8):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for monitoring, protection and management of farms and aquafarms • for farm-to-fork applications such as tracing production origin and labelling of products, development of innovative, cost-effective and resource-efficient blockchain-based approaches to increase the traceability of agricultural products

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for smart irrigation systems, precision agriculture and water management applications
3.1.2	Improve the performance of farming and aqua farming equipment and tools.
3.1.3	Increase the efficiency of plants and livestock, improve the nutritional characteristics of agricultural, livestock and aquaculture produce, develop innovative products based on Cypriot superfoods and endemic pharmaceutical plants.
3.1.4	Research to provide scientific evidence for the support of applications for Protected Designation of Origin, Geographical Indication.
3.1.5	Develop circular economy applications and methods aiming at the re-use of agricultural, livestock, aquaculture and food processing wastes as well as wastes from the cultivation.
3.1.6	Develop methods for improving the quality and safety of food from farm-to-fork.
3.2	Support activities following the principles of agroecology aiming at increasing the resilience and sustainability of the farming system and reducing its environmental footprint
3.2.1	The participation of Cyprus in the “Accelerating farming systems transition: agroecology living labs and research infrastructures” (AGROECOLOGY) European Partnership offers Cypriot researchers, farmers and professionals, opportunities to tap on high-quality research results and practices and apply them to the Cypriot farming sector. Further funding could bring results from Cypriot participations to higher TRL levels (7-9) or apply the methods and practices to other areas of the farming system (TRL5-6).
3.2.2	Development of farming methods for local agricultural products, livestock and aquaculture that respect the natural cycles and the ecology of trophic chains and eliminate the needs of pesticides and antibiotics.
3.2.3	Quantification of the effects of agriculture, livestock and aquaculture on the environment and natural resources of Cyprus and develop mitigation methods.
3.3	Mitigate the climate change impact on the agrifood ecosystem
3.3.1	Effects of climate change on the agrifood ecosystem and quantification of impacts on resource availability for sufficient production, food quality and safety.
3.3.2	Develop mitigation strategies.
4	Maritime and Shipping Ecosystems
4.1	Digital technologies and Earth Observation for monitoring and decision making
4.1.1	Development of maritime informatics applications for ship optimisation such as digital applications for diagnosis and control of systems, IoT applications for data collection, big data analytics for optimisation of ships operation, energy saving and reduction of emissions, earth observation and satellite communications for monitoring ships and optimising decisions, and fully autonomous operations in open sea.
4.1.2	Cybersecurity applications for ships and fleet management.
4.2	Decarbonisation of ships
4.2.1	Development of decarbonisation of ships services such as optimisation of energy sources.
4.3	Equipment and tools for applications in shipping
4.3.1	Design and development of prototypes of small zero-emission vessels, unmanned vessels, drone and robots for ships inspections and repairs.
4.3.2	Advanced materials that improve the performance of vessels.
5	Renewable energy
5.1	Renewable energy production technologies
5.1.1	Green hydrogen, including, among other energy storage applications, use of renewable energy sources for hydrogen production, demonstration projects and testbeds with international participation.
5.1.2	Small-scale wind energy systems for specific applications, e.g., houses, industry, wind farms assessment tools.

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5.1.3	Development of innovative solar heating and cooling technologies for the production of electricity, improvement of the performance of solar heating and cooling systems, use of thermal and cooling systems for energy storage.
5.1.4	Integration of PVs in the structures of buildings, greenhouses, vehicles or other structures for improving the design and performance.
5.2	Digital management and monitoring systems for the production and distribution of energy
5.2.1	Smart energy systems and smart grids, including innovative ways of optimising energy supply and demand based on sensors, software, and AI algorithms.
5.2.2	Energy monitoring, intelligent control and optimisation of small PV systems, monitoring of PV systems for failure, maintenance and production forecasting.
5.3	Energy efficiency in urban environments
5.3.1	Smart technologies for buildings, including energy management and optimisation of energy use, energy production from different RES and energy storage.
5.3.2	Innovations for energy efficiency in existing urban structures and exploitation of synergies with the “Driving Urban Transitions” (DUT) European Partnership.
Emerging Ecosystems	
6	Space Ecosystem
6.1	Exploitation and use of data generated from space-based infrastructures for downstream applications
6.1.1	Use earth observation and remote sensing technologies for monitoring and protection of agriculture production and integrate earth observation in smart applications in agriculture (see also the Agrifood area of support).
6.1.2	Use earth observation and remote sensing technologies in the shipping sector for ship monitoring and management services and application (see also the Maritime and Shipping area of support).
6.1.3	Develop applications and services for monitoring soil subsidence and instability with applications to the conditions of buildings and cultural monuments.
6.1.4	Monitoring of climate change and environmental conditions to prevent environmental disasters and reduce risk with application in various areas.
6.1.5	Use satellite earth observation and advanced remote sensing technologies for mapping and monitoring archaeological monuments and cultural heritage to identify the effects of climate change, physical events, and human pressures to address major risks.
6.2	Advanced materials for structures and equipment used in earth observation facilities and spacecrafts
6.3	Exploitation of participation in ESA programmes for bringing results closer to the market
6.3.1	Support Cypriot participation in ESA programmes to bring results to higher TRL levels (7-9) or apply the methods and practices to other application areas (TRL5-6).
Enablers	
7	Health
7.1	Clinical and genetic investigation and treatment of diseases including molecular and medical genetics (Medical Translational Research), diagnosis – prevention / risk factors / treatment and personalised medicine
7.1.1	Molecular and Medical Genetics (Medical Translational Research). Areas of research include: Research on the human genome of the Cypriot population and utilisation in the treatment of diseases, complete approach for the understanding and cure of mechanisms involved in diseases- gene therapy, advanced DNA and protein sequence, structure and modelling technologies, ability to comprehend the complicated biological mechanisms that lead to pathology, playing an important role in supporting the process of discovery of new medicinal and treatment targets.
7.1.2	Diagnosis - Prevention / Risk Factors / Treatment. Areas of research include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prevention / Treatment (diagnosis, cure) - Causes of the appearance of diseases in the Cypriot population, understanding quality/quantity connections between diet and phenotype/genotype, gene-expression and

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	<p>risk factors, exposure to environmental factors, psychological disorders, treatment of diseases and increase of productivity, quality, safety and effectiveness of intervention and early detection programmes, modern mapping methods</p> <p>b) One health approaches include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the understanding of risk factors for disease spill-over from wildlife to domestic animals and humans to prevent and manage disease outbreaks • strengthening monitoring, surveillance, and reporting systems at the regional, national and local levels to prevent and detect animal and zoonotic disease emergence and control disease spread
7.1.3	Personalised medicine using genetic or other biomarker information to provide personalised treatment to patients.
7.2	Digital health including AI, big data, machine learning, IoT and blockchain technologies for improving health services, use of health data and decision making
7.2.1	Use AI and big data, IoT, innovative diagnostic imaging approaches, VR/AR, HPC and blockchain technologies to develop products and services for health management, telemedicine, tele-examination, simulations and digitally assisted independent living.
7.2.2	Use big data analytics, AI, IoT and blockchain technologies for collecting, managing, versioning and processing medical data for priority diseases.
7.2.3	Development of machine learning algorithms and advanced decision support systems for the management of health services and decision making.
7.3	Innovative products in the areas of diagnosis, specialised pharmaceuticals, cosmeceuticals and nutraceuticals, medical equipment and devices
7.3.1	Molecular diagnosis and development of specialised pharmaceuticals.
7.3.2	Development of innovative materials, cosmeceuticals και nutraceuticals.
7.3.3	Development of medical equipment and devices.
7.4	Promoting public health and quality of life
7.4.1	Health economics, health management, public health and policy.
7.4.2	Disease prevention, infectious diseases control, environmental health.
7.4.3	Healthy and active ageing, nutrition and climate change- biomonitoring and Risk Assessment.
8	Environment
8.1	Adjustment to climate change
8.1.1	Monitoring of climate change and environmental conditions for prevention of environmental disasters and reduction of risk with application in various areas, e.g. agrifood, cultural heritage, tourism or construction.
8.1.2	Effects of climate change on economic activities and the society.
8.2	Monitoring and protection of the environment from economic and human activities
8.2.1	Impact of economic activities on the environment with priority on the sectors of agriculture, livestock, aquaculture, food industry (see also the Agrifood area of support), tourism and construction. Examples of activities to consider, among others, are waste and consumption of natural resources.
8.2.2	Environmental risk and methods to mitigate the impact on the environment of the extraction of hydrocarbons.
8.2.3	Indoor environmental monitoring, monitoring and improvement of air quality in the urban environment and especially in buildings.
8.3	Greening of industry and economic activities
8.3.1	Innovative approaches to adopt circular economy practices by companies (Projects of TRL 5 to 8 will be supported).

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8.3.2	Development of green production methods and products that reduce consumption of energy, raw materials and natural resources and waste (Projects of TRL 5 to 8 will be supported).
8.4	Management of natural resources and protection of biodiversity
8.4.1	Monitoring and management of water and waste e.g. in critical infrastructures. Use of digital tools and development of digital applications.
8.4.2	Protection of the marine environment and biodiversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autonomous Multi-Agent Systems for real-time sea monitoring• Early detection and prevention of sea pollution• Human interactions with oceans and their effects on marine and coastal ecosystems• Models to better understand coastal and marine processes and stresses and improve decision making• Develop technologies and methods to monitor physical conditions at the seabed and the parameters that affect the physical condition of aquatic animals

1. “DUAL USE TECHNOLOGIES” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”)

The "Dual Use Technologies" Programme, which will be announced in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, aims to promote research and development of dual-use technologies for civilian applications, i.e. for non-military, commercial and social purposes. Funded projects are expected to promote cooperation between stakeholders of the R&I ecosystem (enterprises and research organisations) in order to jointly design activities for the development of new technologies and solutions in the fields of dual-use technologies.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of €2.720.000 is expected to be announced in September 2022.

2. “PROOF OF CONCEPT FOR TECHNOLOGY / KNOWHOW APPLICATIONS” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The “Proof of Concept for Technology/Knowhow Applications” Programme aims at the preliminary investigation of possible industrial applications of a technology/knowhow. Through this Programme it is expected that enterprises will have the opportunity to verify the industrial application potential of a technology/knowhow before being involved in a broader scale technological development and innovation research project.

The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) are expected to be announced in July 2022 and August 2023 (with a budget of €700.000 and €500.000, respectively).

3. “EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The «European Partnerships» Programme offers the opportunity to local organisations to participate in transnational research and innovation projects in sectors and thematic areas of high importance for Cyprus, which are implemented in the frame of Joint Programmes of European Partnerships under the EU “Horizon Europe” Programme, in which the country participates. Furthermore, the Programme promotes the extroversion of local enterprises and research organisations, and their collaboration and networking with foreign organisations through their participation in the transnational projects.

During the May 2022 - December 2024 period, Calls for Proposals will be announced for the following European Partnerships:

1. Key Digital Technologies (KDT)
2. Innovative SMEs (EUROSTARS-3)
3. Clean Energy Transition (CETP)
4. Driving Urban Transitions to a Sustainable Future (DUT)
5. Sustainable Blue Economy (SBEP)
6. Accelerating Farming Systems Transition (AGROECOLOGY)

The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and of each European Partnership as well as rules for participation) with a total budget of €9.000.000 are expected to be announced within the said period, according to the planning of the relevant European Partnerships (for some Partnerships more than one Call for Proposals will be announced).

4. “RESEARCH IN ENTERPRISES” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”)

The “Research in Enterprises” Programme aims at (a) enhancing the competitiveness of Cypriot enterprises thus contributing in the country’s economic growth, through the development of new products / services / production methods of high added value, or significantly enhanced products / services / production methods which will be commercially used, and (b) intensifying the participation of Cypriot enterprises in research activities resulting in raising the contribution of the private sector in the country’s RTDI (Research, Technological Development and Innovation) investments.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a total budget of €6.000.000 are expected to be announced in **February 2023**.*

*In addition, in **November 2023** a special Call for Proposals is expected to be announced (with full Programme description and rules for participation) to promote the targets of the REPowerEU Initiative with a budget of €4.000.000.*

5. “BILATERAL COLLABORATIONS” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The “Bilateral Collaborations” Programme aims at the development of cooperation and the networking of organisations in Cyprus with entities from another specific collaboration country, through the implementation of joint research projects.

The starting point of the “Bilateral Collaborations” Programme are Bilateral Agreements or Cooperation Protocols co-signed by the Government of Cyprus and the Government of another country. One of their main provisions is usually the announcement of a Joint Programme for Cooperation in Research and Innovation, under which stakeholders from both countries are

invited to submit proposals for the implementation of joint projects, in selected thematic areas that reflect the common interests of the two parties.

The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and of each Bilateral Collaboration as well as rules for participation) with a total budget of €2.900.000 are expected to be announced within the said period, following a consultation between RIF and the competent agency in the collaboration country.

6. “RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The "Research Infrastructures" Programme aims to create new or upgrade existing research infrastructures (of small or bigger scale) that will be used for the implementation of research projects by the Consortium. The Consortium should document the need to create a new or upgrade an existing infrastructure in Cyprus, as well as the possibility for providing access for extensive use by the research and business community of the country.

The Programme will cover the following five thematic priorities.

- Health
- Environment (incl. Renewable Energy Sources and advanced materials).
- Shipping – Marine Transportation
- Agriculture – Food
- Information and Communication Technologies (incl. space technologies)

The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a total budget of €17.500.000 are planned to be announced in December 2022.

7. “EUROPEAN INITIATIVES - NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT” PROGRAMME

(National Funding)

The “European Initiatives - National Development” Programme offers the opportunity to implement research projects in cutting-edge fields of the priority sectors, in order to improve the quality of life and competitiveness of Cyprus’ economy. At the same time, it promotes extroversion, collaboration and networking of Cypriot research organisations and enterprises with organisations from other countries through their participation in research projects implemented in the frame of joint pan-European programming initiatives, in which Cyprus participates.

During this period, the Programme will cover the participation of Cypriot organisations in a Call for Proposals of the PRIMA initiative, implemented under Article 185 of the EU Treaty.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of €400.000 each are planned to be announced in **January 2023 and March 2024 respectively.***

8. “COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT – CO-DEVELOP” PROGRAMME

*(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of **Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”**) and Co-funded by the **Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”**)*

The "CO-DEVELOP" Programme aims to enhance the effective collaboration between enterprises and the research community, with the aim of jointly identifying challenges and jointly designing and implementing research and development projects to develop new cost-effective solutions to address these challenges. In the context of effective collaboration, the sharing of resources and infrastructure and the mobility of staff are expected, among other things, in order to enable the technology transfer and the exchange of knowledge. The ultimate objective is bridging the gap between academia and industry and the utilization of the existing know-how to meet specific needs and challenges, thus contributing to the strengthening of the competitiveness of the economy and the improvement of the quality of life in Cyprus.

*The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation is expected to be announced in **August 2023 and July 2024** (with budget of **€7.300.000 and €6.000.000** respectively).*

*In addition, a special Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) to promote the objectives of the REPowerEU initiative, with a budget of **€6,000,000**, is expected to be announced in **December 2023.***

9. “SPACE TECHNOLOGIES” PROGRAMME

*(Co-funded by the **Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”**)*

The "Space Technologies" Programme, which will be announced in cooperation with the Electronic Communications Department (ECD) of the Deputy Ministry for Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, aims to promote the cooperation within the stakeholders of the local Research and Innovation Ecosystem, for the implementation of joint activities for the development of new technologies and solutions in the Space area, and more specifically in the relevant focus areas of the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the country.

*The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation is expected to be announced with budget **€3.000.000** is expected to be announced in **June 2024.***

10. “COMMERCIAL PROOF OF CONCEPT FOR TECHNOLOGICAL / KNOW-HOW APPLICATIONS” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus' Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”)

The "Commercial Proof of Concept for Technological / Know-how Applications" aims at the commercial and technical/pilot preliminary investigation of possible industrial applications of a technology/knowhow, which will address the challenges defined in the Call and contribute to the targets of REPowerEU.

*The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with budget **€1.607.000** is expected to be announced in **June 2024**.*

PILLAR II: SUSTAINABLE RTDI SYSTEM

Pillar II “Sustainable RTDI System”, aims at ensuring the sustainability and dynamics of the RTDI System. In contrast to Pillar I which deals with the implementation of specific targeted Programmes in the Priority Sectors, Programmes of Pillar II aim at addressing the needs of the RTDI System and enhancing its prospects. The Programmes focus around “excellence”, following a bottom-up approach meaning that participants may implement projects in the scientific or technological field of their choice.

The objectives of Pillar II are reached through the following Sections which include specific Programmes for the support of the RTDI System in terms of activities and human resources and in a way that contributes to the restructuring and transformation of Cyprus’ economy and also towards addressing social challenges:

- “Excellence” Section: It includes Programmes that aim at the promotion of scientific, technological and industrial excellence for the development of pioneering research concepts in cutting-edge fields, and the development of effective, internationally competitive solutions and products.
- “Young researchers, New Ideas, New opportunities” Section: It includes Programmes targeting the strengthening and mobility of human resources and creation of new jobs for researchers in enterprises and research organisations. It also aims to optimise the use of synergies between the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes and the Horizon 2020 Programme of the EC for the implementation of frontier research and innovation projects. It also supports new concepts for addressing social challenges.

1. “HORIZON EUROPE – 2nd OPPORTUNITY EIC” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”)

The “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity EIC” Programme aims to provide a second opportunity to enterprises that have submitted proposals in the frame of the EIC Accelerator Programme of the EUs’ “Horizon Europe” Programme, which were either awarded a Seal of Excellence or were rejected in the final evaluation stage (face-to-face interviews) of the Programme, in order to improve their proposals and reapply for EU funding through the Programme. More specifically, the Programme aims to support beneficiaries to address weaknesses/shortcomings of the original proposals submitted to the EIC Accelerator and to improve the technological and commercial readiness of the innovative idea.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of €1.500.000 is expected to be announced in **March 2023** and **May 2024**.*

2. “HORIZON EUROPE – 2nd OPPORTUNITY” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027” for the “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity - MSCA” Call and using national funding for the “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity - ERC” Call)

The “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity” Programme offers a second opportunity to institutions and natural persons (researchers) who:

- submitted Proposals under the “Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA)” - PostDoctoral Fellowships (PF) of the EU’s “Horizon Europe” Framework Programme, which secured quality certification (Seal of Excellence), but did not secure funding, or
- attempted to obtain a grant under the “ERC Starting Grant”, “ERC Consolidator Grant” and “ERC Advanced Grant” funding instruments of the European Research Council (ERC), and their proposals were deemed eligible for funding but did not manage to secure a grant due to budget exhaustion or received a final score of B at the 2nd stage of evaluation (step 2).

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a total budget of €3.100.000 are expected to be announced in **November 2022**.*

3. “PHD IN INDUSTRY” PROGRAMME

(National Funding)

The “PhD in Industry” Programme concerns the funding of a research project that is implemented by a researcher employed in an enterprise in Cyprus while registered as a PhD student at a University in Cyprus. The Programme aims to promote effective collaboration between enterprises and the research/academic community since it is based on the collaboration of

researchers, universities and industry, and combines the scientific research and cognitive specialization of researchers with the practical application of knowledge in industry.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) are expected to be announced in **December 2022, November 2023 and November 2024** (with a budget of **€1.000.000, €1.750.000 and €1.000.000** respectively).*

4. “DISRUPT” PROGRAMME

*(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of **Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”**)*

The «DISRUPT» Programme aims to connect enterprises which develop cutting-edge innovations with the potential to create new or disrupt existing markets, with Venture Capitals who will support the further development and scale-up of these enterprises in international markets. Through the Programme, RIF’s funding – grant will be combined with the VC investment, with the aim to support the successful penetration of beneficiaries in international markets, and as result to enhance the competitiveness and resilience of the Cypriot economy.

*The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of **€10.000.000** is expected to be announced in **January 2023**.*

*An additional Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of **€3.000.000** from **national funding** is expected to be announced in **December 2023**.*

5. “CREATION AND INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF STARTUPS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION – PRE-SEED” PROGRAMME

*(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of **Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”**) and **Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”**)*

The «Creation and Initial Development of STARTUPS with International Orientation (PRE-SEED)» Programme aims to support the creation and initial development of innovative STARTUPS which intend to develop innovative products and services with global market penetration prospects. The enterprises, which are still in the idea stage and their product or service is not yet fully developed, may utilize funding to support their initial operations and to proceed with the development of the idea and an initial product / service, and with the first efforts towards the commercialization of the product / service.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of **€1.200.000** each are expected to be announced in **August 2023** and **June 2024**.*

6. “POST-DOC” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The “POSTDOC” Programme aims to integrate young, post-doctoral scientists in the Cypriot RTDI System, to carry out high level research projects, seeking to involve them in novel research activities, knowledge transfer and to create sustainable, highly specialised job positions for the employment of young scientists.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of €2.500.000 is expected to be announced in April 2024.

7. “EXCELLENCE HUBS” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The “Excellence Hubs” Programme aims to promote scientific excellence, which is a fundamental part for the sustainable development of the Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) System, through the funding of pioneering research projects in cutting-edge fields. Additionally, the Programme aims to contribute towards creating growth prospects for the local economy and to tackle social and other contemporary challenges.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of €12.000.000 is expected to be announced in April 2024.

8. “INNOVATE” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”) and Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The «Development and Promotion of Internationally Competitive Innovative Products and Services by Existing Enterprises (INNOVATE)» Programme aims to support existing enterprises from all activity sectors, that will invest in research and innovation, for the development of competitive innovative products or services with quick global market penetration prospects.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of €4.000.000 is expected to be announced in June 2024.

PILLAR III: TRANSFORMATION OF RTDI SYSTEM

Pillar III “Transformation of RTDI System”, contrary to the first two Pillars, does not concern the implementation of RTDI Projects, but the application of policy measures for supporting and upgrading the complete RTDI System, the optimisation of its results exploitation, the promotion of research and innovation activities, and generally overcoming the main challenges of the System.

The objectives of Pillar III are achieved through the following sections, which include specific Programmes that supplement the research and innovation development actions:

- “Support Mechanisms” Section: It includes Programmes aiming to the involvement of the SMEs in innovative activities, the enhancement of research result exploitation mechanisms, the management of intellectual property rights, the technology transfer, the enhancement of extroversion of Cypriot organisations, and the creation of collaborations.
- “Alternative Forms of Funding” Section: It includes Programmes aiming at the commercial exploitation of research results by research organisations and Enterprises, and the enrichment of the funding instruments and mechanisms by utilising European initiatives and attracting foreign investments.
- “Culture” Section: It includes Programmes aiming to the cultivation of research and innovation culture for the three levels of the educational system, the enterprises, the public sector, and the general public.

1. “INNOVATION VOUCHERS” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”)

The “Innovation Vouchers” Programme aims to encourage Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to engage in research and innovation activities and to strengthen cooperation between enterprises and knowledge intensive organizations. SMEs will be supported to develop innovative solutions in order to address challenges or problems they face, through the transfer of know-how from knowledge intensive organizations and access to laboratory infrastructures.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) are expected to be announced in **July 2022, October 2022 and May 2024** (with a total budget of **€605.000**).*

2. “CLASSIFIED LABS – DUAL USE TECHNOLOGIES” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”)

The “Classified Labs – Dual Use Technologies” Programme, which will be announced in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, aims at the creation of new or upgrade of existing classified labs, which can be used for research and development activities in the field of dual-use technologies for civilian applications, i.e. for non-military, commercial and social purposes.

*The relevant Call for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) with a budget of **€195.000** is expected to be announced in **September 2022**.*

3. “NURTURING AN RTDI CULTURE” PROGRAMME

(National Funding)

The “Nurturing an RTDI Culture” Programme aims to cultivate a research and innovation culture and to consolidate by society the importance of research, technological development and innovation (RTDI). In order to achieve its objectives, the Programme has previously covered activities such as Competitions, Awards, Exhibitions, Workshops and other Events.

During this period the Programme will cover the Research Awards 2023 and 2024.

*The relevant Calls for Proposals (with full Programme description and rules for participation) are expected to be announced in **May 2023 and April 2024**, respectively.*

4. “BRIDGE2HORIZON” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The “BRIDGE2HORIZON” Programme provides funding for R&I projects aiming to enhance the competencies of Cypriot R&I entities in specific thematic areas and domains of the Smart Specialization Strategy of Cyprus which are aligned with the thematic priorities and challenges that the EU seeks to address in the context of upcoming Work Programmes of the Horizon Europe Programme for Research and Innovation. In addition, the Programme also aims to increase the number of Cypriot entities coordinating collaborative projects and leading pan-European Consortia in proposals submitted in the Horizon Europe Programme.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with a full description of the Programme and conditions of participation) with a budget of €6.000.000 is expected to be announced in August 2023.

5. “VISION ERC” PROGRAMME

(Co-funded by the Cohesion Policy Programme “THALIA 2021-2027”)

The “VISION ERC” Programme aims to encourage more top young and experienced researchers to participate in the European Research Council's (ERC) Call for Proposals under Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2021-2027. Funded projects should relate to research activities that will form the basis of the coordinator's proposal to the European Research Council (ERC).

The relevant Call for Proposals (with a full description of the Programme and conditions of participation) with a budget of €1.000.000 is expected to be announced in April 2024.

6. “ERC VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP” PROGRAMME

(National Funding)

The “ERC Visiting Research Fellowship” Programme aims to encourage more excellent young and advanced researchers to apply for the European Research Council (ERC) Calls for Proposals of the “Horizon Europe” Programme by giving them the opportunity to travel abroad to an ERC Grantee, with the aim of enhancing his/her research profile and knowledge exchange in an international environment.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with a full description of the Programme and conditions of participation) with a budget of €200.000 is expected to be announced in April 2024.

7. “SUPPORTING STRUCTURES” PROGRAMME

(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of Cyprus' Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - "Cyprus_tomorrow")

The “Strengthening Innovation Support Structures” Programme, aims to support local Innovation Support Structures to implement structured cycles of supporting programs addressed to startups. Startups are considered companies with a technological orientation and potential for high growth, which are established with the aim of developing a product/service that the founders of the company seek to make available to the market. More specifically, it aims to «direct» more mature startups, which have prospects for shorter market penetration, to local Innovation Support Structures, from which they will receive added value services that will enhance their chances of market penetration.

The relevant Call for Proposals (with a full description of the Programme and conditions of participation) with a budget of €300.000 is expected to be announced in April 2024.

8. “ENTERPRISES CAPACITY BUILDING IN NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT” PROGRAMME

*(Funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument in the frame of **Cyprus’ Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - “Cyprus_tomorrow”**)*

The “Enterprises Capacity Building in New Product Development” Programme aims to support companies with 30 or more employees, to employ specialised staff in New Product Development and to engage in research and development activities aiming at the development of new products and services.

*The relevant Call for Proposals (with a full description of the Programme and conditions of participation) with a budget of **€930.000** is expected to be announced in **May 2024**.*

SECTION III – PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

The general regulations and procedures for participation **apply to all RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes**, unless otherwise specified in the description of the Programmes, in the relevant Calls for Proposals announced.

1. BENEFICIARIES

1.1. PARTICIPATION IN THE RESTART 2016-2020 PROGRAMMES

Eligibility

Eligible for participation in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes are organisations such as research organisations, higher and tertiary education institutions, scientific and professional associations, enterprises, associations of enterprises, non-governmental organisations, public services, public benefit organisations as well as natural persons, such as academics, scientists, researchers, technicians, students and pupils.

Participation of organisations and natural persons engaged in an economic activity in a proposal shall be deemed valid, if they are legally established and are active or will be established and active (it only concerns start-ups for participation in Business Innovation Programmes) in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Organisations and natural persons whose registered address is in the European Union or in another State recognised by the Republic of Cyprus, shall participate under the terms and conditions stipulated in the Work Programme and in the individual Programme Calls for Proposals.

The activity of the entities is documented by the existence of facilities and other equipment in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus and, indicatively and not restrictively, by audited financial statements, the tax return of the entity in the Republic of Cyprus, etc. For start-ups (participation in Business Innovation Programmes) the activity must be confirmed during the implementation of the project, with the existence of facilities and other equipment in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. These conditions should be met to the satisfaction of RIF and without prejudice to the Foundation to request further data and information from the institutions.

The specific restrictions and conditions for participation pertaining to the eligibility for participation of different types of organisations and individuals are specified in the Programme Description in Section II of the present Work Programme and the Calls for Proposals.

Participation Restrictions

The Research and Innovation Foundation's (RIF) intention is to create the conditions for free and unimpeded participation of the interested parties in the proposals of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes. The restrictions described below, however, were deemed necessary to ensure the rational and efficient Programme implementation.

More specifically, the restrictions pertaining to participation in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, can be summarised as follows:

- Each person acting as Project Coordinator may submit to each Call for Proposals a maximum of two (2) proposals unless otherwise stated in the Programme Description, as described in Section II of the present Work Programme or in the Call for Proposals.
- Participation is not permitted to:
 - (a) Persons employed by the RIF or members of the Foundation’s Board of Directors.
 - (b) Organisations and individuals with respect to which a ruling has been issued by the EU excluding them from the procedure of concluding contracts with the EU.
 - (c) Organisations for which there is an outstanding aid recovery order following a prior ruling of the European Commission, declaring such aid to be illegal and incompatible with the Common Market.
 - (d) Organisations and individuals whom the RIF¹⁰ Board of Directors has decided to exclude from the Foundation’s Programmes, for the period of time that the exclusion applies to.
 - (e) Organisations and individuals convicted by a Cyprus and/or foreign court and/or any Cyprus and/or foreign supervisory and/or regulatory authority for an offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude and/or participation in a criminal organisation and/or an offence relevant to their professional conduct.
 - (f) Organisations against whom an outstanding petition and/or an order of liquidation has been issued.
 - (g) Organisations for which there is an outstanding application to appoint an examiner and/or an order has been issued to appoint an examiner pursuant to Law 62(I)/2015.
 - (h) Undertakings in difficulty as determined in Article 2 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 on State aid. Undertakings in difficulties may participate only as Partner Organisations with own funding. The following Programmes are exempted: (a) “Innovation Vouchers”, (b) “Participation in International Brokerage Events”, (c) “Encouragement of Project Coordination in HORIZON 2020”, and (d) “Complementary Funding”, where participation of undertakings in difficulty is permitted, funded with a lump sum in the form of de minimis aid.

Unless the Foundation’s Board of Directors have decided otherwise, any organisation showing outstanding financial obligations towards the RIF in the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes or previous RIF Frameworks of Programmes, may participate on condition that they have reached an agreement in writing with the Foundation regarding the settlement of such outstanding financial obligations.

Besides the aforementioned general participation restrictions, more specific restrictions defined in the Programme Description, in Section II of the present Work Programme and/or the individual Calls for Proposals may apply in relation to proposal submission or the participation of organisations and individuals in a proposal. The specific restrictions shall not apply for Calls for Proposals of other Programmes or even for subsequent Calls for the same Programme, if not expressly referred to them.

¹⁰ The appropriate body for examination and implementation of any sanctions is the Specific Issues Examination Committee of the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

1.2. ORGANISATION TYPES

The organisations eligible for participation in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes are classified into one of the types described below.

The Research and Innovation Foundation will examine the legal standing of the organisations during the Legal Status Check, which, as a rule, shall be carried out prior to signing of Contracts.

If, during its participation in a project, an organisation that has been classified in a specific Organisation Type on the basis of the Legal Status Check, is found not to meet any of the conditions classifying it as such, then the RIF reserves the right to change such Classification to another one. Classification to another Organisation Type may entail modifications in the organisation's rights or the conditions for participation thereof in the project, pursuant to the regulations and conditions for participation in the present Work Programme.

A. Research Organisations

For the purposes of the present Work Programme, a Research Organisation is a university or research institute irrespective of its legal status (public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently¹¹ conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development and the extended, non-exclusive dissemination of said activities' results without discrimination, through teaching, publishing or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also pursues economic activities the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, in the quality of, for example, shareholders or members, may not enjoy preferential access to the results generated by it.

"Economic" and "non-economic activities" are defined in the Framework for State aid for research, development and innovation (2022/C 414/01 – has replaced 2014/C 198/01).

Such organisations are required to submit to the RIF, on an annual basis, a certificate from an independent external certified auditor confirming that it keeps separate accounts for its "economic" and "non-economic activities" and that it meets the relevant conditions for their separation, as defined in the state aid rules for research, development and innovation (2022/C 414/01).

In the cases where an Internal Audit Department / Sector / Unit operates within the organisation, the submission of a relevant certificate issued by the organisation's Internal Audit Department / Sector / Unit confirming that the organisation keeps separate accounts for its "economic" and "non-economic activities" and that it meets the relevant conditions for its separation, as defined in the state aid rules for research, development and innovation (2022/C 414/01), will be acceptable.

¹¹ Independent Research is the research for further knowledge and better understanding, including collaborative research and development. It should be explained that the provision of research and development services and the research and development conducted by enterprises is not considered to be independent research and development.

B. Enterprises¹²

This type generally covers private sector undertakings active in any sector of the economy, as follows:

B.1. Small Enterprise¹³:

It is an enterprise which employs fewer than fifty (50) employees and has an annual turnover or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding ten (10) million Euros. Start-ups are also included in this category.

It is noted that a Start-up is any small enterprise not listed in the stock exchange up to five years after its registration that fulfils the following cumulative conditions: (a) has not taken over the activity of another enterprise, unless the turnover of the overtaken activity accounts for less than 10 % of the turnover of the eligible undertaking in the financial year preceding the take-over, (b) has still not distributed profits, and (c) has not acquired another undertaking or has not been formed through a merger, unless the turnover of the acquired undertaking accounts for less than 10 % of the turnover of the eligible undertaking in the financial year preceding the acquisition or the turnover of the undertaking formed through a merger is less than 10% higher than the combined turnover that the merging undertakings had in the financial year preceding the merger..

For eligible enterprises not subject to registration, the five-year period may be deemed to start from the time that the enterprise either starts its financial activity or becomes liable to pay tax for its financial activity. By way of derogation from the above conditions and particularly point (c) enterprises formed through a merger between undertakings eligible for aid under Article 22 of the Regulation (EU) 651/2014 shall also be considered eligible undertakings up to five years from the date of registration of the oldest enterprise participating in the merger. Unless otherwise stipulated in the Programme, in the case of start-ups, the company registration must pre-date the proposal.

Aid for Start-ups should meet the provisions of Commission Regulation (EC) 651/2014 Article 22 on State Aid (see amended EC GBER Regulation)¹⁴.

In addition, the following are noted:

- According to Article 22 (3) (c) of the Regulation, aid to be provided to Start-ups under the RESTART 2016-2020 Framework Programme will take the form of "grants, including equity or quasi-equity investments, and interest rate reductions and guarantee premium reductions up to EUR 0.5 million gross grant equivalent".

¹² The classification of enterprises (cat. B.1, B.2, B.3) will be re-examined at the time of drawing up of the contracts prior to the final decision on funding.

¹³ The full definition of "Small and Medium-sized Enterprises" (SME) is included in Annex III of this Tender and refers to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003, concerning the definition of very small, small and medium-sized enterprises, EU L 124 of 20.5.2003, p. 36. The RPF shall adopt each EU Regulation that replaces the applicable Regulation.

¹⁴ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2023.167.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2023%3A167%3ATOC

- According to Article 22 (5) of the Regulation, 'For small and innovative enterprises, the maximum amounts set out in paragraph 3 may be doubled' (for the definition of the innovative enterprises see the revised GBER Regulation - Article 2 (80)).

B.2. Medium-sized Enterprise:

It is an enterprise which employs fifty (50) to up to two hundred forty-nine (249) employees and has an annual turnover of up to fifty (50) million Euro or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding forty-three (43) million Euro.

B.3. Large Enterprise:

It is an enterprise which employs two hundred fifty (250) or more employees and/or has an annual turnover exceeding fifty (50) million Euro or an annual balance sheet total exceeding forty-three (43) million Euro.

Please note that the participation of a Large Enterprise in a RESTART 2016-2020 Programme project is possible only after prior proof through the proposal of the incentive effect that the funding will have for a Large Enterprise. To this end, one of the following criteria must be met:

- increase of the project size: increase of the total project cost (without reducing the Large Enterprise's expenses relative to the case of non-funding); increase in the number of persons employed in research, development and innovation,
- expansion of scope: increase in the number of expected project results; increase in the expectations from the project, proven by the larger number of participating partners, the higher possibility of success of scientific or technological break-through or the higher risk of failure (in particular in conjunction with the long-term character of the project and the uncertainty of its results),
- increase of speed: project implementation requires less time compared to the implementation time required for the implementation of the same project without aid, and
- increase in the total amount spent: increase the total expense for research, development and innovation on behalf of the Large Enterprise in absolute terms or as a percentage of the turnover, changes in the project budget (without a corresponding reduction in the budget for other projects).

It is noted that for projects to be financed by the ERDF under the Cohesion Policy Programme "THALIA 2021-2027", the participation of large enterprises in Research and Innovation activities should include cooperation with SMEs, in accordance with the provisions of Article 5, paragraph 2.a of EU Regulation 2021/1058 on the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

C. Other Organisations

C.1. Other Private Sector Organisations:

Private Academic Institutions not classified as Research Organisations, Non-Profit Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Professional and Scientific Organisations and Unions, Associations of Enterprises, Chambers of Enterprises, etc.

These types of organisations will be funded pursuant to the applicable terms for the corresponding type of enterprise they belong to (B.1, B.2 or B.3). It should be explained that in the case of Associations of Enterprises, Chambers of Enterprises or other organised groups having a Large Enterprise as member, those will automatically be classified as a Large Enterprise (B.3).

C.2. Other Public and Broader Public Sector Organisations

Government Departments, Municipalities, Communities, Broader Public Sector, Government Organisations, etc. Organisations operating in conditions of free competition are excluded and will be classified as “Enterprises”.

1.3. NATURAL PERSONS CATEGORY

The persons eligible for participation in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, may be classified in the following categories:

Researcher

An employee¹⁵ of one of the organisations participating in the Consortium of a project, who performs research work in the context of said project is included in this category. The researcher must be employed by the organisation participating in the project during its participation period in the project.

For the purposes of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, a person is considered an “employee” of an organisation, if:

- the employee-employer relationship can be proven (employment contract, job control, supervision and work approval, provision of work-related materials and so forth),
- such person is included in the organisation’s official payroll on a regular basis, and
- all the employer’s obligations pursuant to the law are fulfilled.

This category may also include personnel that provides specialized technical support for research work or, in the Programmes for Entrepreneurial Innovation, personnel involved in innovation activities or other relevant activities.

¹⁵ Persons participating as members of Associations, Scientific Societies or other Entities not employing personnel, are exempted and can participate by means of a Contract for the Provision of Services.

It is noted that, that persons providing services to an organisation that do not meet the requirements regarding the employer-employee relationship, shall not be considered to fall under the “Researcher” category.

Any natural person may participate in projects of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes with more than one employment agency at a given time.

The Foundation allows participation in different projects of the Foundation with different employers provided that the total time of all employment contracts does not exceed the full-time equivalent of one (1) person which is set at 1720 hours per year.

In the case of linked entities (i.e. where there is a control rate between the companies (over 50%) or they are under joint control) where the beneficiary uses part of the staff time of other companies in the group, it is expected that there will be multiple employment contracts between employees and employers (linked entities).

Student - Pupil

This category may include:

- an undergraduate or postgraduate level student, and
- a pupil attending a public or private school¹⁶ in Cyprus.

1.4. ORGANISATION TYPE COMMITMENT

All organisations wishing to participate in proposals in the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, shall fall under only one of the aforementioned types of organisations, according to their characteristics.

The type of the organisation can only be changed if the organisation’s characteristics change. In this case, the RIF should be notified immediately.

1.5. ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS IN A PROJECT

Host Organisation

The Host Organisation (HO) shall be the organisation submitting the proposal, signing the Project Contract and duly authorising the Project Coordinator for the purposes of the project implementation and Contract modification. The HO must be legally established and active or will be established and active (it only concerns start-ups for participation in Business Innovation Programmes) in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. The HO is legally liable against the RIF amongst others for:

¹⁶ The schools must be recognised by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus.

- the supervision, control and generally smooth implementation of the project, in accordance with the Project Contract stipulations,
- the management of the funding in accordance with the approved budget and the financial management regulations included in the Project Contract, and
- the submission of the project's scientific and financial progress reports or any other supplementary information that may be requested.

Partner Organisation

The Partner Organisation (PA) is an organisation participating in the Consortium, which undertakes the implementation of part of the project. The PA must be legally established and active or will be established and active (it only concerns start-ups for participation in Business Innovation Programmes) in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus.

Foreign Research Organisation

A Foreign Research Organisation (FRO) is any non-profit organisation whose registered address is in a European Union State or in other State recognised by the Republic of Cyprus and one of its main activities is the conduct of research. Foreign businesses (for-profit organisations) cannot be funded as FROs in the context of the Foundation Programmes.

The FRO may participate nominally in a proposal describing in detail its specialisation and role in the project implementation, but shall not be member of the Consortium. Therefore, FROs are not contracting parties in the Project Contract and shall not sign the Consortium Agreement, while their budget shall be included in that of the HO, in a specific cost category. As regards the procedure for the conclusion of a Contract between the HO and the FRO, Article 5.5 – Tender Procedures of this Work Programme is relevant.

Collaboration Country Organisation

An organisation from a Collaborating Country that participates in the project and is funded by its country's relevant funding organisations. This concerns the Programmes "Bilateral Collaborations", "EUREKA Cyprus", "European Initiatives – National Development", "EUROSTARS Cyprus" and "European Partnerships".

Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator (PC) must be employed by the HO starting from the Project start date and throughout the Project implementation period, and must participate in the work and coordinate Consortium activities. The PC must be duly authorised by the HO for the purposes of project implementation and Contract modification.

Furthermore, the PC, shall amongst others:

- oversee the project implementation progress,
- represent the Consortium on all stages of proposal submission, contract preparation, project implementation and Contract modification and communication with the RIF,

- communicate with the RIF and be responsible to notify the Consortium on matters related to the physical and economic objective of the funded project,
- inform the responsible persons of all Consortium member organisations and ensure their approval whenever so required, in particular, in relation to the relevant project activities, participation of human resources, use of the facilities and the potential financial obligations arising from participation of the organisations in the project;
- check the validity of participation of all organisations and individuals, as defined in the relevant general provisions of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes and the special provisions of each Call for Proposals,
- collect from the members of the Consortium and check any documents and information requested by the RIF and/or other competent authorities,
- submit the required project Progress Reports and Payment Requests and check their correctness and completeness taking into consideration the project's scientific objective, or other supplementary data that might be requested, and
- ensure that all payments are timely made to the Consortium and respectively inform the RIF, if and when required.

It is clarified that the PC's responsibilities may not be assigned to another member of the Consortium or subcontracted to a third party.

Financial Contact Point

At the stage of Project Contract preparation, the HO will appoint a Financial Contact Point (FCP) for the project, for the purpose of facilitating communication between the Consortium and the RIF's Accounts Department on economic issues (accounting entries, provision of accounting information etc.) in the context of the Financial Audits conducted by the RIF.

All communication between the RIF and the HO's FCP will be notified to the PC and the HO's legal representative.

Furthermore, each member of the Consortium shall appoint a FCP for the purpose of using the electronic system for matters of financial management.

The cost of such FCP will be covered by the "Overheads" cost category.

Organisation's Legal Representative

The Organisation's Legal Representative (OLR) shall be the person representing it and has the authority to legally bind it.

1.6. CONSORTIUM

The Consortium consists of the group of organisations included in each proposal and project contract. Depending on the intended targets of each Programme, a Call for Proposals may set forth any possible requirements of the Foundation with regard to the types or number of organisations that must jointly comprise a Consortium.

In the cases where a minimum Consortium is required, it must consist of legal entities, independent of one another, none of them being under the direct or indirect control of the other or under the same direct or indirect control.

2. TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR AID

The proposals submitted within the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes may refer to one or more of the following types of activities, as defined in Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 on State aid (GBER) and in the Framework regarding State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation (2022/C 414/01), as follows:

- Research and Development Activities (GBER Article 25),
- Innovation Activities (GBER Article 28),
- Participation of SMEs in Fairs / Exhibitions (GBER Article 19),
- Start-ups Activities (GBER Article 22), and
- Investment Aid for Research Infrastructures (GBER Article 26).

Furthermore, and if provided for in the Call for Proposals, it is possible to include activities not falling under the above types, which will be funded as De Minimis aid.

The eligible activities that may be included in a project are defined in each Call for Proposals.

2.1. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Types of Research and Development Activities

Research and Development activities may refer to:

A. Fundamental Research:

Fundamental Research means the experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any direct commercial application or use in view.

B. Industrial Research:

Industrial Research means the planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes or services or for bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as super-computing, quantum technologies, block chain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud technologies). It comprises the creation of components parts of complex systems and may include construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation.

C. Experimental Development:

Experimental Development means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services. This may also include, for example, activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as for example super-computing, quantum technologies, block chain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud or edge technologies).

Experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set.

This may include development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes. Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.

D. Feasibility Study:

Feasibility Study means the evaluation and analysis of the potential of a project, which aims at supporting the process of decision making by objectively and rationally uncovering its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as identifying the resources required to carry it through and ultimately its prospects for success.

The Project's Research Character

The “research character” of a project is determined by the types of research in which its activities fall under.

A project may include one or more of the above types. Depending on the objectives of each individual Programme, the eligible types are defined in the Programme description, in Section II of the present Work Programme and/or the Call for Proposals.

2.2. INNOVATION ACTIVITIES

The following activities are supported in the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes:

- Obtaining, validating and defending patents and other intangible assets,

- Secondment¹⁷ of highly qualified personnel from a research and knowledge dissemination organisation or large enterprise, working on research, development and innovation activities in a newly created function within the beneficiary and not replacing other personnel,
- Innovation Advisory Services: Consultancy, assistance and training in the fields of knowledge transfer, acquisition, protection and exploitation of intangible assets, use of standards and regulations embedding them as well as consultancy, assistance or training on the introduction or use of innovative technologies and solutions (including digital technologies and solutions), and
- Innovation Support Services: means the provision of office space, data banks, cloud and data storage services, libraries, market research, laboratories, quality labelling, testing, experimentation and certification or other related services, including those services provided by research and knowledge dissemination organisations, research infrastructures, testing and experimentation infrastructures or innovation clusters, for the purpose of developing more effective or technologically advanced products, processes or services, including the implementation of innovative technologies and solutions (including digital technologies and solutions). .

2.3. PARTICIPATION OF SMEs IN FAIRS / EXHIBITIONS

The participation of SMEs in trade fairs / exhibitions is supported in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

2.4. START-UPS ACTIVITIES

Start-ups are supported in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, if they meet the relevant definition (Chapter 1.2 of Section III of the present Work Programme), for their involvement in research and development activities. Furthermore, support is provided for the activities of start-ups established for the commercial development of existing research results, as well as the activities of start-ups which develop products and services with significant global market penetration potential. Eligible activities and relevant costs are described in the relevant Calls for Proposals of the Programmes which include this activity type.

2.5. INVESTMENT AID FOR RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

Investment aid for the development of new or the upgrading of existing research infrastructures is supported in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

According to the Framework for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation (2022/C 414/01) and Article 2 (91) of the Regulation (EU) 651/2014 on State Aid, research infrastructure is defined as *'facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields and covers scientific equipment or set of instruments, knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structured scientific information,*

¹⁷ Temporary personnel employment by a beneficiary of aid with the personnel having the right to return to its previous employer.

enabling information and communication technology-based infrastructures such as grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature essential to conduct research. Such infrastructures may be 'single-sited' or 'distributed' (an organised network of resources)'.

Additionally in Article 26 of the Regulation (EU) 651/2014 the following conditions apply:

- Where a research infrastructure carries out both economic and non-economic activities, the funding, costs and revenues of each type of activity shall be declared separately, based on consistently applied and objectively justifiable principles of analytical accounting.
- The price charged for the operation or use of the infrastructure shall correspond to a market price. Where a research infrastructure receives public funding for both economic and non-economic activities, Member States shall put in place a monitoring and recovery mechanism to ensure that the aid intensity does not exceed the allowed aid intensity resulting an increase in the share of economic activities compared to the situation foreseen at the time the aid was granted.

3. BUDGET-FUNDING

Funding of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the European Commission Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid.

Support for a project implemented in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes by the RIF shall be made in the form of a grant. The funding amount varies depending on the activities implemented and the beneficiary.

Usually, the organisations involved are required to contribute financially, however, subject to certain conditions, RIF's funding may cover the total (100%) amount of eligible costs.

Entitlement to Funding

The beneficiaries funded by the RIF must be legally established and active or will be established and active (it only concerns start-ups for participation in Business Innovation Programmes) in territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus.

Organisations with a registered address outside the Republic of Cyprus in a European Union State or other State recognised by the Republic of Cyprus that wish to receive funding from the RIF through the Consortium's Host Organisation, must be non-profit organisations, having the conduct of research as one of their main activities (Foreign Research Organisations). FRO funding may amount to 15% of the total project funding by the RIF, unless otherwise stated in the Programme description and/or the Call for Proposals. It must be noted that additional restrictions regarding FRO funding may be provided for in the Calls for Proposals.

3.1. PROJECT BUDGET

The budget of a project is the total amount of eligible costs required for its implementation and is covered by RIF funding and by self-funding, namely by contributions of the Consortium members.

The amount of funding that a project may secure from the RIF is limited by:

- (a) the Maximum Funding Amount, namely the maximum amount that a project may secure as funding from the RIF, as defined in the Programme description and the individual Calls for Proposals, and
- (b) the Maximum (in accordance with the State Aid framework) or the Maximum Permitted (in accordance with the limitations of the individual Programmes) Aid Intensity.

The Budget amount, the Requested Funding and the Final Aid Intensity of each organisation, which is defined as a rate of the Required Funding related to each organisation's Budget, are defined in the project's Budget form, which is included in the research project Contract. The Final Aid Intensity for each organisation may not change, unless the organisation type has changed and the Final Funding by the RIF may not exceed the Requested Funding defined in the Contract.

It should be noted that aid may be cumulated with other State Aid granted to the beneficiary by another local, regional, national or community funding scheme for the purpose of covering self-funded eligible costs, which will not exceed the maximum aid intensity in accordance with the State Aid framework.

3.2. MAXIMUM AID INTENSITY

Aid Intensity is calculated separately for each organisation and according to the type of activity, as follows:

Research and Development Activities

The Maximum Aid Intensity, pursuant to the State Aid framework, for each beneficiary category in RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, is summarised in Table III.1 that follows.

For beneficiaries classified as "**Research Organisations**" and "**Other Public and Broader Public Sector Organisations**", the Aid Intensity amounts, as a rule, to 100% of the project's eligible costs, and their funding does not fall under the control system of state aid.

The Maximum Aid Intensity for beneficiaries not classified as one of the above types of organisations, will be that of the Type of Enterprise to which they belong (Small, Medium-size or Large Enterprise).

Table III.1 MAXIMUM AID INTENSITY FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES					
A. BASIC INTENSITY					
Calculated according to the project research character					
	The Project's Research Character	Small Enterprise	Medium-sized Enterprise	Large Enterprise	"Research Organisations" and "Other Public and Broader Public Sector Organisations"
A.1	Fundamental Research Activities	100%			100% ¹⁸
A.2	Industrial Research Activities	70%	60%	50%	
A.3	Experimental Development Activities	45%	35%	25%	
A.4	Feasibility Studies	70%	60%	50%	
B. SUPPLEMENTARY INTENSITY					
Is added to the Basic Intensity in the event that the project covers one of the following special provisions (besides Feasibility Studies) if one of the following conditions is met:					Enterprise
I.	The Project involves effective collaboration ¹⁹ : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ between enterprises of which at least one is an SME or is carried out in at least two member states or in one member state and one contracting party of the European Economic Area (EEA) and no single enterprise bears more than 70% of the eligible costs, or between one enterprise and one or more research and knowledge-dissemination organisations, where the latter bear at least 10 % of the eligible costs and have the right to publish their own research results 				+15%
II.	The Project results are widely disseminated through conferences, publications, free access repositories or through free software or open source software.				

It should be noted that:

(a) for Industrial Research projects or project parts thereof, the maximum Aid Intensity that may be received by a beneficiary funded as an Enterprise shall not exceed 80%.

(b) the supplementary intensity shall be granted only when criteria I and/or II above are met. If upon Completion of the projects' Implementation these criteria are not met, then the aid intensity will be limited to the Basic Intensity.

¹⁸ The rate is valid on the condition that funding does not concern financial activities for the said organisation (e.g. infrastructure leasing, provision of services to enterprises, implementation of research on contract for the benefit of enterprises). In the event that the funding concerns financial activities, then the organisation will receive the rate of aid relevant to the type of Enterprises to which the organisation belongs.

¹⁹ "effective collaboration" means collaboration between at least two independent parties to exchange knowledge or technology, or to achieve a common objective based on the division of labor where the parties jointly define the scope of the collaborative project, contribute to its implementation and share its risks, as well as its results. One or several parties may bear the full costs of the project and thus relieve other parties of its financial risks. Contract research and provision of research services are not considered forms of collaboration.

It should be clarified that the Supplementary Intensity is not applied in Feasibility Studies and applies only to Industrial Research and Experimental Development.

The maximum permitted Aid Intensity for **start-ups** is equal to the maximum Aid Intensity corresponding to Small Enterprises, unless otherwise defined in the Programme.

Innovation Activities

The Maximum Aid Intensity for innovation activities, as described above, is summarised in Table III.2 that follows.

Table III.2 MAXIMUM AID INTENSITY FOR INNOVATION ACTIVITIES	
Small and Medium-sized Enterprise	“Research Organisations” and “Other Public and General Government Sector Entities”
50%	100%

Large Enterprises (cat. B.3) are excluded from this aid category.

Participation of SMEs in Fairs / Exhibitions

The maximum Aid Intensity for costs related to the participation of SMEs in trade fairs / exhibitions is 50% of total eligible costs.

Aid Intensity for De Minimis Aid

The Aid Intensity for De Minimis Aid may total up to 100% of the project’s eligible costs and will be defined in the individual Call for Proposals of each Programme and may not exceed the amount stipulated in EU Regulation 1407/2013 for De Minimis Aid (the De Minimis Aid Regulation will be applied to said aid) (replaced by the Commission’s Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13th December 2023²⁰).

In cases where activities and/or beneficiaries may not be funded in the context of Commission Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid, funding may be carried out on the basis of EC Regulation for De Minimis Aid. In the event that the beneficiaries cannot be funded pursuant to the De Minimis Regulation either, due to the fact that the Regulation conditions are not met, then:

- (a) if the enterprise is a Host Organisation, the contract preparation procedure will be terminated, and
- (b) if the enterprise is a Partner Organisation, it will either participate on a self-funding basis or will be replaced.

Not exceeding the maximum limit shall be achieved by adhering to the procedure provided for in EU Regulation for De Minimis Aid, as modified or replaced, prior to the aid being granted by the

²⁰ Commission’s Regulation (EU) 2023/2831
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302831&qid=1704451373927

competent national authority. It is noted that as of January 2022, a Central System of Registries for State Aid and De Minimis Aid will be implemented in which all de minimis aid will be registered to ensure that the maximum limit is not exceeded.

3.3. COST ELIGIBILITY

In the context of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, eligible costs are those that:

- Are Included in the project Budget,
- Are real and necessary for the project implementation,
- Have been incurred by the organisation declaring them,
- Pertain to activities carried out during project implementation,
- Have been settled by the date of the Final Payment Request submission at the latest (*Note: VAT expenditure which can be paid up to the next deadline for payment of VAT from the date of submission of the Final Payment Request, as defined by national legislation, is an exception*),
- Are directly related and have been incurred entirely and exclusively for the completion needs of the specific project,
- Are consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and
- Have been registered in the organisation's accounting records.

Each organisation's accounting system must allow for the reconciliation of declared costs with its financial statements, as well as with the supporting documents.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT is eligible only in the cases where the beneficiary has no obligation or right to register in the VAT Registry or cannot recover VAT on revenue stemming from research activities. In order to consider VAT as an eligible cost, the beneficiary must submit to the RIF the relevant correspondence with the VAT Commissioner proving the above. Until submission of said correspondence, VAT shall be deemed non-eligible.

It is noted that for projects to be financed under the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (through the Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 - "Cyprus_tomorrow"), in which VAT is considered an eligible expenditure according to the previous paragraph (at project level), this will be covered by additional national funding.

Costs in Foreign Currency

In cases of transactions in foreign currency, eligible costs shall be the organisation's actual costs on the basis of the Euro foreign exchange reference rates of the European Central Bank²¹ on the dates of payment.

²¹ <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/index.en.html>

Non-Eligible Costs

The costs referred to below are not eligible:

- Costs exceeding Euro 100 paid in cash and for which the provisions of Chapter 5.4 of Section III of the present Work Programme are not met,
- Costs settled in non-monetary payment (e.g. payroll payment through loan or rental payment, redemption in kind, through exchange of services etc.),
- Costs made prior to the project start date excluding “Costs for Instruments and Equipment” and “Consumables” the eligibility conditions for which are defined in Chapter 3.4 of Section III of the present Work Programme,
- Charges between Consortium members,
- Internal charges between departments of the same organisation,
- Transactions between linked/associated organisations,
- Interest payable and other bank costs,
- Forecasts for potential future losses or charges,
- Foreign exchange losses,
- Return on capital cost,
- Costs that are funded by and/or pertain to activities relevant to other projects,
- Charges related to loans (e.g. loan issue and management costs),
- Excessive and reckless expenditure,
- Indirect tax that is refunded by the competent authorities to the organisation (namely they do not comprise real cost for the organisation), and
- Parts of the personnel costs defined in Chapter 3.4 and 5.4.1 of Section III of the present Work Programme (e.g. overtime, commissions, bonuses etc.), and
- Cost for property acquisition and/or buildings construction.

3.4. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COST CATEGORIES

The cost categories for research and development are classified into direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include Personnel Cost, Instruments and Equipment Costs, Costs for External Services, Costs for Foreign Research Organisations, Costs for Travelling Abroad, Consumables and Other Specific Costs, whereas, Indirect Costs consist of Overheads.

In the case that a Call for Proposals requires the use of the simplified cost option method “Personnel costs plus 40% on Personnel Costs for covering the rest of the Project costs”, the eligible costs of the Project consist of the direct costs of Personnel Costs and other expenses (direct and indirect) calculated at a fixed rate of 40% on personnel costs.

The research and development cost categories are described as follows:

Personnel Cost

This category pertains to the cost of employing research team members during their participation in the project. The researcher’s man-hours on a project must be calculated on the basis of the productive hours of the organisation that employs him/her for the project, irrespective of the amount of time he/she spends working for the organisation. The monthly productive working

hours are defined as the year's business days (365 days), minus weekends (104 days), annual vacation days, official holidays, sick leave and others, multiplied by the productive hours per day and divided by 12 months.

The eligible costs for personnel consist of the gross salary plus contributions payable to the State's authorities pursuant to relevant Legislation, plus the employer's contributions for Health Insurance and Provident Fund. The employer's contributions are eligible provided that:

- (i) they are specified in the employment document or by law,
- (ii) they are in line with the legislation referred to in the employment document and/or the normal practice applicable in the country and/or the organisation where each specific staff member is actually working at,
- (iii) they are not recoverable by the employer, and
- (iv) the general principles (e.g. equal treatment between the Beneficiary's employees) and rules applicable for contributions to the specific funds are being met.

It is pointed out that personnel cost does not fall under eligible costs per se and, therefore, the following are not taken into consideration when calculating eligible costs:

- Overtime (time declared in the Time Sheets for projects funded by the Foundation and other funding organisations beyond the organisation's monthly Productive Hours),
- Additional fee/Bonus, and
- Commission, allowances (e.g. rent) etc.

Additionally, for organisations whose personnel costs are directly or indirectly covered by the State budget, the only costs eligible for funding by the RIF are any additional costs for personnel hired specifically for the purposes of the project. Furthermore, the employment cost of a person whose main salary is directly or indirectly covered by the State budget is not considered eligible for funding, even if he/she is cooperating with another organisation for the purposes of the project.

Costs for Instruments and Equipment

This category pertains to costs for instruments and equipment to the extent and for the time they are to be used on the project. The cost of depreciation is eligible when calculated on the basis of the equipment purchase price and the time it is used for the purposes of the project.

Exceptions are:

- The "New Strategic Infrastructure Units - Young Scientists" Programme, where for organisations exempted from the European Commission Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid (Categories A and C2) the concept of depreciation does not apply for the costs of Instruments and Equipment, and the full purchase price of the equipment is eligible for funding.
- The "Research Infrastructures" Programme, where:
 - For organisations exempted from Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid (Categories A and C2) the concept of depreciation does not apply for the costs of

Instruments and Equipment, and for funding purposes 90% of the full cost of purchasing the equipment is eligible.

- For organisations not exempted from Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid, the funding of Instruments and Equipment will be made on the basis of Article 26 of Regulation (EC) 651/2014 on State Aid (Category of Aided Activities "Investment Aid for Research Infrastructures") and the concept of depreciation does not apply. For funding purposes, the aid intensity in this Category is 50%.

The cost of second hand equipment and instruments is not covered.

The time period of use for the project purposes is defined as the shortest between:

- (a) The project implementation period,
- (b) The time period from the purchase date of the equipment until the Completion of the Project Implementation or sale of the equipment, and
- (c) The duration in months equal to the sum of the eligible work Person-Months of the organisation's researchers.

The cost for equipment includes the total amount of direct costs necessary for installation thereof in the area intended for its use, including costs for transportation, customs clearance etc.

As a rule, in relation to equipment purchased/acquired prior to of the start of a project, the costs pertaining to depreciation thereof for the time it is used on the project are eligible for funding provided the equipment was acquired/purchased after the Proposal submission date.

The cost of equipment maintenance is not eligible (it is covered by Overheads) nor is the operating cost of equipment used by the same organisation or another member of the Consortium. Furthermore, the cost relevant to training the organisation's personnel to operate the equipment is not eligible.

Costs for instruments and equipment pertain to two sub-categories:

- **Durable Equipment:** Pertains to the purchase cost of state-of-the-art research instruments and specialised research equipment (service life: 5 years).
- **Computers and Software:** Pertains to specialised computers and software required for the project implementation and not standard office computer and software (which are covered by Overheads) (Service life: 3 years).

Costs for External Services

The category pertains to the cost for covering subcontracts, including consulting and similar services, used for research purposes. These can cover, indicatively:

- Contracted research costs,
- Costs for access to research infrastructure for the purpose of implementing experimental processes that cannot be implemented within the Consortium,
- Costs for the purchase of technical know-how and patents as well as licensing patent rights from external sources at free market prices,

- Costs for the dissemination of the project results to the scientific community and/or the interested social or business bodies, such as, for example, posters at conferences and organisation of information days. The eligible cost for organising a local information dissemination day may not exceed Euro 500, unless otherwise documented in the Project Contract. This amount may cover cost pertaining to, amongst other things, rent for the venue and audio-visual equipment, as well as tea/coffee breaks. Costs pertaining to lunch/dinner are not eligible.

Costs for development of research project websites for the purpose of dissemination are not eligible. It is expected that all Consortium members will present their research work and results on their own websites. Furthermore, organisations will be able to upload information regarding their research work and results on RIF's website.

The relevant transactions must be carried out under conditions of fair competition without any element of collusion.

The Costs for external services must not exceed 10% of the total project budget pursuant to the Project Contract and 40% of the budget of the organisation implementing the cost.

The Costs for external services are exempted from the direct costs on which the Overheads calculation is based.

It is pointed out that additional restrictions or different limits may be defined in the Programme description, Section II of the present Work Programme and in the Call for Proposals relating to the Costs for external services.

Costs for Foreign Research Organisations

This cost category of includes the costs of Foreign Research Organisations participating in the project. The Foreign Research Organisation costs may not exceed 15% of RIF's overall project funding. It is pointed out that additional restrictions or different limits relating to the costs for Foreign Research Organisations, may be defined in the Programme description, Section II of the present Work Programme and in the Call for Proposals.

The costs for Foreign Research Organisations are exempted from the direct costs on which the Overheads calculation is based.

Costs for Travelling Abroad

This category covers costs for travelling abroad when necessary for project implementation (dissemination, coordination, research implementation, access to foreign research infrastructures, etc.).

The longest duration that the RIF can fund, irrespective of the purpose of the trip, as a rule is 5 calendar days unless a request is approved by the RIF for a longer duration, or is otherwise defined in the Project Contract and the individual Calls for Proposals, or it is undertaken for the purpose of participating in a conference lasting more than 5 calendar days.

In the event that travel is undertaken for multiple reasons beyond those pertaining to project activities, only the part of the cost pertaining to the project will be considered eligible.

Costs pertaining to participation in conferences are acceptable only for the researchers participating in the project and presenting its results in the context of the conference official schedule, either through an oral presentation or with a poster and on condition that the regulations for information and publicity for projects co-funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds are met. The participation of a second or more researchers from the same project at the same conference is not an eligible cost unless there is a respective or higher number of presentations pertaining to the project results.

Consumables

The category pertains to the consumables necessary for the implementation of experimental processes in the context of the research activity, which have been acquired after the Proposal submission date.

The category does not include stationery, printing paper, ink, digital disks etc., which are covered under the “Overheads” category.

In the event of purchase of consumables in large quantity for the purpose of multiple activities of an organisation, the allocation of costs pertaining to the project will be acceptable, on the condition that the allocation is adequately documented at the absolute discretion of the RIF.

As a rule, costs pertaining to the purchase of consumables acquired/purchased prior to the start of the project, are eligible for funding, provided that they have been purchased after the Proposal submission date and have been used/consumed during the project implementation period.

Costs pertaining to consumables customs clearance are also acceptable.

Each cost for the purchase of consumables must be documented with the corresponding purchase invoice. Costs arising from a costing system that takes into consideration multiple purchase invoices (e.g. weighted average cost) are not considered eligible.

Other Specific Costs

The category pertains to costs resulting directly from the research activity that cannot be included in the above cost categories, such as, for example, the cost of publication in technical and scientific journals and/or repositories, conference registration costs, traveling expenses within Cyprus etc. This category shall not include costs considered ineligible in one or more of the remaining categories.

Other Expenses (Simplified Cost Option and Declaration of Expenses)

The category pertains to direct and indirect operating expenses arising from the research activity and may include costs for instruments and equipment, cost for external services, costs for foreign research organisations, costs for travelling abroad, consumables, other specific costs, and

overheads. Expenses in this category are calculated at a fixed rate of 40% on eligible personnel costs.

Overheads

The category pertains to indirect operating costs arising either from the employment of personnel in a research activity at the organisation's facilities (e.g. utility bills for power, water, telephone, administrative support, FCP fees, accounting, regular office computers and software) or the maintenance of durable equipment. Overhead costs are defined at a rate of up to 20% of the direct costs, with the exception of costs for the external services and Foreign Research Organisation costs.

3.5. INNOVATION COSTS

Innovation costs pertain to costs related to Innovation Activities as defined in Chapter 2.2 of Section III of the present Work Programme.

3.6. PARTICIPATION OF SMEs IN FAIRS / EXHIBITIONS

Renting, setting up and running the stand for the participation of an SME in any particular fair or exhibition.

3.7. FUNDING PAYMENT

The payment method of the RIF funding is specified in the research Project Contracts and may vary for each Programme. In any event, the project funding is paid by the RIF to the HO, who is responsible for transferring the funding to the Partner Organisations.

As a rule, funding payments are made in instalments as follows:

- **Pre-Financing**, which corresponds to **40%** of the Requested Funding, is paid upon Contract signature.
- **Interim Payment**, which may correspond to up to **40%** of the Requested Funding, taking into consideration the eligible costs of the first period and on the condition the Interim Progress Report is approved by the RIF. In particular, the second funding instalment is paid, as a rule, only in the event that the eligible costs for the first period exceed 50% of the pre-financing.
- **Final Payment**, which may correspond to up to the balance of the Requested Funding, taking into consideration the eligible costs of the project, the Final Aid Intensity and on the condition the Final Progress Report has been approved by the RIF.

For "Small Projects", as these are defined in Chapter 6 of Section III in the present Work Programme, the Pre-Financing corresponds to 70% of the Requested Funding and is paid upon Contract signature. The Final Funding Payment, which may correspond to up to the balance of the

Requested Funding, taking into consideration the eligible costs of the project and the Final Aid Intensity, is paid upon approval of the Final Progress Report by the RIF.

For a specific number of Programmes, funding is provided in the form of a lump sum payment.

In special cases, different arrangements regarding the funding payments could be defined in the Calls for Proposals.

Host Organisations of the private sector not meeting the financial viability criteria as set out in Chapter 4.4. of the present Work Programme:

- must submit a bank guarantee equal to the pre-financing, or alternatively;
- will receive a pre-financing of 15% and bi-annual instalments on the basis of their eligible costs declared in the corresponding Payment Requests that will be checked and approved by the RIF.

Furthermore, before the payment of each Funding Instalment, the RIF shall examine whether private organisations have adhered to their obligations towards the State, as specified in the applicable Legislation and/or decisions of the Council of Ministers. In the event that an organisation has already submitted the relevant supporting documents and their validity period has not expired, then it is not required to submit them again.

Instalments will be paid immediately after completion of the financial verifications irrespective of whether the PC submits a request for redress.

4. SUBMISSION - EVALUATION - SELECTION

The procedures included in the path from preparing the submission of a research proposal to signing the project contract will include, as a rule, the following five main stages:

- Organisation and PC Registration,
- Proposal Submission,
- Proposal Selection,
- Contract Preparation, and
- Final Decision - Contract Signing.
-

4.1. REGISTRATION

As a rule, prior to the project proposal submission stage, participating organisations will be subject to a **Legal Status Check** by the RIF. To this end, they will be asked to register their details using the electronic system, before submitting the proposal. Upon registration, the organisations will receive a unique **Identification Code (UNIC)**, which will apply for the entire duration of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

The organisations, acting through their Legal Representative, will complete their details on the electronic system and will upload the relevant certificates, depending on the type of beneficiary they fall under and as these are defined on the electronic system.

With regard to the Organisation's Legal Representative, a Certificate must be submitted by the organisation using the electronic system certifying that the specific person is acting on behalf of the organisation and is duly authorised to bind it (e.g. Board of Directors meeting minutes authorising the Legal Representative etc.). In the cases of individuals or groups of individuals, the relevant Written Declaration with respect to the authorisation of the Legal Representative must be submitted.

The information is checked by the RIF (only for those entities that are considered eligible for funding and proceed to the contract preparation process) and the organisation is classified under the appropriate beneficiary type in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes on the basis of their characteristics. The RIF must be immediately informed if there is any change in the Organisation's Legal Representative.

The organisations are obligated to immediately inform the RIF (using the electronic system) regarding any change in their characteristics, such as a change in ownership, change in the composition of the Board of Directors, a modification that affects the size of the enterprise, cessation of activities etc.

For the Foreign Research Organisations a Declaration is submitted at the stage of Contract Preparation, confirming their non-profit nature and that the conduct of research is one of their main activities.

4.2. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submission Procedure

In the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes a proposal can be submitted following the Call for Proposals announcement by the RIF, which invites the interested parties to submit proposals and includes information relevant to the objectives, the budget, the eligible cost categories, the beneficiaries and the proposal submission deadline. The submission procedure will be defined in the individual Calls for Proposals and will, as a rule, be "Online" or "By hand". All proposals shall be submitted in English.

For better preparation regarding proposal submission, the interested parties are advised to utilise the "Proposal Preparation Guide" that provides instructions and clarifications for better guidance regarding the submission procedure and is available on the Research and Innovation Foundation online services Portal (<https://iris.research.org.cy>).

"On-line" Proposal Submission

Proposals are submitted via the electronic proposal submission system, through the internet and the Foundation's website.

Where appropriate, it is possible for the Call for Proposals to require submission of specific documents by hand as these may require signing.

“By Hand” Proposal Submission

This procedure requires submission at the RIF offices or the delivery via postal mail of the required documents in printed form, as well as digital disks that will include the relevant files in electronic form. It is also possible that signed documents may be required to be submitted by the HO.

Submission Time

The following apply as to the submission time for the RESTART 2016-2020 Programme proposals:

- The proposals are submitted by the submission deadline defined in the Call for Proposals.
- No changes or additions to the proposal shall be accepted after its definitive submission.
- With the exception of an extraordinary event affecting all candidate Organisations and the Foundation at the same time, deadlines for submission shall not change. In any event, any change in the submission deadline shall remain at the discretion of the RIF.
- When submitted after the predefined deadline, the proposal shall be deemed to be overdue and will be excluded from the remaining procedure.

The submission deadlines will be defined in the Calls for Proposals. In special cases it is possible to determine cut-off-dates for proposal submission. Furthermore, if so defined in the relevant Call for Proposals, in the context of the implementation of specific Programmes, a two-stage proposal submission may be adopted.

In the case of “By Hand” Submission, proposals submitted via post mail must have delivered to the RIF PO Box by the submission deadline and the date of dispatch shown on the post office stamp will not be taken into consideration.

Proposal Number

Each proposal submitted to the RIF receives a Proposal Number. This number defines the Call for Proposals in the frame of which a proposal was submitted. The Proposal Number is unique and is subsequently used by the RIF for the announcement of the results and the correspondence with the HO.

Furthermore, as a rule, the proposal will also be characterised by the Acronym stated on the submission documents, in order to facilitate communication between the RIF and the Consortium.

4.3. PROPOSAL SELECTION

The procedure of Proposal Selection for funding includes the Preliminary Check and the Scientific Evaluation of the Proposal.

Preliminary Check

The compatibility of the submitted proposal to the specific criteria is examined during the Preliminary Check. Non-compatibility of the proposal to any one of the criteria renders it ineligible and it is not forwarded for evaluation.

Table III.3 includes the general criteria for Preliminary Check that may be adjusted accordingly in the Calls for Proposals:

Table III.3 CRITERIA FOR PRELIMINARY CHECK OF A PROPOSAL		
No.	Criterion	Interpretation
1.	Submission validity (procedure and documents)	The proposal is checked to ascertain: (a) if it has been submitted within the deadline and in accordance with the procedure set out, and (b) whether it includes all the necessary documents and accompanying documents.
2.	Language	It is checked to ascertain whether it has been submitted in English.
3.	Consortium and Participation Right	It is checked, on the basis of the proposal content, to ascertain whether: (a) requirements are met with regard to the Consortium insofar as the participation of individuals and organisations is concerned, (b) the proposal was submitted by individuals/organisations entitled to participate. The types of organisations and individuals entitled to participate in each research project proposal are defined in the corresponding Call for Proposals.
4.	Duration	It is checked whether the duration of project implementation follows the stipulated time frame.
5.	Funding	It is checked whether the requested funding is in line with the Maximum Funding Amount defined in the Call for Proposals.

Proposals meeting all prerequisite Criteria are forwarded for evaluation. Some of the Preliminary Check Criteria will be examined automatically at the time of submission by the electronic proposal submission system.

It should be clarified that if a person, acting as Project Coordinator, submits more than two (2) proposals in the frame of a Call for Proposals, then the first two proposals will be considered valid, on the basis of order of submission, and the remainder will be considered invalid unless otherwise stated in the Programme Description as described in Section II of the present Work Programme or in the Call for Proposals.

Upon completion of the Preliminary Check procedure, the results are communicated to the beneficiaries by correspondence from the RIF. Beneficiaries are entitled to submit a request for redress, as described in the section “Redress Procedure” in Chapter 4.3 of Section III of the present Work Programme.

Evaluation Methods

As a rule, the RIF will use one of the following methods for the proposal evaluation or a combination of them, depending on the Programme requirements and according to the provisions of the corresponding Call for Proposals.

Method I - Remote Evaluation

- **Remote evaluation by One (1) Independent Evaluator**
The proposal shall be evaluated by one (1) independent evaluator. As a rule, the method is used for Programmes with a low Maximum Funding Amount per project.
- **Remote evaluation by Two (2) Independent Evaluators**
The proposal shall be evaluated by two (2) independent evaluators and their average score shall be set as its final score. If the difference between their scores is greater than 3.00/15.00 in total, then the proposal shall also be evaluated by a third evaluator and the final score will be the average of the two closest to each other.
If both initial scores are lower than 12.00/15.00²² then the proposal shall be considered ineligible and shall not be forwarded to a third evaluator even if there is a bigger difference than 3.00/15.00 between the two scores.
- **Remote evaluation by Three (3) Independent Evaluators**
The proposal is evaluated by an Evaluation Team (Consensus Group) consisting of three (3) independent evaluators and a rapporteur. The Evaluation Team reaches a common position regarding the evaluation of the Proposal, including common scores and comments on each Evaluation Criterion and submits a Consensus Report which will be sent to the Project Coordinators.
In case the Evaluation Team cannot reach a common Consensus Report, a voting is held between the three (3) independent evaluators and a decision is made by a majority.

Method II - Evaluation by a Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC)

The proposal shall be evaluated by a Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC). The SEC composition shall be defined, where applicable, in the Programme description in Section II of the present Work Programme. The proposals forwarded for evaluation by the SEC may have been evaluated in a previous stage either by the SEC members or by other independent evaluators.

As a rule, the Project Coordinator shall be invited to present the proposal to the SEC in person. The presentation shall be carried out either at a venue determined by the RIF, or at the premises of the HO, if the on-site visit of the evaluators is deemed necessary. It should be noted that the SEC sessions are attended by RIF executives and external Observers in a supporting role.

As a rule, during the SEC session, its members shall classify the Proposals in a ranking list and shall justify the rationale of their decision in the relevant Evaluation Report. Any special provisions (especially in cases of Competitions) will be included in the relevant Calls for Proposals. It is noted that, for Programmes supporting entrepreneurship, the Evaluation Committee is not primarily scientific but is generally consisted by experts with business / market background.

²² For Calls for Proposals announced before July 2019, the threshold is 11.00/15.00.

Method III - Internal Evaluation

This method may be applied to specific Programmes where evaluation is not primarily scientific. The proposals shall be evaluated by the RIF in accordance with a specific procedure the purpose of which is to ensure that special specifications and conditions shall be met and shall be defined in the Programme description or the relevant Call for Proposals. Alternatively, in the context of the said Evaluation Method, the RIF may use external experts or observers. In the context of the internal evaluation procedure, the Research and Innovation Foundation may request submission of additional supplementary information, which should be submitted within a reasonable time period specified by the Foundation.

Evaluation Method Combination

Where deemed necessary, a combination of the above methods shall be used.

Evaluator Selection

The scientific evaluation of the proposal shall be carried out by international independent experts selected pursuant to specific criteria as follows:

- Based on the "keywords" suggested by the applicants in the proposal to find suitable evaluators. It is recommended where possible to state two "keywords" in the scientific field of the proposal and one in the proposal's field of application. In cases where it is not possible to identify suitable evaluators on the basis of the declared "keywords", additional "keywords" may be used which are considered appropriate after studying the proposal.
- Based on the Fields of Science and Technology Classification (Frascati Manual) selected by the applicants in the proposal.
- Evaluators' CV quality/content (e.g. position, education, research experience, business experience, publications relevant to the research field, patents, experience in research proposal evaluations, participation in various boards and/or professional/scientific bodies).
- Good knowledge of English language.
- In the case of Proposals with interdisciplinary content, the evaluators shall be selected in such a manner that the scientific background of the team of evaluators shall cover the various subjects addressed in the proposal. For proposals with industrial application content, participation of evaluators with knowledge of the market will be sought.

It should be noted that evaluators are selected using the EU Evaluator database, commercial databases and/or other tools according to each case.

When selecting evaluators, care is taken with regard to the following:

- It is investigated whether there is a possibility that the candidate evaluator has any direct or indirect relation with the Consortium submitting the proposal and their beneficial owners. Candidate evaluators who are either participating in or related to the Consortium

- (are referred to in Consortium publications, come from organisations belonging to the Consortium or are mentioned in the scientific section of the proposal), shall be rejected.
- The applicants' statement with regard to the persons and/or organisations that they wish not to be involved in the evaluation of their proposals shall be taken into consideration. It should be noted that the proposal submission documents provide the Coordinator with the possibility to recommend the evaluators' expertise, as well as the exclusion of specific persons/organisations from their proposal evaluation procedure.
 - Priority shall be given to evaluators from member-states of the European Union, the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein), Israel and Switzerland and/or third countries outside the European Economic Area for which the EU has decided that there is sufficient security and/or other third countries in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the relevant Cypriot legislation 125(I)2018.

In order to ensure optimum substantiation and, in general, to ensure quality and maximum transparency of the procedure, evaluators will carry out their activities in accordance with clear instructions on the evaluation procedure defined in the corresponding Guides for Evaluators. It should be noted that evaluators will be requested to adequately justify their evaluation score.

For transparency purposes, the RIF will announce a list of the names of the evaluators used to evaluate the proposals, at regular intervals, during the implementation of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.

Evaluation Criteria

On the Evaluation Report Form, as a first step, the evaluator is required to assess to what extent the proposal is compatible with the Programme objectives. The extent to which the project activities meet the requirements of the Call for Proposals is evaluated in the context of the compatibility assessment. If the proposal is not compatible with the Programme objectives, the evaluator rejects the proposal and does not proceed with examining the evaluation criteria.

The scientific evaluation will be based, as a rule, on the following three general criteria:

1. Excellence

- Quality of Project Objectives.
- Degree of Project Innovation and Originality in relation to the existing knowledge (state-of-the-art) at international level.
- Soundness, credibility and feasibility of the proposed concept.

2. Added Value and Benefit

- Scientific, technological, social and/or economic impact and measures to maximize it.
- Effectiveness of the proposed measures for the exploitation (including management of Intellectual Property Rights) and dissemination of results for achieving maximum Project visibility.

3. Implementation

- Completeness and appropriateness of the Work Packages’ content, the allocation of the various activities, the timetable and the budget.
- Effectiveness of the proposed methodology for the implementation of the deliverables.
- Completeness, quality and capacity of the Consortium for the qualitative implementation of the Project (at the level of Organisations and/or individuals) and achievement of the proposed objectives.
- Suitability and adequacy of the proposed coordination and management activities, including identification and handling of potential risks.

The content of the criteria is specified in each Call for Proposals so that it may express each Programme’s philosophy and aims. Differences shall pertain to the interpretation, analysis and specialisation of each criterion and its weight over the total evaluation score.

The evaluators are required to give an adequately justified score to the above criteria.

Furthermore, the evaluators’ opinion (without evaluation score) is requested with regard to:

- The need of a bioethic evaluation of the proposal,
- The eventuality of negative impact and/or risks to the environment as a consequence of the proposed activities or the project results/products, and
- Gender equality with regard to the research content of the project and the composition of the project research team.

Confidentiality

The entire evaluation procedure is confidential. The proposal content as well as the identity of the evaluators who performed the evaluations for each proposal shall not be disclosed by the RIF. At the same time, the evaluators who will evaluate the proposals, are bound by a “Confidentiality Statement” pursuant to which they undertake the obligation to maintain strict confidentiality during the project proposal evaluation with regard to all data, information, documents or any other information they may be brought to their knowledge, including personal data.

Evaluation Score

Proposals shall be graded by the evaluators for each evaluation criterion. The evaluation score interpretation is shown in Table III.4:

Table III.4 GRADE INTERPRETATION	
Evaluation score	General
0	The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
< 0.99	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
1.00 - 1.99	The proposal addresses the criterion to a limited degree and there are significant weaknesses.

2.00 - 2.99	The proposal addresses the criterion partly and a number of shortcomings/weaknesses are observed.
3.00 - 3.99	The proposal addresses the criterion quite sufficiently but a small number of shortcomings/weaknesses are observed.
4.00 - 5.00	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Evaluation score for each criterion will be recorded with an accuracy of 0.25 marks and will range from 0 to 5.

Overall evaluation score results from the weighted score aggregate of the three criteria on the basis of their relative weight, as set in the description of the corresponding Programmes and/or the individual Calls for Proposals.

Proposals are deemed eligible for funding if they secure a Final Evaluation Score of at least 12.00/15.00²³.

Proposal Ranking

Eligible proposals will be ranked by order of success on the basis of their evaluation score. Special provisions defined in the Programme description and/or the Calls for Proposals will be taken into consideration in the selection of eligible proposals for funding.

In the case of open Calls for Proposals, the ranking by order of success on the basis of evaluation score will not apply, proposals for funding will be selected by order of priority.

Special Cases

After completion of the Evaluation Procedure, cases may arise requiring special handling as are, for example, the ones that follow:

- **Proposals with equal score if there is no available budget to fund all of them:** Proposals with equal scores will be ranked, in the Pillar I Programmes, in order of the score received in the “Added Value and Benefit” criterion, and in the Pillar II Programmes, in order of the score received in the “Excellence” criterion. If the proposals cannot be ranked on the basis of the above criteria, then they will be ranked on a descending order of the budget size allocated to the enterprises participating in said proposals. If they still cannot be ranked, then priority is given to the proposals showing gender balance in relation to the research content of the project and the project research team composition in terms of the number of male/female participants.
- **Similar Proposals:** If it is found that two or more proposals in two different Calls for Proposals are the same insofar as their scientific content and the relevant activities are concerned, then only one of the proposals will be funded, to be selected in order of priority on the basis of: (a) the highest score, and (b) the lowest requested funding amount.
- **Proposals with Possible Activity Overlap:** If it is found that there may be significant overlaps between two or more proposals selected for funding, the RIF may seek the

²³ For Calls for Proposals announced before July 2019, the threshold is 11.00/15.00.

opinion of one or more experts as well as clarifications from the Project Coordinators on the subject. In the event that significant overlaps are ascertained, it will decide in each case the possibility of: (a) funding one of the similar projects, or (b) funding the common activity in one of the similar projects and reducing respectively the budget of the projects in which said activity will not be funded.

Announcement of the Results

Upon completion of the proposal evaluation procedure, the evaluation results shall be validated by the RIF Board of Directors (BoD), unless the BoD decides to follow a different validation procedure. Upon validation, the results shall be posted on RIF's website by means of a Table of Results showing the ranking of the project proposals in descending order of evaluation scores, anonymously (stating the Proposals' Number).

In the context of transparency procedures that the RIF follows, after the evaluation procedure is completed, the evaluation results (including, where applicable, the Evaluation Report Forms with the detailed comments and individual scores and/or the Evaluation Reports) shall be communicated to the beneficiaries by relevant letter sent by the RIF.

In cases of a two (2) stage evaluation procedure is followed, the beneficiaries shall receive their evaluation results for each stage separately.

After announcement of the results, the beneficiaries shall be entitled to submit request for redress, as described in section "Redress Procedure" of Chapter 4.3 of Section III of the present Work Programme.

Redress Procedure

A Host Organisation rejected at any stage of the Proposal Selection process as described below, shall be entitled to submit a request for redress via their Legal Representative or the PC by sending the completed Redress Form through the electronic system within seven (7) calendar days from the date of receipt of RIF's letter notifying the HO of the results, and in any case no later than ten (10) calendar days from the sending date of the original email notification.

Redress requests are examined by a three-member Redress Committee established for this purpose by the RIF's Board of Directors.

Scientific Evaluation

The request for redress may refer to:

- The erroneous rejection of a proposal during Preliminary Check, or
- The selection of the proposal evaluators, as it is evidenced by virtue of the comments in the relevant Evaluation Report Forms, in the opinion of the entity filing the redress form, except in the case of the "Remote evaluation by Three (3) Independent Evaluators" evaluation method.

- The procedure followed, in the case of the “Remote evaluation by Three (3) Independent Evaluators” evaluation method.

In the event of proposal evaluation by a Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC), the SEC’s decision is final and the submission of request for redress is not permitted. Furthermore, a request for redress is not permitted for Joint Programmes implemented in cooperation with foreign funding organisations (European Partnerships, European Initiatives-National Development, EUROSTARS), where a central evaluation procedure is carried out in international level and in the “Bilateral Cooperation” Programme, where the decision for proposals to be selected for funding is taken by the Cyprus-Cooperation Country Joint Committee.

The Redress Committee shall examine in each case:

- The content of the proposal in relation to the reasons for which it was not forwarded for scientific evaluation as set out in the Preliminary Check Sheet. If any decisive omission or error during the Preliminary Check is ascertained, then the proposal shall be forwarded for evaluation.
- That selection of evaluators was appropriate. If the Redress Committee ascertains that any omission or error occurred during the selection of one or more evaluators, then it shall forward the proposal for re-evaluation by another evaluator or evaluators (except in the case of the “Remote evaluation by Three (3) Independent Evaluators” evaluation method).
- Possible non-observance of the evaluation procedure in the case of the “Remote evaluation by Three (3) Independent Evaluators” evaluation method.

The Redress Committee does not examine the content of the evaluators’ judgement, nor does it re-evaluate the proposals.

Proposals, for which the request for redress is approved, receiving an evaluation score bigger than the score of the last proposal selected for funding / invited to contract preparation, then the HOs and the PCs are invited to initiate the contract preparation procedure.

Internal Evaluation

With respect to Programmes for which Internal Evaluation applies, the request for redress may pertain to the erroneous rejection of a proposal during internal evaluation. The Redress Committee shall examine the correctness of the proposal rejection during the internal evaluation.

After completion of the procedure, the interested parties are informed regarding the result of their request for redress in writing. It is pointed out that the Redress Committee’s decision is final.

4.4. CONTRACT PREPARATION

Invitation for Contract Preparation

After completion of the evaluation procedure and announcement of the results, the RIF invites the Host Organisations and the PCs of the eligible proposals to initiate the Contract preparation

procedure. The invitation is made by order of priority, according to their ranking on the Table of Results (where applicable) and until the exhaustion of the available budget for each Call. For a project to be invited for Contract Preparation there must be available budget in the Call covering at least 70% of the requested funding for the proposal unless otherwise specified in the relevant Call for Proposals.

This provision does not apply to the Programmes managed by the RIF on behalf of the Ministry of Defence as in the relevant Calls there must be an available budget covering 100% of the requested funding in order to invite a proposal for Contract Preparation.

In the event where the Contract preparation procedure with the Host Organisations of one or more Proposals is terminated, RIF will not invite the following Proposals with the highest rank for Contract preparation but the remaining budget will be allocated to future Calls.

Contract Preparation Procedure

The Contract Preparation procedure is followed to ensure that the Project Contract that will be prepared contains the appropriate provisions for the smoothest possible project management and, as a rule, includes a meeting which is arranged either at the Host Organisation's premises or that of the RIF.

It is clarified that the invitation for contract preparation does not necessarily mean that the RIF will commit to funding the Project. In order for a project to be funded, it is required that agreement is reached on all matters of the procedure.

In the frame of this procedure, the Host Organisation is invited to submit to the RIF additional data and supporting documents on issues that might affect the Contract and the future implementation of the project, within a reasonable time period determined by the RIF.

After taking into consideration the relevant Call for Proposals and the procedures and regulations for funding of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes in general, a meeting will be held between RIF's representatives and the organisations during which the following issues will be discussed and/or clarifications and/or additional information and/or amendments will be requested where appropriate:

- **Consortium/Beneficiaries:** Ascertaining the validity of the participation of persons and organisations by completing the Legal Status Check for all organisations and the Financial Viability Check for Host Organisations (see Chapter 4.1. Registration)
- **Project Budget:** Checks shall be conducted to ascertain that: (a) the aid intensity for each organisation is compatible with the limits determined in the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes and with the classification of each organisation's type of activity as those are included in the proposal; and (b) the costs provided for are eligible and that the provisions of the present Work Programme and of the individual Programmes described in Section II of the Work Programme and/or in the corresponding Calls for Proposals, are met.
- **Deliverables:** Checks shall be conducted to ascertain inclusion of the minimum required Deliverables shown in the "Proposal Preparation Guide", such as, for example, the

Progress Reports and the Deliverables pertaining to dissemination activities. Furthermore, checks shall be conducted to ascertain whether the Deliverables are delivered in a form that permits their submission to the RIF and their possible evaluation by an external expert, in the context of project monitoring.

On rare occasions, the possibility of project changes shall be discussed, the need for which arose during the period from the submission deadline to the contract preparation meeting. In this case, a relevant request will be submitted in writing by the Coordinator to the RIF and it will be possible to obtain an opinion from an external expert on the matter.

Prior to completion of the contract preparation procedure, the following must be submitted to the RIF:

- The signed Consortium Agreement by and between the members of the consortium,
- Consent regarding the Personal Data Protection Regulations signed by the Host Organisation,
- All necessary authorisations/licenses required pursuant to applicable legislation related to the project objective (see Chapter 8 Broader Legal Framework) unless the issuing authority confirms in writing that approval will be granted at a later stage (***Note: The Project Coordinator is obliged to submit an application to the competent authorities within 30 calendar days from the date of announcement of the results. Otherwise the Foundation reserves the right to terminate the contract preparation process***),
- Other declarations or documents that may be required from time to time by the competent State authorities or that may arise from decisions of the Council of Ministers, and
- Written Declarations from all Consortium members pertaining to adherence to applicable legislation etc.

Furthermore, Private Sector organisations (Categories B.1, B.2, B.3, C.1 and private sector Organisations of Category A), must submit a Written Declaration regarding the following:

- The Organisation is not under bankruptcy, in liquidation, cessation of activities, forced administration and has not entered into an arrangement with creditors or in any other relevant circumstance arising from a similar procedure pursuant to national legislative or regulatory acts,
- No proceedings have commenced against the Organisation with regard to bankruptcy, liquidation, forced administration, arrangement with creditors or similar procedure pursuant to national legislative or regulatory acts, and
- The Organisation has not been convicted by ruling of a Cyprus and/or foreign court and/or any Cypriot and/or foreign supervisory and/or regulatory authority for an offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude and/or participation in a criminal organisation and/or an offence relevant to their professional conduct.

Further to the above, it is pointed out that in the case of private sector organisations, the following will be required at the Contract Preparation Stage: (a) For the purposes of the HO's Financial Viability Check, audited financial statements for the previous financial year (N-1) or the year preceding it (N-2), where "N" is the year when the Contract Preparation procedure shall be

conducted, (b) Certification from an independent external certified auditor that the undertaking is not in difficulty based on the audited financial statements for the previous financial year (N-1) or the year preceding it (N-2), where “N” is the year when the Contract Preparation procedure is conducted, and (c) where applicable, an Declaration for De Minimis Aid. It is noted that from January 2022, the amounts of De minimis Aid will be recorded in the Electronic Central System for State Aid and De Minimis Aid to ensure that the maximum limit is not exceeded.

For the purposes of contract preparation, the Certification from an independent external certified auditor that the undertaking is not in difficulty (see (b) above) will be valid for twenty-four (24) months since the reference date of the financial statements submitted and examined according to the check procedure.

If a Foreign Research Organisation (FRO) participates in the Consortium, the relevant FRO Declaration must be submitted through the HO stating the said organisation is not a for-profit undertaking and that one of its main activities is the conduct of research.

In general, the correctness of the organisations’ information will be examined during the Contract Preparation stage. To this end, the RIF reserves the right to request any additional documents that may be deemed necessary to confirm that such information is correct. Where possible, the documents will be requested once for each organisation.

In addition, according to Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 and Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), RIF is obliged to take appropriate measures to ensure that the use of the funds complies with applicable EU and national law, in particular as regards the prevention, detection and correction of fraud, corruption and conflicts of interest.

Therefore, entities will be invited to submit data in relation to beneficial owners and public procurement as presented in the table below in accordance with the Guidelines of the Coordinating Authority for the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) of Cyprus²⁴ and the Management Authority of the Cohesion Policy Funds²⁵.

Table III.5 LIST OF OBLIGATIONS OF BENEFICIAL OWNERS	
Organisation Category²⁶	Obligations
Private Law Entities (with the obligation to submit	Entities with Requested Funding not exceeding 150,000 Euros must submit the following information:

²⁴ Procedures for Ensuring Compatibility with National and EU Public Procurement Policy and Ensuring the Prevention, Detection and Correction of Fraud, Corruption and Conflicts of Interest in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP Guidelines)
<http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/All/2452E45691D999FBC2258893003E9ACC?OpenDocument>

²⁵ Guidelines of the Coordinating Authority for the Cohesion Policy Funds:
<https://thalia.com.cy/circulars/>

²⁶ The provisions only apply to Host and Partner Organisations.

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<p>beneficial ownership data to the Official Registries of the Republic of Cyprus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proof of registration of the said data and unique registration number in the Official Register of Beneficial Owners of the Republic of Cyprus <p>Entities with Requested Funding exceeding 150,000 Euros must submit the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Name, ID/passport number and date of birth of their beneficial owners (UBOs), and ➤ Proof of registration of the said data and unique registration number in the Official Register of Beneficial Owners of the Republic of Cyprus
<p>Entities obliged to apply National and Community laws and policies relating to public procurement (i.e. acting as Contracting Authorities)</p>	<p>Registration in the information system of the Managing Authority for the Cohesion Policy Funds and/or in the information system of the Coordinating Authority for the Recovery and Resilience Facility ²⁷(for Foreign Research Organisations and research and development services since they are not exempted from the provisions of the law on public procurement as listed in Chapter 5.5. and for all other tenders) of the following information in relation to public procurement tenders financed by RIF projects, regardless of the amount of the public contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tender number ➤ Details of the Contracting Authority ➤ Register of officers involved in the tender procedure ➤ Signed declarations of impartiality of the officers involved ➤ The contractor (or successful economic operator) and its unique identification number in the Official Register of Beneficial Owners of the country of registration ➤ The value of the contract ➤ The type of tender and tendering procedure followed ➤ For the contractor: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Established in the Republic of Cyprus: Proof of registration of the details of their beneficial owners and unique registration number in the Official Register of Beneficial Owners of the Republic of Cyprus 2. Established in another EU member state (bound by Directive (EU) 2015/849): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Proof of registration of the details of their beneficial owners and unique registration number in the Official Register of Beneficial Owners of the Republic of Cyprus, and (b) full name, ID/passport number and date of birth of their beneficial owners 3. Established in a non-EU country (not bound by Directive (EU) 2015/849): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) full name, ID/passport number and date of birth of their beneficial owners, or (b) full name, ID/passport number and date of birth of their senior management staff. ➤ Full name of subcontractors to be used for contract implementation (if applicable) <p>The Contracting Authorities, through a duly authorized person, must register the above data in the information system of the Coordinating / Managing Authority (depending on the source of funding) three months after the signing of the Contract and at the latest until the submission of the Payment Request which includes expenses in relation to the said public contracts. For the registration of the above data, authorized persons must gain access to the information system following the</p>

²⁷ <https://cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/All/3A7B366A18F25173C2258A9F00277216?OpenDocument>

	relevant procedure provided by the Managing / Coordinating Authority. RIF will carry out checks on the submitted procurement data and in case of non-registration of the data it may consider the expenditure concerned as ineligible for funding.
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The RIF as well as other competent authorities will carry out audits on the reported beneficial ownership data with the aim of preventing, detecting and correcting cases of fraud, corruption and conflict of interest on the basis of relevant circulars and guidelines issued by the competent national authority.

The Contract Preparation procedure may be terminated, if one of the following occurs:

- The entire project or a significant part thereof has received in the past or is currently receiving concurrent funding from the RIF or another source and the funding has cumulatively exceeded the maximum aid limits,
- The project contains any information that has resulted from an illegal or unethical action by anybody,
- The evidence submitted for the Consortium’s Legal Status Check is not adequate,
- The HO does not fulfil the definition of a start-up (where their participation is required by the Call) as defined in Chapter 1.2. on the date of granting the aid, i.e. the Contract signing date (in accordance with Chapter 4.5.),
- The HO has not reached a written agreement with the Foundation with regards to the settlement of previous outstanding financial obligations towards the RIF (it is clarified that the payment of debts to the Foundation must be made independently of the examination, at the same time, of any objection submitted for the project in question),
- The participating organisations and individuals are not classified as beneficiaries of the Call for Proposals or are not entitled to submit/participate in the proposal,
- If it is proven that the content of the project proposal or the additional information submitted contain false information,
- If it is found that the HO is under bankruptcy, in liquidation, cessation of activities, forced administration or has entered into an arrangement with creditors or in any other relevant circumstance arising from a similar procedure pursuant to national legislative or regulatory acts,
- It is not possible to reach agreement on the contract preparation issues (incl. failure to submit the necessary information) **within the time frame** determined by the RIF, and
- If an attempt to deceive the Foundation regarding the conflict of interest of the beneficial owners of the entities participating in the project proposal with people involved in the evaluation process is discovered.

Financial Viability Check

The Organisations’ Financial Viability Check will be conducted at the Contract Preparation stage and will concern only the Host Organisations of Projects of the private sector (legal and natural entities engaged in an economic activity), who will be funded by the RIF with an amount:

- a) equal to or higher than Euro 120,000 per Project, or

b) less than Euro 120,000 per project but cumulatively²⁸ equal or more than this amount for more than one projects.

Furthermore, in exceptional cases the RIF reserves the right to assess the financial viability of organisations of the private sector participating as Host Organisations, irrespectively of the amount of funding they will receive.

Private organisations the earnings of which are derived from State subsidies at a percentage equal or higher to 50%, are exempted from the financial viability check (this amount does not include earnings derived from State subsidy as a result of the organisation's participation in competitive or other programmes or projects).

For the purposes of the financial viability check the Organisations must submit audited financial statements for the previous financial year (N-1) or the year preceding it (N-2), where "N" is the year when the Contract Preparation procedure shall be conducted. The audited financial statements must include at least:

- Balance Sheet,
- Profit and Loss account and Other Comprehensive Income, and
- Independent External Certified Auditor's Report.

The explanatory notes comprise part of the Financial Statements and must be submitted.

Separate audited financial statements of a Host Organisation belonging to a group of companies must be submitted and the group's consolidated financial statements will not be acceptable.

If the organisations do not have audited financial statements for one of the two years mentioned above, then the Contract Preparation Procedure shall be suspended. Organisations that are not obligated to prepare Financial Statements, pursuant to national legislation are excluded. For the purposes of the financial viability check, such organisations will be classified in the category with a score of 1-3, as described in Table III.6.

The financial viability check method used by the RIF, is based on the relevant method applied by the EC in its Framework Programmes for assessing financial viability of organisations. For the EC's Framework Programme "Horizon 2020" the method is presented in detail in the "Guide on beneficiary registration, validation and financial viability check"²⁹.

Organisations are classified in four (4) categories on the basis of the financial viability check. Table III.6 shows the possible results of the financial viability check and the measures taken by the RIF to complete the Contract Preparation procedure:

²⁸ Funding for "Innovation Vouchers", "Participation in International Brokerage Events" and "Encouragement of Project Coordination in Horizon 2020" Programmes are not taken into account.

²⁹ Guide on beneficiary registration, validation and financial viability check http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/lev/h2020-guide-lev_en.pdf

Table III.6 FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF ORGANISATIONS		
Evaluation score	General	RIF Measures
0	Unsatisfactory	Contract Preparation procedure suspension
1-3	Infeasible	(a) Bank guarantee required from the Organisation equal to the amount of the pre-financing the duration which will be from project start to six (6) months after the Contract End Date (letter template to be obtained from the RIF), or (b) Organisation will receive a lower pre-financing of 15% and semi-annual instalments on the basis of the its eligible costs, which will be stated in the corresponding Payment Requests that will be approved by the RIF.
4-5	Satisfactory	No measures taken.
6-10	Good	No measures taken.

Organisations will be able to check their financial viability using the Financial Viability Self Check Tool which is available in the RIF IRIS Portal.

For the purposes of contract preparation, the organisations' financial viability check results will be valid for twenty-four (24) months since the reference date of the financial statements submitted and examined according to the check procedure.

Stamp Duty

In accordance with the relevant law and the Stamp Duty Commissioner, the RIF is exempted of stamp duty. Nevertheless, the research project contracts entered into by and between the RIF and the Beneficiaries must be submitted to the Stamp Duty Commissioner in order to separately examine whether the activities thereof concern technical projects, which are subject to the provisions of the Stamp Duty Law.

Consequently, each research Project Contract with a budget exceeding Euro 5,000 must be submitted by the Host Organisation to the Stamp Duty Commissioner at the latest ten (10) calendar days after signature thereof.

4.5. FINAL DECISION - CONTRACT SIGNATURE

The final decision for the projects to be funded is made on the basis of the Contract Preparation procedure results. The signing of the Contracts must be completed up to 3 months from the date of the invitation to the Contract Preparation procedure. Otherwise, RIF reserves the right to terminate the Contract Preparation process.

The Aid Granting Date is the date of contract signing, or, in the cases where no contract is signed, the date of the RIF letter to the beneficiary regarding funding approval.

In the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, all decisions for funding, pertaining to State aid, will be made by 31 December 2026, based on the revised duration of the General block exemption Regulation (GBER).

As a rule, a Project Contract is signed for every project selected for funding. The Contract is signed by the legal representatives of the RIF and the Host Organisation. The project Implementation Completion Date is set as the project's scientific implementation date. The Contract End date is set as the date on which the Host Organisation transfers to the Partner Organisations their share of the funding disbursed by the RIF. In the cases where there are not any Partner Organisations, the Contract End date is set as the disbursement of the final payment to the Host Organisation.

The RIF reserves the right to cancel the Project Contract, if the Host Organisation representatives fail to sign it within one (1) month from their invitation date to sign the Contract.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

5.1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

The project management shall be conducted in accordance with the Project Contract provisions.

The RIF shall be entitled to act in a manner that shall ensure the smooth implementation of the projects it funds, by means of effective audits and, if any irregularities are found, it shall enforce dissuasive sanctions.

The Host Organisation (HO) shall be responsible for the proper implementation of the project's total Budget. Furthermore, the HO shall provide guidance to other Consortium members, as to the project management regulations and procedures.

Each Consortium member shall be responsible for the proper management of the funding aid it shall receive and the implementation of the costs pertaining to it in the context of the project implementation.

If the HO finds that a Consortium member fails to meet its obligations relating to project implementation and budget management, then it must take the appropriate measures and update the RIF immediately.

Legal Liability

The Host Organisation is legally liable for the project management and implementation.

Record Keeping and Document Submission

The Host Organisation shall be obligated to keep all information and documents pertaining to the project implementation progress (such as progress reports, payment requests, expenditure invoices, information on the project indicators, the required licenses, information and publicity actions etc.) in a separate printed or electronic Project Documentation File, which they are required to keep for at least ten (10) years from the aid granting date pursuant to the General Block Exemption Regulation EU 651/2014. To this end, the HO must request copies of such documents from the other members of the Consortium.

All Consortium members shall be obligated to keep printed or electronic records of all original documents (invoices, receipts, agreements, information and publicity actions etc.) pertaining to the project implementation for at least ten (10) years from the aid granting date pursuant to the General Block Exemption Regulation EU 651/2014.

If the Project Documentation File is not properly kept, as set out above, resulting in financial loss by the State of resources that derive from the European Structural and Investment Funds, then the HO is liable for refunding the relevant aid bearing interest, in accordance with Chapter 5.6. of the present Work Programme.

The Project Documentation File and/or the records of Organisations will be checked by the RIF during the on-the spot financial verifications that will be conducted at the Host Organisation or the Partner Organisations, as appropriate.

5.2. PROJECT CHANGES PROCEDURE

The Project Coordinator (PC) shall be able to proceed with project changes in the following cases, without prior approval from the RIF:

- **Research Team Composition:** Changes as to the research team members with the exception of the PC and research members specifically targeted by the Programme (e.g. Young Researchers on a DIDACTOR Programme).
- **Minor Project Activity change/amendment:** Where the PC considers that a research or other project activity requires a small change or modification that will not have major impact on the course of the Project, then they may unilaterally apply the modification.

In the cases that follow, project changes are possible, but prior approval of the RIF is required:

- **Project Extension:** Where necessary, it is possible to submit a request for project duration extension. As a rule, the extension duration will not exceed 3 months. The request for extension pertains to the project implementation completion date and, as a rule, is granted only once.
- **Consortium Composition:** The request may pertain to change, addition or removal of a Partner Organisation from the Consortium. The RIF examines the reasons for which the change in the Consortium's composition is requested, while the PC makes sure that the provisions of the Work Programme and of the Consortium Agreement, in the context of which the project was approved, are met.
- **Foreign Research Organisation Change:** The request may pertain to change, addition or cessation of cooperation of a Foreign Research Organisation with the Consortium.
- **Major Project Activity change/amendment:** The PC may request from the RIF approval for research activity modification that is of major significance to the project.
- **Request for Project Termination:** In exceptional circumstances, the RIF may consider and accept a request for project termination. Acceptance of such request may be accompanied by a demand on behalf of the RIF to be refunded the entire or part of the funding amount it has disbursed for the project implementation until that time.
- **Request for PC Replacement:** In exceptional circumstances, the RIF may consider and accept a request for PC replacement, which, as a rule, is submitted by the Host

Organisation's Legal Representative, accompanied by information stating the reasons for which such change is requested.

In the above cases, the RIF may consult a specialized expert before deciding on acceptance or rejection of a request.

The main condition for the acceptance of request for a project change by the RIF is that it will not decrease the scientific quality of the project, affect the exploitation and dissemination capability of the results and cause significant deviation from the objectives of the Call of Proposals under which the project is being funded. Furthermore, additional factors are taken into consideration such as the avoidance of negative impact on the Foundation's financial planning, the timely absorption of resources from the EU Structural and Investment Funds, etc.

Where RIF approval is required, this is communicated to the Coordinator or the Host Organisation within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of receipt of the request. The time frame for examining a request for a major activity change or a change of PC is forty-five (45) calendar days. If additional information is required to complete examination of a request, the time required for its submission is added to the time the RIF will need in order to communicate its decision. If the additional information is not submitted to the RIF within twenty-one (21) calendar days from the day requested, the RIF reserves the right to reject the request.

All changes made, either following RIF's approval or by virtue of a unilateral decision of the PC, are specifically reported in the progress reports.

Budget Revision

The Project Coordinator (PC) is entitled to revise the Consortium Budget without prior approval from the RIF, if this pertains to:

- Amendment in the amount of a Cost category not exceeding the amount mentioned in the initial budget by more than $\pm 40\%$ with a maximum of €15,000, or
- Transfer to a Cost category with zero budget that does not exceed €2,000.

For Projects funded with the method "Personnel costs plus 40% on Personnel Costs for covering the rest of the Project costs" no revision of budget for the participating organization can be accepted without the prior approval of the RIF.

Upon examination of the Payment Request, the RIF reserves the right not to approve the changes, if it is found that the general requirements for cost eligibility, as described in Chapter 3.3. of the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme are not met.

In cases showing the need for:

- (a) Project budget revision exceeding the limits mentioned above, and
- (b) Transfer of funding from one consortium member to another irrespective of the size of the amount,

the Project Coordinator (PC) must submit a relevant request and obtain approval from the RIF. Budget Revision Requests within the above limits will not be examined by the Foundation.

Regarding funded projects' budget revisions, the following are specified:

- Budget revisions that the PC has the right to proceed with without prior approval by the RIF (if they fall within the above-mentioned limits) relate only to adjustments within the same Category of Aided Activities (e.g. expenditure on "Research and Development Activities").
 - However, in the case of a Programme where a specific budget per research activity is set in the "Research and Development Activities" Category of Aided Activities, budget transfer from one research activity to another is not allowed.
- In the event that there is a need for budget adjustments between different Categories of Aided Activities³⁰, the PC must submit a request and obtain approval from the RIF. The following are the exceptions to the rule:
 - The budget of the "Participation of SMEs in Fairs" Category of Aided Activities (where applicable), which will be included in the Contract of a project, cannot be transferred to other categories of activities, during project implementation.
 - In the "Research Infrastructures" Programme, the transfer of budget to and from the "Investment Aid for Research Infrastructures" Category of Aided Activities during project implementation is not allowed.

For cases of budget adjustment between different Categories of Aided Activities, the following are specified:

- The Final Aid Intensity, which is defined as a percentage of the Requested Funding in relation to the Project Budget, must not exceed the Final Aid Intensity specified in the Project Contract, and the Final Funding of the RIF (for the funded Project) cannot exceed the Requested Funding of the Project specified in the Contract.
- The individual Aid Intensities for each Category of Aided Activities may not exceed the respective Maximum Permitted Aid Intensity for each category, as defined in the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme.

5.3. PROJECT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

All expenditure made in the context of the project must be supported with invoices, payment receipts or other documents issued for the Consortium member they refer to. The Organisation's record keeping must allow for direct matching of the copies submitted with the Payment Request to the original documents.

In Projects funded with the method "Personnel costs plus 40% on Personnel Costs for covering the rest of the Project costs" in the Payment Request, only the expenses of the Personnel Remuneration category are declared as described below.

³⁰ Refers to the Business Innovation Programmes ("PRE-SEED", "SEED" and "INNOVATE"), the "DISRUPT" Programme, the "Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity EIC" Programme and the "Research Infrastructures" Programme.

The Simplified Cost Option and expenditure declaration “Personnel costs plus 40% on Personnel Costs for covering the rest of the Project costs” in a funded project does not revoke the obligation to follow the National Law and the Union Regulatory Framework, as described in Part 8.6 of the present document. The competent auditing bodies of the Republic of Cyprus reserve the right to carry out a relevant audit for the implementation of the Laws and Regulations.

Detailed Ledger

All members of the Consortium are obligated to post transactions in the project account in the organisation’s accounting system, which must be adequately codified for the purpose of identifying and grouping expenditures pertaining to the specific project.

In any event, the direct matching of the conduct of transaction stages must be ensured from beginning to end, and the expenditures pertaining to the project must be entered in such a way as to permit reconciliation between the detailed ledgers, the supporting documents and the funding management.

The project’s detailed ledger kept by each Partner Organisation is submitted to the RIF with each payment request.

5.4. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE FOR PROJECT EXPENDITURE

The necessary supporting documents that must be submitted to the RIF for the purposes of examination and approval of eligible costs per expenditure category, are shown in detail below.

It is made clear that electronic transactions are eligible provided that the requirements mentioned below, are satisfied.

As a rule, a supporting evidence for a specific expenditure shall be submitted to the Foundation only once.

5.4.1. Personnel Cost

Time Sheets and Employment Contracts

All members of the Consortium must maintain Time Sheets (TSs) for all members of their research team. TSs must cover 100% of the employees’ working time. TSs must reflect the actual employment hours per day for each project funded by the RIF or other funding organisations and any other activities of the organisation’s employee.

The members of the research team will declare for each month included in a Financial Report the hours they devote to all funded projects (RIF, Horizon 2020/Europe, other national or European funding bodies) and other activities (e.g. organisation administration) even if the time effort relevant to RIF-funded projects is zero. In case of multiple employment, participating organisations will declare, in the frame of submitting an Interim and Final Report to the Foundation, all the employments of the researchers participating in the projects they implement.

In case the total productive hours are exceeded (1720), any cuts will be made in chronological order in which the implementation periods of the projects are completed and provided that the need for a cut arises.

TSs must be kept on a daily basis and indicate the Proposal Number of each project funded by the RIF and the Work Package for which the stated time was dedicated. Each Sheet must show the reference month and year and bear the signatures of the researcher and his/her supervisor.

With regard to personnel costs for members of research groups that cannot be funded by the RIF, the TSs may be submitted on a monthly, semi-annual, or annual basis, or according to the period for which the report is submitted.

The following are instances when TSs submission is not required:

- Researchers working under full time employment for the project implementation.
- Researchers working on the project at a fixed proportion of their time each month.

In such cases, the researcher's Employment Contract may be submitted instead of the TSs, stating the time he/she will be dedicating to the project implementation. If the need arises to terminate the fixed proportion of employment in the project implementation, TSs must be submitted for the period after the modification.

The following must apply for the researcher's Employment Contract:

- It describes the scope of the agreement between the two parties,
- It sets out information regarding the employment, namely the remuneration, the corresponding time of work, working hours, supervision, duties and other employment terms,
- If the employee is not employed by the organisation on a full time basis, the time he/she shall dedicate to the organisation to facilitate calculation of his respective hourly rate should be defined, and
- The duration of the Contract must cover the period of the salary payments as appearing in the payroll.

The eligible personnel cost is calculated according to one of the following methods. Each Organisation will use a specific method for calculating personnel cost, which will be defined in the Project Contract. At the stage of Contract Preparation for the chronologically first project of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes in which the organisation participated and which was selected in the frame of a Call for Proposals covering personnel expenses, the Legal Representative of each participating organisation was called upon to select the method for calculating the organisation's Personnel cost. This selection is binding throughout the duration of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes and the method will apply to all projects that the organisation will be participating in.

All beneficiary entities that have not previously participated in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, are obliged to make use of the simplified Method "Standard Scales of Unit Costs" for the calculation of staff remuneration.

Standard Scales of Unit Costs:

The standard scales of unit costs are amongst the measures for simplification and reduction of the administrative load. Based on historical data and other objective information the average hourly rate for specific research categories has been calculated by external consultants on behalf of the RIF. This cost is considered eligible expenditure for all corresponding cases and does not require the submission of supporting documents and their examination.

The standard scales of unit costs that apply are presented in Table III.7a and Table III.7b, as follows:

A. For Call for Proposals prior 1/11/2021

Table III.7a Standard Scales of Unit Costs			
Researcher Category	Hourly Rate Until 29/02/2020 (€)	Hourly Rate from 01/03/2020 until 31/12/2023 (€)	Updated Hourly Rate from 01/01/2024 (€)
Researcher at Professor level at a Higher and Tertiary Education Institution	38.00	45.00	47.00
Researcher at Associate Professor level at a Higher and Tertiary Education Institution or PhD holder with at least seven (7) years since the date awarded	29.00	34.00	36.00
PhD holder with at least two (2) to six (6) years since the date awarded	21.00	25.00	26.00
PhD holder with less than two (2) years since the date awarded	20.00	23.00	25.00
PhD Candidate	14.00	16.00	17.00
Holder of Degree or Post Graduate Title with at least five (5) years since the date awarded	19.00	22.00	23.00
Holder of Degree or Post Graduate Title less than five (5) years since the date awarded or Technical Staff	16.00	19.00	20.00

B. For Call for Proposals from 1/11/2021 onwards

Table III.7b Standard Scales of Unit Costs		
Researcher Category	Hourly Rate from 01/11/2021 until 31/12/2023 (€)	Updated Hourly Rate from 01/01/2024 (€)
Researcher at Professor level at a Higher and Tertiary Education Institution	45.00	47.00
Private Sector Managers	36.00	42.00
Researcher at Associate Professor level at a Higher and Tertiary Education Institution or PhD holder with at least seven (7) years since the date awarded	34.00	36.00
PhD holder	25.00	26.00
Holder of Degree or Post Graduate Title with at least five (5) years since the date awarded	22.00	23.00
Holder of Degree or Post Graduate Title less than five (5) years since the date awarded or Technical Staff	19.00	20.00

The inclusion of researchers in the category "Private Sector Executives" will be possible if the company in question employs at least 10 people. For the purposes of applying this criterion, where the company in question is part of a group of companies, the number of employees at group level shall be taken into account.

The calculation of eligible personnel cost in accordance with the Standard Scales of Unit Costs method is as follows:

Eligible Cost	=	Personnel Hourly Rate	X	Researcher's Hours on the Project
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- **Researcher's Hourly Rate:** The Hourly Rate corresponding to the researcher category each researcher falls under at the time the expenditure is made. In case the researcher changes category, the corresponding staff hourly rate will apply from the first day of the month following the change.
- **Hours on the Project:** The time dedicated on project implementation by the researcher, as declared on the Time Sheets (TSs) or the Employment Contract (if the proportion of employment on the project per month is fixed).

The supporting documents required to calculate the eligible costs are the following:

- Certificate of Studies (Degree, Post Graduate Title, PhD), and
- Time Sheets (TSs) or Employment Contract as appropriate, and
- Decision by the competent body for appointment of the researcher at Professor or Associate Professor level at a Higher and Tertiary Education Institution (as applicable).
- Should a researcher be classified in the "Private Sector Executives" category, documentary evidence certifying the position of the researcher in the company (certificate from the Competent Department of the organisation, organisation chart, etc.) and the number of staff members (Social Insurance statements).

Specific Hourly Staff Cost:

The Specific Hourly Staff Cost is determined as follows:

Specific Hourly Staff Cost	=	Annual Gross Staff Cost
		1720

The number of 1720 hours has been defined by the EU as the standard annual productive working time.

The numerator must be justified on the basis of the latest documented annual gross personnel cost.

As such, this method may apply only in the case of Researchers who have been working for their Organisation for at least the last three (3) consecutive months prior to the announcement of the evaluation results.

Otherwise, personnel cost will be calculated pursuant to Actual Staff Costs.

The calculation of eligible personnel cost in accordance with the Specific Hourly Staff Cost method is as follows:

Eligible Cost	=	Specific Hourly Staff Cost	x	Researcher's Hours on the Project
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- **Specific Hourly Staff Cost:** It is calculated three (3) months prior to the completion of the specific reporting period for the chronologically first project of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes in which the organisation participates in and which is selected in the frame of a Call for Proposals covering personnel expenses. The numerator must be justified on the basis of the latest documented annual gross personnel cost in accordance with the researcher's Payroll as shown in the organisation's accounting system wherein the researcher's gross salary and the employer's contributions are recorded in detail for the last twelve (12) consecutive months prior to the date the results are announced. The Payroll must be in a form which allows the audit by the RIF. RIF may request the

submission of additional documentation (e.g. Terms of Employment, Time Sheets etc.) justifying the personnel cost. It should be noted that the eligible costs for personnel cost consist of the gross salary plus contributions payable to the State authorities pursuant to relevant legislation, plus the employer’s contributions pertaining to Health Insurance and Provident Fund. Costs such as the following are not taken into consideration: (a) Overtime, (b) Bonuses, and (c) Commission, allowances (e.g. rent) etc.

In the case where the researcher has not been employed by the organisation for twelve (12) months but has been employed by the organisation for at least the last three (3) months prior to the announcement of the evaluation results, the calculation of the annual gross personnel cost is based on the justified gross personnel cost for the months of employment extrapolated in a twelve months’ period.

The Specific Hourly Staff Cost of each researcher remains fixed for all projects funded by the RIF for a period of two (2) years from the start of the chronologically first project that the researcher participates in (in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes) and which is selected in the frame of a Call for Proposals covering personnel expenses.

- **Hours on the Project:** The time dedicated on the project implementation by the researcher, as declared on the Time Sheets (TSs) or the Employment Contract as appropriate. For the purpose of calculating the eligible costs, the number of hours of work in a twelve (12) month period that will be taken into consideration by the RIF, is 1720.

In the case of a researcher for whom the Specific Hourly Cost has been calculated in advance, the supporting documents required to calculate the eligible costs are the Time Sheets (TSs) or the researcher’s Employment Contract, if the researcher’s proportion of employment on the project per month is fixed.

Actual Staff Expenditure:

The eligible cost for personnel will be calculated on the basis of the organisation’s actual expenditure.

Initially, the researcher’s hourly cost is calculated for the specific month:

Researcher’s Hourly Cost for a Specific Month	=	Gross Cost for the Researcher for a Specific Month <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> Monthly Productive Hours of the Organisation
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Subsequently, the eligible expenditure is calculated for the researcher’s remuneration for the specific month as follows:

Eligible Expenditure for a Specific Month	=	Hourly Cost for the Researcher for a Specific Month	X	Researcher’s Hours on the Project for a Specific Month
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The supporting documents required to calculate the eligible costs are the following:

- Time sheets (where applicable),
- Employment Contract,
- Pay Slips,
- Employer's contributions payment receipt (Social Insurance Services, Tax Department etc.),
- For contributions to Provident Funds: Statutes of the Provident Fund with a rate of contributions that can be reconciled with the contribution shown in the payroll, and for contributions to a Health Insurance Plan: Document showing that the Health Insurance Plan is provided to all the employees of the organisation with the same conditions and document from the Insurance Company confirming the plan provision. The Insurance Company must be included in the approved list of Insurance/Reinsurance Companies of the Insurance Companies Control Service.

The following Payroll Settlement Documents are required along with supporting documents of expenditures, which must reconcile exactly with the researcher's net salary as shown in the payroll:

- Bank transfer advice slip or copy of a cheque issued by the organisation clearly evidencing clearance of the cheque in the bank account statement, and
- Social Insurance Services settlement documents (Salary and Contributions Statement (YKA 2-002) and Payment Receipt (YKA 2-001)).

It is noted that costs will be deemed eligible only when supported by bank documents, it is clear that they are paid directly to the specific researcher and relate to his/her salary and not any other obligation (e.g. dividends, personal expenses, loan repayments etc.). If the monthly salary payments are not consistent with the net salary shown in the organisation's payroll, the overall payment pertaining to salaries for the entire reference period is checked. If the total amount supported by the payment evidence is lower than the corresponding amount in the payroll, the eligible cost is limited to the amount supported by the payment evidence.

It is noted that in relation to Personnel cost the following are not eligible costs and therefore are not taken into consideration in calculating eligible costs:

- Overtime,
- Additional fee/Bonus, and
- Commissions, allowances (e.g. rent) etc.

With regard to Overtime, it is clarified that the cost for overtime and the corresponding time will not be taken into consideration in the calculation. The time declared in the TSs, for projects funded by the Foundation, beyond the total Productive Hours used for the calculation of the researcher's hourly cost which correspond to his/hers working period in the Project, will also not be taken into consideration. In case more hours than the relevant productive hours corresponding to the researcher's employment period are declared, but the hours charged in total on projects funded by the Foundation and other funding organisations do not exceed this number, no hours will be deducted. Otherwise, namely if overtime is identified on funded projects overall, the difference will be deducted from the Foundation's projects. In accordance with this practice there

will not be a detailed check of TSs for deducting hours charged on a daily basis, weekends and public holidays.

It is noted that, the researchers' working hours per month should be real, reasonable and consistent with the Labor Legislation.

Payroll is not required for the fees paid to members of Associations, Scientific Organisations or other organisations that do not employ personnel. The following supporting documentation will be required to calculate eligible costs:

- Contract of Collaboration / Provision of Services,
- Invoices issued pursuant to the Contract,
- Payment evidence, and
- Time Sheets.

5.4.2. Cost for Instruments and Equipment

The supporting documents required to calculate the eligible costs are the following:

- Equipment Purchase Agreement for expenditure exceeding Euro 15,000 excluding VAT (this also applies in cases where the expenditure charged to the project is lower than Euro 15,000 but the total expenditure of the Organisation with regard to the corresponding invoice exceeds this amount)
- Purchase, customs clearance invoices, etc.,
- Receipts from the supplier clearly showing invoice settlement, and
- Delivery/installation sheets.

Each invoice must have a unique document and VAT number. The invoices pertaining to equipment must show the equipment reference numbers (e.g. serial number).

One of the following is acceptable as proof of settlement:

- Receipt issued by the equipment supplier to the organisation,
- Bank transfer advice slip,
- Copy of the organisation's cheque with obvious evidence of the cleared cheque in the bank account statement, and
- Supplier's statement of account clearly showing payment of the entire invoice amount.

The equipment acquired during project implementation must be located at the premises of the entity that buys it and within the territories under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Equipment acquired for project implementation purposes will belong (after completion thereof) to the Organisation in whose budget the cost of acquisition is recorded.

5.4.3. Costs for External Services

A Contract (Agreement) for the External Services is required for this cost category, which must indicate amongst others:

- The agreement objective (description of the work to be implemented or service to be provided),
- Contract duration,
- The fee payable to the service provider.

The supporting documents required to calculate eligible costs are the following:

- Contract/Agreement of Collaboration/provision of services for expenditure exceeding Euro 15,000 excluding VAT (this also applies in cases where the expenditure charged to the project is lower than Euro 15,000 but the total expenditure of the Organisation with regard to the corresponding invoice exceeds this amount),
- Invoices,
- Settlement documents, and
- Deliverables (such as, for example, activity report, information day's schedules / agendas / participant lists, posters in conferences etc.).

One of the following is acceptable as proof of settlement:

- Receipt issued by the service provider to the organisation,
- Bank transfer advice slip,
- Copy of the organisation's cheque with obvious evidence of the cheque being cleared in the bank account statement, and
- Supplier's statement of account clearly showing payment of the entire invoice amount.

5.4.4. Costs for Foreign Research Organisations

The minimum number of documents submitted to the RIF to calculate eligible expenditures are:

- Collaboration Agreement of the Foreign Research Organisation (FRO) with the HO,
- Invoice issued by the FRO to the HO,
- Settlement documents, and
- Activity Report describing the work carried out by the FRO (relevant Deliverable).

5.4.5. Costs for Travelling Abroad

Eligible costs of the travelling abroad include:

- The actual cost of economy class air tickets and other means of transport for the purpose of travelling to and from the city of destination. Travel costs within the city of destination or costs to and from the place of residence shall not be eligible. An allowance of €30 is paid for travel purposes to and from the airport in Cyprus.
- Daily allowance based on the Standard Scale of Unit Costs which covers subsistence costs while traveling abroad. The eligible amount is the daily allowance for the days of the meeting/conference during which attendance is deemed necessary plus one day. Depending on the city of destination, the amount is calculated according to the Circular of the Ministry of Finance. The Foundation will announce a list of daily allowances per city

of destination in Euro at regular intervals in accordance with relevant circulars of the Ministry of Finance.

For trips with duration longer than the duration approved by the RIF, for the calculation of eligible costs, the Daily Subsistence Allowance Rate is reduced by 20% after the completion of 30 consecutive calendar days of stay in the same city. Temporary interruption of up to 5 days of the stay, either before the completion of the 30 days, or after, is not considered as interruption of the consecutive stay in the same city.

It is noted that if the actual cost of the Organisation for a trip is lower than the highest permissible (as resulting from the above calculations), then the amount that corresponds to the actual cost will be considered the eligible expense.

The supporting documents required for the calculation of the eligible costs are the following:

- Boarding passes,
- Invoice and receipt of payment of air ticket and other means of transport to and from the city of destination, and
- Invitations from organizers, agendas, minutes from meetings, presentations, participation certificates, where applicable, etc.

5.4.6. Consumables

The supporting documents required to calculate the eligible costs are the following:

- Consumables Purchase Agreement for expenditure exceeding Euro 15,000 excluding VAT (this also applies in cases where the expenditure charged to the project is lower than Euro 15,000 but the total expenditure of the Organisation with regard to the corresponding invoice exceeds this amount),
- Invoices corresponding to the requested expenditures (including the cost for customs clearance), and
- Settlement documents.

One of the following is acceptable as proof of settlement:

- Receipt issued by the supplier to the organisation,
- Bank transfer advice slip,
- Copy of the organisation's cheque with obvious evidence of the cheque being cleared in the bank account statement, and
- Supplier's statement of account clearly showing payment of the entire invoice amount.

5.4.7. Other specific costs

The documents required to calculate the eligible costs are the following:

- Invoices,
- Settlement documents,

- Invoice and settlement receipt for Conference Registration Fee, as applicable,
- Researcher's Claim Form for traveling costs within Cyprus and the relevant proof of reimbursement of the Researcher's costs by the Beneficiary. It is noted that traveling costs within Cyprus will be deemed eligible according to the applicable Circular of the Ministry of Finance only in the cases where a special provision is included in the Project Contract or an important need arises during the implementation of the project, and
- Deliverables (such as e.g. copies of publications in scientific magazines, repositories etc.), as applicable.

Please note that all activities pertaining to dissemination and exploitation of the research project results (Cost Categories "Costs for External Services" and "Other Specific Costs"), even those to be carried out after project Implementation Completion, must acknowledge the RIF financial support with the use of logos and/or appropriate reference.

Furthermore, all actions to exploit and disseminate the results of research projects should necessarily provide for the recognition of financial support from the relevant financial Fund / Mechanism in accordance with the visibility and publicity rules applicable to the EU-funded Programmes of the 2021-2027 programming period (including both the Cohesion Policy Funds and the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility), based on the relevant guidance to member states³¹. Relevant information can also be found on the national websites of the respective Programmes / Schemes (<https://www.structuralfunds.org.cy/κανονισμοί-εε-πρόγραμμα-θαλασσα> for ESIF and <http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/> for the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Cyprus).

In the event of non-compliance with the EU information and publicity regulations, the relevant expenditure may be deemed ineligible, requiring the recovery of part or all of the relevant amount disbursed.

Submission of receipts for expenditures under categories "**Other Expenses (Simplified Cost Option and Declaration of Expenses)**" and "**Overheads**" is not required.

5.5. TENDER PROCEDURES

Organisations obligated to apply National and Community legislation and policies pertaining to public procurements and related matters, must comply with the relevant guidelines of the competent Authority ("Cyprus RRF Management and Control System"³² / Managing Authority for the Cohesion Policy Funds) and attach to the Payment Requests:

- the relevant compliance certificates or the corresponding annexes, and
- the evaluation report of the tender procedure and other supporting documents regarding the tender and award procedure.

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/funding_tenders/guidance_for_member_states-november_2021-final.pdf

³² Cyprus RRF Management and Control System
[http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/914BB71E30DA1E36C2258759001F9059/\\$file/MCS_Cyprus%20RRP_AnnexIV_v.2.0.pdf](http://www.cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypresidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/914BB71E30DA1E36C2258759001F9059/$file/MCS_Cyprus%20RRP_AnnexIV_v.2.0.pdf)

The “Law on Public Procurement of 2016” applies to public procurements for research and development services covered under code numbers CPV 73000000-2 to 73120000-9, 73300000-5, 73420000-2 and 73430000-5 of the single classification system for public procurement³³, provided the following conditions are cumulatively met:

- (a) The products belong exclusively to the organisation for their own use while they engage in the contract activity, and
- (b) The provision of services is paid by the organisation in its entirety.

The remaining organisations must receive and evaluate at least three (3) independent tenders for each purchase exceeding Euro 15,000 (excluding VAT) resulting in the selection of the most economical solution that meets their needs. Expenses for research and development services for which the Research and Innovation Foundation will examine whether the organisations apply basic principles such as fair competition, selection of the most economical solutions meeting their needs and their evaluation, selection and award is in accordance with their regulations, shall be excluded.

The Law that provides for the “Regulation of Public Procurement Procedures and related Matters” of 2016 applies in cases of conclusion of a contract between a Contracting Authority, as defined in the Law, and a Foreign Research Organisation. An exception to the scope of the Law are the following cases in which it will be possible to conclude a direct contract with the Foreign Research Organisation that is considered as suitable for the purposes of the implementation of the project, after examining the following criteria in the order presented below. The criteria are examined sequentially and in case none of the three is met, the award of the contract must be concluded in accordance with the provisions of the Law.

- Stage 1: The Bilateral Contract between the Contractor and the Foreign Research Organisation grants at least part of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of the results of the bilateral cooperation to the Foreign Research Organisation, or
- Stage 2: An entity that is not a Contracting Authority participates in the Consortium and the Collaboration Agreement grants to that organization at least part of the Intellectual Property Rights of the project, or
- Stage 3: There is a wide dissemination of the project results and the results are fully available to stakeholders.

5.6. FINANCIAL VERIFICATIONS

Payment Requests

The HO must submit to the RIF Payment Requests at the intervals defined in the Project Contract. As a rule, Payment Requests are submitted up to one (1) month from the submission of the corresponding Progress Report and, at the latest, two (2) months after the completion of the half (Interim Payment Request) and the entire project implementation (Final Payment Request).

³³ <https://simap.ted.europa.eu/el/web/simap/cpv>

Payment Requests are submitted electronically through the Electronic Project Monitoring System and include Tables of Expenditures for each member of the Consortium.

Payment Request Check

The RIF checks all Payment Requests and disburses the corresponding funding to the beneficiaries within a period of ninety calendar days (90 days) at the latest from Request submission and provided that the corresponding Progress Report has also been submitted.

The Payment Request Check procedure is temporarily suspended and as a result the above period is extended in the following circumstances:

- The necessary supporting documents have not been submitted or are not clear, and
- An investigation has been launched in relation to a possible irregularity.

In such circumstances, the Project Coordinator and the Host Organisation's Financial Contact Point (FCP) will be informed in writing with regard to the suspension in the Payment Request examination procedure and the reasons thereof. The suspension will be valid from the date of communication from the RIF up to the submission of the required supporting documents and/or clarifications.

It is noted that the RIF will ask for the submission of the necessary outstanding supporting documents and/or clarifications, as a rule, up to twice. After the deadline for submission of the supplementary information, which is set at twenty-one (21) calendar days, the RIF will proceed to the completion of the financial verification on the basis of the information at hand.

In any event, Payment Requests for research projects, for which the corresponding Progress Reports have not been submitted to the RIF, will not be examined.

Financial Verification Procedure

The purpose of the financial verification procedure is to ensure proper implementation of the research project's budget and its compliance with relevant rules and regulations.

Financial verifications are conducted on all Payment Requests and for all the expenditures included therein. It is checked that each expenditure, among other things:

- Pertains to an activity/transaction occurred within the eligible period corresponding to the duration of project implementation (for the depreciation of equipment and consumables see Chapter 3.4) and was settled at the latest by the submission of the final Payment Request,
- Is related to an approved activity and complies to the Project Contract terms,
- Meets national and Community eligibility rules,
- Is documented with adequate supporting evidence also ensuring the audit trail,
- Meets the terms for payments, for simplified cost calculation methods, and
- Where applicable, it complies with Community and national public procurement rules and adheres to national and Community publicity rules.

Verifications may be administrative and/or on-the spot and are conducted via the examination of Payment Requests and accompanying documents and evidence. The RIF or its authorised representative (e.g. Audit Firm acting on behalf of the RIF), conducts:

- Administrative verifications on all Payment Requests, and
- If deemed necessary, on-the spot verifications of Final Payment Requests.

Furthermore, the RIF or its authorised representative, may conduct on-the spot verifications of interim Payment Requests or on Partner Organisations, when deemed necessary.

Prior to the conduct of an on-the spot verification, the Foundation shall timely inform the Host Organisation's Project Coordinator (PC) and Financial Contact Point (FCP) so that they prepare as appropriate and put at the disposal of the RIF all necessary documents.

Expenditure Verifications on a Sample Basis

The RIF is obligated to check all the expenditures included in a Payment Request. The only exception may be Payment Requests submitted by organisations that are qualified for expenditure checks on a sample basis, after taking into consideration various risk factors (expenditure value and nature, beneficiary category, past experience etc.).

Expenditure checks on a sample basis may apply to both Public and Private Sector entities, taking into consideration the number of their participations in RIF Programmes and the Foundation's experience relative to their capability in the financial management of research projects.

The application of sample testing methodology for the purposes of performing verification of Payment Requests is based on Circular 5 - "Guidelines for the Verification Procedures for the Projects funded under the Operational Programs" Competitiveness and Sustainable Development", "Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion" and "Sea". The following provisions apply:

- Verification of costs on a sample basis is performed when the population of the entries included in a Payment Request consists of more than 20 (twenty) items. In case the items are equal to or fewer than 20 (twenty) the Payment Request is verified on a 100% basis,
- It is ensured that the sample selected includes items from all cost categories in the Payment Request,
- The methodology can also be applied to the verifications of Payment Requests submitted by Large Enterprises.

Based on the above provisions, it is not necessary to attach any supporting documentation to the Payment Requests of projects funded under the RESTART Programme 2016 - 2020.

Based on the review of the submitted Payment Request, the Foundation informs the Organisations about the expenses for which the necessary supporting documents must be submitted, in accordance with the Provisions of the RESTART Programme 2016-2020.

The verification of Payment Requests on a sample basis does not apply to organisations which:

1. have no previous participation in RIF's programmes, or
2. during their previous participation in RIF's programmes, they did not perform adequately in the financial management of research projects. This exception relates to the first Payment Request submitted by Organisations against which sanctions have been imposed.

In case a Call for Proposals provides for the use of a simplified method of calculation and declaration of costs, the calculation of the eligible costs of the Projects will be done under the method "Personnel costs plus 40% on Personnel Costs for covering the rest of the Project costs". RIF has the obligation to verify only the expenses included under the category "Personnel Costs" with regards to the Payment Requests that are submitted in the framework of the Projects funded under these Calls. The verification of the costs in this category may be performed on a sample basis. The methodology to be applied is as described above.

Financial Verification Results

The results of the financial verification are communicated to the PC by the Foundation's Accounting Department with a notification to the FCP of the HO and the RIF Project Officer, by sending the Decision of Instalment Disbursement.

Redress Procedure

The Host Organisation is entitled to submit a request for redress regarding the result of the Final Payment Request Verification.

Requests for redress are submitted only by the Legal Representative of the Host Organisation or the PC by sending the relevant Form through the electronic system together with the necessary documents, within twenty-one (21) calendar days from the communication of the Verification Decision on the Final Payment Request.

Request for redress submitted by other individuals and organisations are not examined. Where necessary, however, the RIF may communicate directly with the Partner Organisations for clarifications and supplementary information concerning the request for redress. The supplementary information will be requested by the RIF only once and if not submitted by the date specified in the relevant message, the examination of the request for redress will be conducted taking into consideration the information submitted by the end date.

All relevant electronic communication will be notified to the Project Coordinator, the RIF Project Officer and the Financial Contact Point of the Host Organisation.

If during the request for redress examination further expenditures are found to be eligible, then a further amount of funding will be disbursed.

Funding Recovery

Under circumstances where for any reason (e.g. termination, low budget implementation etc.), the amount of funding already disbursed is higher than the funding amount that the Consortium is entitled to receive on the basis of eligible costs, the RIF is obligated to recover the balance. To this end, the PC is informed of the reasons and the exact amount that must be returned to the Foundation including legal interest, where applicable.

If this amount is not returned within ninety (90) calendar days, the HO is charged legal interest calculated from the date of receipt of the letter sent by the RIF pertaining to the demand for funding refund, up to the date the amount due is fully settled.

Finally, the Foundation may take all required legal measures to achieve refund of the amount due, if such amount is not returned.

Please note that the HO is exclusively liable for returning the funding, irrespective of whether the debt is generated due to a Partner Organisation in the Consortium.

Debt Settlement Procedure

A Settlement Process may be applied in cases where the Host Organisation (HO) is unable to make a lump sum payment within the deadline for amounts exceeding Euro 10,000.

Funding Transfers

The HO is responsible to transfer the amount corresponding to their share of the funding to the other members of the Consortium, in accordance with the provisions of the project Budget, the progress of the work and each one's participation in the implementation of the project and the Decision for Instalment Disbursement, taking into consideration the Consortium Agreement. The transfer of the amount must be carried out as soon as possible and the documents confirming such transfer to the Partner Organisations must be submitted to the RIF within two (2) months from the date of Instalment disbursement.

One of the following may be submitted as proof:

- A copy of a cheque clearly showing its settlement on the Host Organisation's statement of account.
- Bank transfer advice slip.

It is noted that transfer of funds from one Consortium member to another in cash will not be accepted by the RIF.

If the supporting evidence pertaining to the Final Funding Instalment for transfer by the HO to the Partner Organisations of amount corresponding to their share of the funding is not submitted within the deadline indicated above, the relevant costs of the Partner Organisations will become ineligible and the return of the relevant funding plus legal interest, will be requested back from the HO.

Receipts in the Frame of the Project

The RIF funding must not result in profit for the organisation or in double funding (namely funding of the same expenditure from more than one source).

The following are considered receipts:

- Cash transfers to the organisation by third parties (funding by third parties) if transferred for no other reason than funding the project and to the extent that they are not refunded or repaid by the organisation to the third party.
- Income generated in the frame of the project (e.g. income from the sale of equipment acquired for the purposes of the project, charges for participation to events organised by the organisation etc.).

All income generated in the frame of the project must be declared in the Payment Request of the organisation involved to be taken under consideration in calculating its funding (reducing the eligible cost by an amount equal to the revenue). This rule applies at organisation level.

Audits from other Competent Authorities

National competent authorities and the European Commission or their authorised representatives are entitled to conduct Administrative and On-the Spot Financial Audits during project implementation and up to ten (10) years from the date the aid is granted (see Chapter 5.1 and 5.3 in Section III of the present Work Programme) on all members of the Consortium.

Audits after the Final Payment

For funded projects that involve investment in infrastructure or productive investment, audits may be carried out up to ten (10) years after the projects' final payment.

6. PROJECT MONITORING

The Project Monitoring procedure pertains to the implementation of measures to facilitate the research activity and at the same time, to ensure the qualitative implementation of the Projects through effective tools and procedures.

The progress and results of the projects are monitored and evaluated by the RIF through the submission of progress reports, the application of a scientific evaluation procedure for the progress of projects and the conduct of on-the spot visits at the areas where the research is carried out.

Selection of the tools and procedures applied with the aim of the optimal monitoring of the projects is performed according to the Maximum Funding Amount (the maximum funding a project can receive) as defined in the Programme description and/or the corresponding Work Programme. Projects are categorised in three levels as follows:

- Large Project: Maximum funding amount exceeding Euro 500,000

- Medium-sized Project: Maximum funding amount between Euro 120,000-500,000
- Small Project: Maximum funding amount lower than Euro 120,000

6.1. PROGRESS REPORTS

The Host Organisation is responsible for the submission of progress reports to the RIF via the Project Coordinator. The progress reports are filled in on standard forms provided by the RIF in electronic form and are submitted to the RIF within a predetermined time frame. The progress reports pertain to the implementation of the work as defined in the Contract.

The types of reports, depending on their content are the following:

- **Interim Progress Report:** Includes a brief description of the work implemented during the first half of the project and the completed Deliverables of the project.
- **Final Progress Report:** It includes the description of the work carried out during the entire project implementation period as well as other information required in the provided forms. The project Deliverables are also attached.
- **Payment Request:** It includes expenditures pertaining to the time period of project implementation for which the report is being submitted and for which the disbursement of part of the funding is required, or specific expenditures (irrespective of the project implementation time period) for which the disbursement of an instalment is required (e.g. equipment).

The frequency and time frame for Report submission are as follows:

- **Medium-sized and Large Projects:** Interim Progress Report and Final Progress Report. The reports are submitted up to thirty (30) calendar days following the end of the time period they pertain to. A Payment Request is submitted when a funding aid instalment is required, as defined in the Project Contract. When the Payment Request pertains to expenditures for the first half of the project, it is submitted up to sixty (60) calendar days after completion of half the duration of project implementation. When the Payment Request pertains to disbursement of the final instalment of the funding aid, this is submitted up to sixty (60) calendar days after the date of project implementation completion. In Large Projects with an implementation duration longer than thirty six (36) months, it is possible to set different intervals for submission of Progress Reports in the Project Contract.
- **Small Projects:** Final Progress Report, which is submitted up to thirty (30) calendar days after project implementation completion. The Payment Request is submitted up to sixty (60) calendar days after the project implementation completion and pertains to expenditures occurred throughout the project duration.

In special circumstances it is possible for RIF to require the submission of periodic progress reports (e.g., projects receiving a low pre-financing). In such circumstances, the report period submission will be defined in the Project Contract. Furthermore, in special circumstances (e.g., in small projects) different arrangements may be specified in the Calls for Proposals in relation to report submission and payment requests.

The RIF reviews the reports within ninety (90) days from the day of submission of the corresponding payment request and the outcome of the review is communicated to the Project Coordinator. If additional information is required to complete the examination of the report, the time period until their submission is added to the ninety (90) calendar days from the date of submission of the corresponding payment request. If the supplementary information is not submitted within twenty-one (21) calendar days, the Report evaluation procedure continues without them.

All participating organisations will be asked to submit a Report on the impact of the project results two (2) years after Completion of its Implementation.

6.2. SCIENTIFIC VERIFICATIONS

The RIF conducts at least one monitoring visit for each funded project in order to be informed in person by the PC and the project team on the implementation and progress of the project activities, to check the equipment purchased (where applicable), to ascertain the implementation of the different tasks and the active involvement of the project team members and the organisations, and in general to ascertain the qualitative and problem-free project implementation. Furthermore, the monitoring visit enables the project team to get clarifications and advice from the RIF in matters of project management.

As a rule, no monitoring visits are conducted for the following Programmes:

- Innovation Vouchers,
- Industrial Property,
- Participation in International Brokerage Events,
- Encouragement of Project Coordination in “Horizon 2020 Programme”,
- Specific Actions of the “Nurturing a RTDI Culture” as it will be defined in the Call for Proposals, and
- Classified Labs – Dual Use Technologies.

The monitoring visit is conducted by the RIF Project Officer and/or other RIF executives or by specialized experts selected by the RIF for this purpose.

As a rule, the monitoring visit, to ascertain the smooth implementation of the project activities, is carried out as follows:

- Medium-sized and Large Projects: Upon completion of half the project implementation duration and, as a rule, after the submission of the Interim Progress Report.
- Small Projects: Upon completion of the project implementation duration and after the submission of the Final Progress Report.

Additional monitoring visits may be conducted by the RIF for On-the Spot Verifications when deemed necessary (e.g. at a kick-off meeting, a consortium meeting after an invitation, etc.), or if there is indication of insufficient implementation of the project activities. It is anticipated that the PC informs and invites the Project Officer in a reasonable time in advance for scheduled meetings of the Consortium.

Project Evaluation by Independent Experts

Project Evaluation by Independent Experts aims to showcase the valuable results that derive from the funded projects, as well as finding and dealing with cases where public funding does not end up to the results sought. Furthermore, the Evaluation Procedure contributes to the assessment of the RIF Programmes and to the improvement of the Foundation's processes.

The RIF Officers evaluate the implementation of a project on the basis of deliverables implementation, progress report examination and the conduct of on-the spot verifications. The quality of implementation and results of a project are evaluated in a larger extent by specialized experts in the project field who perform the Project Evaluation.

The Project Evaluation by Independent Experts is a systematic way of evaluation by specialized experts of the research projects funded by the Research and Innovation Foundation and may cover scientific, technological and other aspects related to the proper implementation of funded projects and the compliance of the activities carried out with the targets of the Call for Proposals and the Contract terms.

Depending on the nature and content of its activities, a research project may undergo Evaluation using one of the two following methods:

- Remote Evaluation, or
- On-the Spot Evaluation.

As a rule, the Evaluation is carried out by one evaluator. If deemed necessary, a project may also be evaluated by a second evaluator or even by a group of evaluators.

The type and frequency of the Evaluation is scheduled on the basis of the project size and features, as follows:

- Large Projects: Evaluation by Independent Experts of the interim and final progress report. As a rule, the interim Evaluation is carried out on-the spot, while the final Evaluation is carried out remotely.
- Medium-sized Projects: The final Evaluation by Independent Experts is carried out remotely and pertains to the final progress report.
- Small Projects: They are not subject to Evaluation by Independent Experts, unless it is found that they present significant problems in the project implementation thus rendering a scientific evaluation necessary.

The RIF reserves the right to conduct Evaluations by Independent Experts (on-the spot and remotely), where it deems that the project implementation is not satisfactory, irrespective of the project budget or the stage that the project is in. In special cases, different arrangements regarding the conduct of Project Evaluations by Independent Experts could be defined in the Calls for Proposals.

In the context of the Evaluation, the evaluators will be called to classify the projects into categories depending on their performance. The category interpretation is shown in Table III.8:

Table III.8 ScE SCORE INTERPRETATION		
Category	Performance	Interpretation
A	Excellent	Project activities and objectives have been fully achieved and the results are deemed particularly important.
B	Very Good	Project activities and objectives have been achieved with relatively small deviations.
C	Adequate	Project activities and objectives have been partially achieved. The participating organisations have undertaken the necessary actions for successful implementation of the project to a satisfactory degree.
D	Low	Project activities have been implemented to a very low degree. The participating organisations have not undertaken the appropriate actions for successful implementation of the project.
E	Not Satisfactory	Project activities and objectives have not been achieved. The participating organisations have undertaken no effective actions for successful implementation of the project.

The Evaluation result is communicated to the Project Coordinator (PC) and he/she is given the opportunity to express his/her views. The PC's opinion is communicated to the Evaluator, who has the opportunity to modify his evaluation. If according to the Evaluation the project falls under categories D and E and the PC disagrees with the evaluation result, a second expert will be consulted to confirm the results of the Evaluation. If more than one (1) independent expert is used, the evaluation that will be taken into consideration will be the most favourable one.

6.3. LOW QUALITY PROJECTS / PROJECT TERMINATION / IMPOSING SANCTIONS

The Project Contract regulates all matters governing the research project implementation, including the project termination procedure, funding repayment and the imposition of sanctions. Not adhering to Project Contract obligations and conditions on the part of the beneficiaries may lead to a temporary project funding withdrawal (freezing) and/or the permanent suspension of the project funding (project termination and/or repayment of part or the entire funding amount plus legal interest). Furthermore, the RIF may exclude the project from the Operational Programme and, depending on circumstances, impose sanctions either on the Beneficiaries (Host Organisation and/or Partner Organisations) or on specific individuals, members of the Consortium. Finally, low quality of project implementation on behalf of the Consortium results in the enforcement of certain measures by the RIF.

6.3.1. Handling Low Quality Projects

The RIF takes all the necessary measures and precautions to ensure the best use of public resources. In the case of projects with low quality results, which fall under categories D and E, the RIF will take the appropriate measures as described in Table III.9:

Category	Measures	
	Monitoring Stage: Interim Report	Monitoring Stage: Final Report
D	Approval of the project's Interim Progress Report and request for corrective actions by the Host Organisation.	Approval of the project's Final Progress Report and imposition of a monetary fine equal to 20% percentage of the eligible costs. Two (2) year exclusion of the Project Coordinator from participation in future Calls for Proposals and other initiatives supported by the RIF if the Scientific Evaluation of more than one (1) of the PC's projects falls within Category D or E.
E	Non-approval of the project's Final Progress Report and demand for repayment of the disbursed funding. Two (2) year exclusion of the Project Coordinator from participation in future Calls for Proposals and other RIF initiatives if the Scientific Evaluation of more than one (1) of the PC's projects falls within Category D or E.	

6.3.2. Project Termination

The project and/or the Project Contract may be terminated by the RIF, if the Contract terms are not adhered to, such as, for example, if the required progress reports are not submitted despite reminders by the RIF, incomplete project implementation and/or management or refusal or negligence in undertaking corrective actions, Host Organisation withdrawal, key researcher withdrawal in person-oriented projects, etc.

In special cases the project may be terminated following a request submitted by the Host Organisation to the RIF. Specifically, in cases such as this, the Host Organisation's Legal Representative or Project Coordinator will submit a request to the RIF for examination.

Decisions for project termination may require the repayment of part or the entire funding amount. Those decisions are not considered as sanctions and are made by the RIF Management, unless there is suspicion of fraud or unethical behavior. In the latter cases, the matter is forwarded to the Foundation's Board of Directors Specific Issues Examination Committee (SIEC) for possible imposition of sanctions.

The RIF reserves the right to examine the possibility to terminate the participation of a Partner Organisation in the Consortium (e.g. on information resulting from Project Monitoring, Consortium request and imposition of sanctions - if applicable).

Furthermore, the RIF reserves the right to terminate the Project and Project Contract, if during project implementation it is ascertained that the Host Organisation is under bankruptcy, in liquidation, cessation of activities, forced administration or has entered into an arrangement with creditors or in any other relevant circumstance arising from a similar procedure pursuant to national legislative or regulatory acts.

6.3.3. Sanctions

In the event that there is suspicion of fraud or unethical behavior then the matter will be forwarded to the Foundation's Board of Directors Specific Issues Examination Committee (SIEC), which is the competent body for examining serious issues arising in relation to problems during project management and imposing sanctions. The sanctions that may be imposed by the SIEC for fraud or unethical behavior, in addition to the possible termination of the project and repayment of part of and/or the entire funding amount are:

- Exclusion of the Host Organisation and/or Partner Organisation from participating in other Calls for Proposals and initiatives supported by the RIF for up to five (5) years, and/or
- Termination of all funded projects that the organisation undertakes the role of the Host Organisation and/or termination of its participation in Programmes and other Calls for Proposals and initiatives supported by the RIF, whereas, if the organisation is a Partner Organisation, then the termination of its participation from funded projects and other Calls for Proposals and initiatives supported by the RIF may be imposed, as well as its replacement.

If the project has been terminated due to mismanagement by the Host Organisation and/or the Partner Organisation and/or a person responsible for the project implementation and it is found that there is another instance of mismanagement on another RIF funded project by the same Host Organisation and/or the Partner Organisation and/or person responsible for the project implementation, then up to five (5) year exclusion may be imposed on the Host Organisation and/or Partner Organisation and/or person responsible for the project implementation from participating in other Calls for Proposals and initiatives supported by the RIF.

Before the imposition of any sanction, the organisations or natural persons involved are called to submit a written statement with their response and are given the opportunity to be heard by the SIEC.

6.4. COMMUNICATION AND NOTIFICATION MATTERS

As a rule, the RIF communicates with the Host Organisation, the Project Coordinator and the Host Organisation's Financial Contact Point (FCP), who will be responsible for notifying Consortium Members on matters pertaining to the physical and financial objective of the funded project. As

a rule, communication between the RIF and the project representatives is done via email. The RIF responds to requests made by the Consortium within the following deadlines:

- All messages received by the RIF are answered within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of receipt at the latest.
- All reports are examined by the RIF and the result of the examination is communicated to the Host Organisation and the Project Coordinator within ninety (90) days from the date of submission of the corresponding payment request. If additional information is required, the time period until their submission is added to the ninety (90) calendar days from the date of submission of the corresponding payment request.
- The requests for which RIF approval is necessary are examined and the RIF decision is communicated to the HO and PC within fifteen (15) days from their receipt (with the exception of cases where the request pertains to a major activity change). If additional information is required to complete the examination of the report, the time period until their submission is added to the days required to examine the request.

If the deliverables are not being normally implemented, the PC and the HO are responsible for notifying the RIF in good time, either by submitting an explanatory note or by reporting it in the progress report.

The organisations are obligated to immediately inform the RIF (using the electronic system) regarding any change in their characteristics, such as a change in ownership, change in the composition of the Board of Directors, a modification that affects the size of the enterprise, cessation of activities etc.

7. EXPLOITATION AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The regulations governing ownership, exploitation and dissemination of knowledge resulting from a RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes project:

7.1. OWNERSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

With regard to ownership of knowledge resulting from projects implemented within the frame of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, the following rules shall apply for its allocation and management:

- Organisations participating in projects implemented in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes have the right to use pre-existing knowledge (acquired by another participant in the same project), without charge and for the sole purpose of project implementation. This right may be of limited duration and must be specified in the Consortium Agreement. Pre-existing knowledge that is deemed necessary for project implementation is defined in the Consortium Agreement and/or the proposal.

- Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights³⁴ resulting from a project implemented within the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, belong to the participating organisations carrying out the work that produced them.
- Knowledge and intellectual property rights resulting from work jointly carried out by more than one participating organisation, without it being possible to specify individual participation in this work, are jointly owned by those participants. These participants shall mutually agree with regard to the sharing of knowledge and applicable terms of ownership.
- In particular, in Programmes where cooperation between universities, research organisations and enterprises is foreseen, granting the right of first refusal to exploit project results to companies participating in the Consortium is encouraged. In addition, this may become mandatory under specific provisions included in specific Programmes and Calls for Proposals.
- During the preparation phase of the contract, the RIF retains the right, where special reasons exist, to seek information confirming:
 - (a) acquisition of knowledge ownership or any part thereof, or
 - (b) allocation of knowledge ownership to one or more participants, or
 - (c) granting the right of first refusal to exploit project results to companies participating in the Consortium.
- In a case where persons working in an organisation participating in a project claim rights to knowledge, such organisation is required to take appropriate measures or to conclude a relevant agreement ensuring that these rights are exercised in a manner compatible with the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes' regulations.
- The right of a participating organisation to transfer ownership of knowledge to third parties must be stipulated in the Consortium Agreement entered into by and between the participating organisations regarding allocation and ownership of knowledge. Concerning the transfer of rights to third parties, it is understood that the relevant provisions of Regulation (EC) 651/2014 regarding State Aid and the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01), which address intellectual property rights, must be respected. Non-compliance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) 651/2014 regarding State Aid and the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01), shall constitute unlawful aid, which must be immediately recovered.
- In cases research activities taking place following completion of a research project, the organisation choosing to continue the research activities shall have obtained prior consent from the other participants (who are entitled to a share in the ownership of

³⁴ This includes intellectual property and related rights, rights concerning designs or models, patents or their supplementary certificates, trademarks, plant variety protection rights, geographical indications and designations of origin, particularly those referred to in paragraph 1 of Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No. 1383/2003.

Additionally and for the purposes of this Article, this definition includes Know-how, i.e. all non-patented practical information resulting from experience and testing, which is secret (meaning not generally known or easily accessible), substantial (meaning that it includes information which is significant and useful for the production of the contract products) and identified (meaning that it is described in a sufficiently comprehensive manner so as to make it possible to verify that it fulfils the criteria of secrecy and substantiality).

knowledge). This may be stipulated in the Consortium Agreement and shall be in agreement with the provisions of state aid regulations.

7.2. PROTECTION OF KNOWLEDGE - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Regarding the protection of knowledge and intellectual property rights, the following regulations shall apply:

- Organisations having ownership of knowledge that can be used in industrial or commercial applications are expected to take all necessary measures to allow for the future exploitation of research results, including adequate protection of the intellectual property produced. These organisations are exclusively responsible for ensuring adequate and effective protection of such knowledge in accordance with the relevant provisions of national, community and other relevant legislation³⁵, the Project Contract and the Consortium Agreement.
- Suitable and effective protection of knowledge by interested parties could be at local, European or international level, as appropriate. It is encouraged, however, that the protection of intellectual property rights (where applicable) includes at least Cyprus, thus supporting the further development of economic activity within the Republic of Cyprus.
- If participating organisations that have ownership of knowledge have not proceeded with dissemination activities or ensured suitable and effective protection of such knowledge within five (5) years following the RIF's Final Report approval date for a project implemented under the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, the RIF reserves the right to secure such intellectual property rights in its favor.
- If an organisation participating in a research project chooses to waive its intellectual property protection rights, it must promptly notify the Research and Innovation Foundation regarding this intention. In all cases, this must be done prior to any exploitation, patent registration, or dissemination of new knowledge gained through the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes research projects and be consistent with the provisions of state aid regulations.
- Furthermore, in cases where a Research Organisation wishes to transfer its rights to enterprises (cooperative research projects), this may only be authorized by the Research and Innovation Foundation and under the condition that the compensation is equal to the market price, allowing the relevant Research Organisations to derive full economic benefit from these rights when meeting one of the following prerequisites:
 - (a) the compensation amount is determined through an open, transparent and non-discriminatory competitive sale process, or
 - (b) through an expert's independent valuation, it is confirmed that the compensation amount is at least equal to the market price, or
 - (c) the Research Organisation as the seller can prove that it has substantially negotiated the compensation under competitive conditions in order to obtain maximum economic benefit at the time of contract conclusion, taking into account objectives based on its articles of association, or
 - (d) where the consortium agreement gives the partner company the right of first refusal with respect to intellectual property rights produced by the cooperating

³⁵ For relevant information, interested parties may contact the Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver.

research organizations when these entities retain a reciprocal right to seek the most economically beneficial offers from third parties, so that the partner company may be invited to adjust its offer accordingly.

If none of the aforementioned conditions are met, the full value of the participation of Research Organisations in the project is considered an advantage for the cooperating companies, for which state aid regulations apply.

7.3. KNOWLEDGE EXPLOITATION AND DISSEMINATION

The following regulations apply for exploitation and dissemination of knowledge gained through a project carried out in the frame of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes:

- Participating organisations shall exploit knowledge owned by them resulting from a project carried out in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, or shall ensure the exploitation of such knowledge by third parties in accordance with the interests of the participants. Participants are responsible for establishing conditions of exploitation and dissemination in a mutually agreed, detailed and verifiable manner.
- All exploitation and dissemination activities regarding new knowledge resulting from projects partially or fully funded through the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, must acknowledge the RIF's financial support. With regards to projects funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), and in particular regarding all activities concerning dissemination of project results, even those taking place following completion thereof, must make reference to the financial support received from this EU Fund.
- Organisations funded by the RRF have the obligation to comply with the provisions of the "Guide for Preliminary Publicity Obligations of the Recovery and Resilience Plan"³⁶, which is in force. Respectively, organisations funded by the ERDF are obliged to comply with the provisions of Article 50 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 and the relevant Guidelines of the Managing Authority³⁷.
- Any organisation or individual participating in a project carried out within the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes intending to undertake dissemination activities regarding new knowledge resulting from the project, must give prior notice of such intention to the other participants before performing any such activity. All communication between the parties pertinent to this subject may be defined in the Consortium Agreement.
- Participants may publish data in any form or allow such publication regarding knowledge they own or have acquired within the context of their participation in a project implemented in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, provided it does not adversely affect the protection of such knowledge.

³⁶ Guide for Preliminary Publicity Obligations of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)
<https://cyprus-tomorrow.gov.cy/cypr Presidency/kyprostoavrio.nsf/All/0BCAB8EED9EDEF75C2258807003CCCED?OpenDocument>

³⁷ Communication Guide for the "THALIA 2021-2027" Cohesion Policy Programme Beneficiaries
<https://thalia.com.cy/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/%CE%9F%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82-%CE%95%CF%80%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82-Online-Version.pdf>

- Provided that dissemination of knowledge does not adversely affect its protection or exploitation, participants are required to ensure broad dissemination as soon as possible and certainly within a period of two years following the RIF Final Report approval date for a project implemented in the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes.
- In cases where the participants do not fulfil the aforementioned obligations, the RIF may proceed with dissemination of this knowledge without the participants' approval.

7.4. OPEN ACCESS / OPEN SCIENCE

Open Access

Open Access means the free, immediate and continuous on-line access to digital academic and scientific content, free of charges or copyright restrictions, aimed at facilitating the exchange of scientific knowledge and the free use thereof for research, educational and other purposes.

Within the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, organisations must comply with the "National Open Access Policy for Scientific Information in the Republic of Cyprus"³⁸, approved by the Council of Ministers on February 25, 2016. In accordance with the National Policy, digital copies of publications (post-prints) resulting from implementation of Projects and their metadata, must be available on Open Access.

Researchers may choose one of the two models for Open Access, as mentioned below:

- **Self-archiving (Green route):** Submission of the published article or its final form (final quality assured or peer reviewed version), before or at the time of publication in a digital archive (bibliographic databases and local and/or international repositories), to which there is free access for those interested via the Internet - possibly after a waiting period (embargo period) if required by the publisher.
- **Electronic open access journals (Gold route):** Refers to publication in freely accessible electronic scientific journals without charge to interested parties wherein academic and research articles that have undergone evaluation (final quality assured or peer reviewed versions) are published, with author publication charges paid separately for each article. Said journals are published either by traditional publishing houses, exclusive Open Access publishers, or new types of publishing formats.

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the National Policy, researchers submit to a suitable repository:

- The necessary metadata (such as title, abstract, authors, attribute, name of journal accepting the publication, etc.) for all publications resulting from the funded Project. Metadata must be readily accessible.

³⁸ National Open Access Policy for Scientific Information in the Republic of Cyprus: [http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/B6E053491803C681C2257C7D004841CA/\\$file/Cyprus%20OA%20Policy%20to%20Scientific%20Info.pdf](http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/B6E053491803C681C2257C7D004841CA/$file/Cyprus%20OA%20Policy%20to%20Scientific%20Info.pdf)

- A digital copy of each publication resulting from the funded Project upon final acceptance for publication (final quality assured version or peer reviewed version). Researchers are responsible for consistent and complete submission of their work to the repository.

It is clarified that the text of the articles must be openly available when submitted to the repository. In cases where the publisher has imposed an embargo period, a publication abstract must be submitted and the text of the publication may be “inaccessible” only until expiration of the embargo period.

In all cases, article metadata must be readily open and accessible and reference must be made to them in Progress Reports to be submitted to the RIF.

In cases where researchers choose the Gold Model for Open Access, the relevant expenditure may be eligible for funding through the Project Budget, while, at the same time, metadata and the published article must also be filed at an appropriate repository.

Suitable repositories are defined as those which offer Open Access to scientific information, allowing data citation through persistent identifiers (Digital Object Identifiers - DOI) and/or other means that provide quality metadata (including reference to research funding), based on accepted guidelines and standards for interoperability with international digital harvesters, as well as compatibility with OpenAIRE or corresponding infrastructures.

Organisations that do not have repositories compliant with the required specifications are recommended to submit publications and metadata for open access in other local, thematic, or international repositories, (e.g., the digital Zenodo repository).

Open Science

For Calls for Proposals to be announced from 1 December 2022 onwards, stakeholders are requested to comply with the “National Policy of the Republic of Cyprus on Open Science Practices”³⁹, which was approved by the Council of Ministers on 27 May 2022. This National Policy revises the existing “National Policy of Open Access to Scientific Information in the Republic of Cyprus” (2016).

The National Policy on Open Science Practices covers the field of access to the preservation and reuse of scientific information and in particular (a) open access to scientific publications, (b) the management of research data, including open access, (c) the use of infrastructures, tools and services for open science, and (d) the adoption of other open science practices.

The framework of the "National Policy of the Republic of Cyprus on Open Science Practices" includes, among others, obligations that must be complied with in the context of the funded Projects in terms of the following:

³⁹ National Policy of the Republic of Cyprus on Open Science Practices [https://www.dmid.gov.cy/dmid/research.nsf/All/AA70CE90EBA683F1C225885900404C05/\\$file/National%20OS%20policy.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.dmid.gov.cy/dmid/research.nsf/All/AA70CE90EBA683F1C225885900404C05/$file/National%20OS%20policy.pdf?OpenElement)

A. Open Access to Scientific Publications

Researchers are required to deposit in appropriate repositories:

- Machine-readable electronic copies of the full text of their publications (published article, Author Approved Manuscript or final peer-reviewed manuscript) as well as related metadata before, during or after the date of publication.
Researchers are responsible for the timely submission of their publications to the repository or any other appropriate facility. For monographs, deposit remains mandatory but access will be closed until the expiry of the embargo by the editor.
- Publications' metadata should be made openly accessible in the case of "closed" publications in order to enhance their visibility.
- Authors of publications are required to retain sufficient intellectual property rights in order to comply with Open Access requirements.

B. Open Access to Research Data

- Researchers deposit in an appropriate repository the data required to validate the results presented in scientific publications or other data used during a project and are described in the Data Management Plan (DMP) - where required⁴⁰. Data must be provided with persistent identifiers.
- Data and services are handled in accordance with the FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable). The data should also be traceable and whenever possible available for later use.
- The "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" principle should be followed. If the data cannot be made available due to legal, confidentiality or other issues such as personal data this should be adequately described in the DPM. Metadata which ensure that the data is traceable should be provided in all circumstances.

7.5. CENTRAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OFFICE SERVICES

Fast-track access

The beneficiaries of the following Programmes will become potential beneficiaries, through a fast-track process, of the services and tools for support and knowledge transfer that will be provided by the RIF in the framework of the Central Office for Knowledge Transfer (KTO)⁴¹.

- "Creation and Initial Development of STARTUPS with International Orientation" (PRE-SEED) Programme – 12/2021 Call

⁴⁰ In cases of small-scale research projects or when no data is generated during a research project, a DMP may not be required.

⁴¹ In the context of the application of State aid regulations, the measure has received a separate approval by the State Aid Control Commissioner (Decision E.E.K.E.25.06.001.924.404 dated 20 June 2022) regarding its compatibility with Regulation (EU) 1407/2013 of 18th December 2013.

- “Development of Internationally Competitive Innovative Products and Services by STARTUPS” (SEED) Programme – 12/2021 Call
- “Development and Promotion of Internationally Competitive Innovative Products and Services by Existing Enterprises” (INNOVATE) Programme – 12/2021 Call
- “Collaborative Development” (CO-DEVELOP) Programme – 03/2022 Calls

The procedure for accessing the Central KTO services by the beneficiary Organisations, through the fast-track process, will be defined in a separate Call for Proposals, which will be announced by the RIF in the frame of the Central KTO’s operation.

Direct Entry

The beneficiaries of the following Programmes will automatically become beneficiaries of the services and tools for support and knowledge transfer that will be provided by the RIF in the framework of the Central Office for Knowledge Transfer (KTO).

- “Proof of Concept for Technology/Knowhow Applications” Programme
- “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity EIC” Programme
- “Dual Use Technologies” Programme
- “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity” Programme
- “Research Infrastructures” Programme
- “Research in Enterprises” Programme
- “PhD in Industry” Programme
- “DISRUPT” Programme
- “Creation and Initial Development of STARTUPS with International Orientation” (PRE-SEED) Programme*
- “Collaborative Development” (CO-DEVELOP) Programme*
- “POST-DOC” Programme
- “Excellence Hubs” Programme
- “Development and Promotion of Internationally Competitive Innovative Products and Services by Existing Enterprises (INNOVATE)” Programme
- “Space Technologies” Programme

**Except those Calls covered under the fast-track procedure*

Operating Framework of the Central Knowledge Transfer Office

The services that will be provided by the Central KTO, including the rules for participation, will be described within the Operating Framework of the Central KTO, which will be available from the RIF in the specially formulated area on the Foundation's website.

The services of the Central KTO will be offered as a donation (i.e. 100% public sponsorship) to the Beneficiary Entities on the basis of the State Aid Regulations, within the framework of the requirements of Article 28 of the General Block Exemption Regulation of the European Commission (651/2014) for SMEs and the De Minimis Regulation (1407/2013) – as replaced by the De Minimis Regulation 2023/2831) for large enterprises.

The total value of the services will be calculated based on the cost of the services per man-day and the total man-time allocated by the experts for each Project and will be distributed equally among the Consortium partners. The cost of the services per man-day will be communicated to the potential beneficiaries by the RIF in due course through announcements on the Foundation's website and/or the relevant Calls for Proposals.

Consortia Obligation to Communicate with the Central Knowledge Transfer Office

In order to enhance the ability to exploit the research results, the communication of the Consortium of funded Projects with the Central KTO for the preparation of a specialized Service Provision Plan may become mandatory in the context of the separate Calls for Proposals of the aforementioned Programmes. At the same time, acceptance of the Service Provision Plan by the Consortia and the use of the services of the Central KTO will be optional.

7.6. “INNOVATION FACTORY” INITIATIVE SERVICES FOR INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISES

Through the “Innovation Factory” Initiative, the Foundation seeks to promote and support innovation in the business community, through targeted actions, such as:

- specially designed educational Programmes,
- guidance services (mentoring / coaching),
- services for assessing the ability to manage the innovation of the enterprise,
- networking with investors,
- events and activities that generally support the development of the ecosystem.

Customised services that will be provided to innovative companies under the “Innovation Factory” Initiative (for the definition see revised GBER – Article 2 (80)⁴², including the participation rules and procedures for accessing the services by the beneficiary Organisations, will be defined in separate Calls for Proposals, which will be announced by the RIF.

Beneficiaries of the “Horizon Europe – 2nd Opportunity EIC” Programme will become potential beneficiaries, through a fast-track process, of the services and tools that will be provided by the RIF to innovative enterprises, under the “Innovation Factory” Initiative.

8. BROADER LEGAL FRAMEWORK

According to the law, the implementation of research, development and innovation in matters relating to bioethics, scientific research on wild birds and quarry and scientific experiments on animals, are subject to the control of the state, which assigns supervisory responsibility and approval rights to competent departments or special committees as appropriate.

⁴² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02014R0651-20230701>

8.1. MANAGEMENT OF PERSONAL DATA

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) has the legal obligation when collecting, processing and using personal data to do so in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)" as the Data. To this end, the present Policy determines the way in which the RIF collects and processes personal data (information) relating to natural persons (individuals), as well as the way in which it obtains their consent in relation to the processing of their data. The purpose of this Policy is to provide adequate and consistent safeguards for the management of personal data (as defined below) which in accordance with the principles and provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)" entered into force on 25 May 2018.

Personal data is any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject") an identifiable natural person being one whose identity can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to a recognisable element of identity, such as a name, identity number, location data, online identity card, or one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, psychological, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.

Processing of personal data is interpreted to mean any work or set of operations performed by any person with or without the use of automated methods and which applies to personal data and includes the collection, registration, organization, maintenance, storage, amendment, removal, use, transfer, transmission or any other means of distribution, matching or association, connection, locking, deletion or destruction.

The RIF's Personal Data Protection Policy is available in the Foundation's website ([Http://www.research.org.cy](http://www.research.org.cy)).

8.2. BIOETHICAL ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS

In general

Bioethics is the study of moral, ethical, social, humanitarian and legal issues arising from the use of modern biotechnology, biology, medicine, genetics and pharmaceutical methods, but mainly arising by human intervention in biological processes and the human genotype and is based on principles of prudent avoidance and promotion of health.

Bioethical evaluation of projects implies the moral consciousness in scientific research involving humans, since it ensures that the research done on humans is to the benefit of every potential participant. Bioethical considerations must be taken into consideration during research process and must determine its methodology, while potential benefits should not constitute the sole criterion for choosing methods or procedures used, as the main concern should be to respect a suffering human, which is firstly human and secondly a patient.

In accordance with the Law of 2001 "On Bioethics" (Establishment and Operation of the National Committee) (Law 150(I)/2001), the law for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine (Ratified) and Other Relevant Provisions for Implementation of the law, (Law 31 (III)/2001), the good Clinical Practice regarding

Pharmaceuticals law (Law 70 (I)/2001) and the Codes of Practice of Regulatory Administrative Act 175/2005, which refer to “Codes of Practice for the Establishment and Operation of a Bioethics Committee for the Monitoring of Biomedical Research in Cyprus”, bioethical monitoring is required as defined in the aforementioned Laws and Regulations on research activities carried out in Cyprus, which include human participation.

Cyprus National Bioethics Committee

The monitoring of research projects regarding moral issues, bioethics and ethics is the responsibility of the National Bioethics Committee (CNBC). The CNBC’s mission, in accordance with Law 150(I)/2001, is the ongoing monitoring, survey, systematic analysis and evaluation of issues and problems related to scientific research progress and application of biotechnology, biology, medicine, genetics and pharmaceutical industries, as well as human intervention on the biological procedure and the human genotype, and exploration of moral, ethical, social, humanitarian and legal dimensions thereof.

In accordance with the Codes of Practice of Regulatory Administrative Act 175/2005 on the Establishment and Operation of a Bioethics Committee for the Monitoring of Biomedical Research in Cyprus, biomedical research includes research using drugs, medical devices, radiation for medical purposes, surgical procedures, medical records, and biological samples, as well as epidemiological, genetic, social and psychological studies.

Moreover, under Article 16 of the Law, which provides for the ratification of the Convention for the protection of human rights and human dignity with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine (Law 31(III)/2001), “*research on a person may only be undertaken if all the following conditions are met: (iii) the research project has been approved by the competent body after independent examination of its scientific merit, including assessment of the importance of the research objective, and multidisciplinary review of its ethical acceptability.....* . In accordance with Article 5 of the Ratification Law, the competent body is the National Bioethics Committee.

Similarly, provisions of Article 14(1) of the Law state that, for the safeguarding and protection of patients’ rights and related issues (Law 1 (I)/2005), patient participation in scientific research or experimental treatment is permitted only under specific conditions. One of the conditions laid out by this Law is that “the research study has been approved by the competent body after independent examination of its scientific merit, including assessment of the importance of the research objective, and multidisciplinary review of its ethical acceptability”.

In accordance with “the Decree on Codes of Practice (Establishment and Operation of a Bioethics Committee for the Monitoring of Biomedicine in Cyprus)” and under the authority granted to the National Committee on Bioethics (CNBC) by Law 150 (I)/2001, The Bioethics Law, (Establishment and Operation of a National Committee), the CNBC proceeded to establish three Bioethics Review Committees:

- The Bioethics Committee for Review of Research Protocols in Relation to Clinical Research in Medicines for Human Use,
- The Bioethics Committee for Review of Biomedical Research, and
- The Bioethics Committee for Review of Research Protocols in Biomedical and Clinical Research in Medicines for Human Use.

The CNBC supervises, directs and coordinates the work of the above Bioethics Committees, whose role is:

- To contribute to ensuring the dignity of rights, safety and well-being of all those who participate, or may participate in research,
- The exercise of independent, adequate and timely review of the ethics of proposed programs, and
- Assessing proposed projects before their launch and assuring that they are suitable for approval.

Irrespective of monitoring of biomedical research programmes by Bioethics Committees, the CNBC retains the right, when and if it so decides, to investigate and monitor any project falling within its authority. Regardless of any Bioethics Committee decision, the CNBC has the right to modify, suspend, terminate or confirm the Bioethics Committee's initial decision at any time.

Application Submission and CNBC Approval

Pursuant to the Codes of Practice, only projects that will be implemented should be submitted to Bioethics Committees for approval after having first secured the necessary funding. In exceptional cases, Bioethics Committees shall decide, after a full justification by the applicant, whether to accept projects for review that have not secured the necessary funding. Regardless of the aforementioned, no project shall be implemented without first having received the approval of the Bioethics Committee. It is the responsibility of every organisation/researcher to address the National Bioethics Committee for obtaining approval.

Details regarding the research proposal submission process for consultation and complete bioethics evaluation, as well as all relevant forms, are available on the CNBC website (<http://www.bioethics.gov.cy>).

8.3. RESEARCH THAT INCLUDES THE UTILISATION OF GENETIC RESOURCES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ASSOCIATED WITH GENETIC RESOURCES

In accordance to the EU Regulation No 511/2014, funded beneficiaries that carry out research involving the utilization of genetic resources (GR) and traditional knowledge (TK) associated with genetic resources, are obliged to ascertain that access to GR and TK is in accordance with the applicable access and benefit-sharing legislation or regulatory requirements of the provider countries which are parties to the Nagoya Protocol. In addition, if this is required by applicable legislation or regulatory requirements of the provider country, users must ascertain that transfer and utilization of GR and TK as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization is in accordance with mutually agreed terms.

The abovementioned obligation of funded beneficiaries is fulfilled by the submission of a due diligence declaration to the competent authority of the member state in which the beneficiary's is established, or to the competent authority of the member state where the research is carried out in case the beneficiary is not established in the Union. In accordance with Law No. 49(I)/2018 (the national Law on compliance measures for users from the Nagoya Protocol on Access to

Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization in the Union), the competent authority of the Republic of Cyprus, where the due diligence must be submitted, is the Director of the Environment Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment. The due diligence declaration must be made by submitting a completed template which is available to funded beneficiaries by the Department of Environment. The declaration must be submitted after the first instalment of funding has been received and after all the GR and TK associated with GR that are utilised in the funded project have been obtained, but no later than at the time of the final report, or in absence of such report, at the projects end.

Funded beneficiaries whose research work may fall under Regulation 511/2014, can seek information on whether a country is a Party to the Nagoya Protocol and whether the country has access measures in place for GR and TK, by searching the country profiles on the Access and Benefit Sharing Clearing-House (ABS Clearing House, <https://absch.cbd.int/countries>) which is the main mechanism under the Protocol for sharing information related to access and benefit-sharing. In addition, beneficiaries may consult the Department of Environment for further information and clarifications relevant to obligations arising from Regulation 511/2014.

8.4. RESEARCH ON WILD BIRDS AND QUARRY

In accordance with sub-paragraph (2) of Article 95 of the Law on Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Quarry (Law 152(I)/2003), any investigation, action or measure relating to the management of wildlife by any person, is authorized only after the applicable Permit is issued by the Minister of Interior.

It is noted that pursuant to the Law (Law 152(I)/2003), “wildlife” means quarry, wild birds and the mouflon.

8.5. SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS

In accordance with the Laws on Animals (Scientific Experiments) of 1995 and 2000 (Laws 30(I)/95 and 115(I)/2000) and the Regulations on Animals (Scientific Experiments) of 2000 (Regulatory Administrative Act 18/2000) a controlled experiment on an animal is permitted only when:

- The person conducting the controlled experiment on animals holds a Personal Permit granting the right to conduct a specifically described controlled experiment on an animal or animals of a specific description and specified area or areas, and
- The experiment is conducted within a Programme framework, which is defined in the Project Permit and authorizes a controlled experiment of a specific description on an animal or animals in a specific space or spaces.

The Personal Permit and Project Permit are issued by the Director of Veterinary Services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment.

In accordance with Law 30(I)/95, “controlled experiment” means any experimental or other scientific procedure applied on a protected animal that may result in causing that animal pain, suffering, fear, stress, or permanent damage.

Therefore, project Contracts that require the securing of these Permits shall be signed only after the relevant permits are secured and submitted to the RIF.

The securing and provision of any other Permit required by the Laws and Regulations of the Republic of Cyprus for conducting research experiments is considered an essential element for the signing of Research Contracts and their securing and provision are the sole responsibility of the researcher submitting the proposal.

8.6. OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

All Programme beneficiaries must comply with National, EU Legislation and EU Regulations regarding relevant issues, which include, amongst others:

- State aid,
- Protection of the environment,
- Equal opportunities for men and women,
- Protection of personal data,
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- Non-discrimination, and
- Information and disclosure.

Implementation of research, development and innovation projects is subject to state control, which delegates the responsibility of monitoring and approval to competent services or special committees, as applicable. Appendix IV of this present Work Programme includes a List of the relevant Legislation and Other Regulations.

Applicants must comply with all national laws and regulations falling under the scope of implementation of a research, development and innovation project, regardless of the List of Legislation and Other Regulations. It is noted that this List is indicative and not exhaustive and in no way binding for the RIF.

According to Regulation (EU) 2021/241 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, each and every measure of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans must comply with the "do no significant harm" principle. This principle ensures that no measure supports or carries out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives, within the meaning of Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU Taxonomy Regulation). The provisions of this Scheme, as described in the Calls for Proposals, to which the beneficiaries of the scheme must comply with, fulfill the requirements of the "do no significant harm" principle and are also in compliance with the European acquis and the national environmental legislation.

According to the Technical guidance on the application of “do no significant harm” under the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation (2021/C 58/01), the following activities are not eligible for this call for projects:

- Activities related to fossil fuels, including downstream use. Except projects under this measure in power and/or heat generation, as well as related transmission and distribution infrastructure, using natural gas, that are compliant with the conditions set out in Annex III of the Technical Guidance 2021/C58/01.
- Activities under the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) achieving projected greenhouse gas emissions that are not lower than the relevant benchmarks. Where the activity supported achieves projected greenhouse gas emissions that are not significantly lower than the relevant benchmarks an explanation of the reasons why this is not possible shall be provided. Benchmarks established for free allocation for activities falling within the scope of the Emissions Trading System, as set out in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/447.
- Activities related to waste landfills, incinerators and mechanical biological treatment plants. For incinerators, this exclusion does not apply to actions under this measure in plants exclusively dedicated to treating non-recyclable hazardous waste, and to existing plants, where the actions under this measure are for the purpose of increasing energy efficiency, capturing exhaust gases for storage or use or recovering materials from incineration ashes, provided such actions under this measure do not result in an increase of the plants' waste processing capacity or in an extension of the lifetime of the plants; for which evidence is provided at plant level. For mechanical biological treatment plants, this exclusion does not apply to actions under this measure in existing mechanical biological treatment plants, where the actions under this measure are for the purpose of increasing energy efficiency or retrofitting to recycling operations of separated waste to compost bio-waste and anaerobic digestion of bio-waste, provided such actions under this measure do not result in an increase of the plants' waste processing capacity or in an extension of the lifetime of the plants; for which evidence is provided at plant level.
- Activities where the long-term disposal of waste may cause harm to the environment.

8.7. CODE OF ETHICS FOR RESEARCHERS

Within the context of RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, it is recommended that organisations take all necessary steps to adopt the European Charter for Researchers⁴³ and the relevant Researchers' Code of Conduct⁴⁴.

The European Commission has adopted the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Researcher Recruitment, providing researchers with the same rights and obligations throughout the EU. The European Charter for Researchers includes the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers and their employers or funding organisations. It aims to ensure that

⁴³ Further information regarding the European Charter for Researchers may be found on the EU website, <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>

⁴⁴ Further information regarding the Researchers' Code of Conduct for Researcher Recruitment may be found on the EU website, <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/codeOfConduct>

the relationship between these parties contributes to successful results regarding the transfer and exchange of knowledge and the development of researchers' careers.

The Code of Conduct for Researcher Recruitment aims to improve recruitment procedures so that they are transparent and fair.

8.8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN - NON-DISCRIMINATION

In the context of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, organisations must comply with the applicable laws concerning equal opportunities for men and women and the prevention of any form of discrimination (based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation) - an indicative list of the relevant laws can be found in Appendix III of the present Work Programme. It is recommended that organisations consider gender equality issues in relation to the research content of the project and the composition and contribution of the members of the project's research team. Furthermore, where applicable, accessibility for persons with disabilities is taken into account at all stages of project implementation.

8.9. ENSURING RESPECT FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

In the frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes to be funded by the Cohesion Policy Funds, organisations should ensure respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

8.10. OBTAINING AND SUBMITTING AN APPROVAL/PERMISSION FROM THE COMPETENT COMMITTEE OR SERVICE

The signing of the Project Contract, which, according to the Law, requires monitoring, authorisation, or permission by the competent committee or service, will only take place after having obtained and submitted a positive assessment, approval or authorization to the RIF on behalf of the Host Organisation/Project Coordinator.

In order to accelerate the process, an application may be submitted to the competent committee or service immediately after the RIF announces its results and in parallel with the contract preparation process between the RIF and of the Host Organisation.

Compliance with the aforementioned laws and regulations is the sole responsibility of the researchers and organisations submitting the proposal.

The RIF reserves the right not to proceed with the signing of the Project Contract where a positive assessment, approval or authorization by the competent committee or service is delayed due to liability on behalf of the Host Organisation.

9. ANNEXES

Annex I: Science and Technology Field Coding⁴⁵ of Projects implemented in the Frame of the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes

1. Natural sciences

1.1 Mathematics

- 1.1.1 Pure mathematics
- 1.1.2 Applied mathematics
- 1.1.3 Statistics and probability (This includes research on statistical methodologies, but excludes research on applied statistics which should be classified under the relevant field of application (e.g. Economics, Sociology, etc.))

1.2 Computer and Information Sciences

- 1.2.1 Computer sciences, information science and bioinformatics (*hardware development to be 2.2, social aspect to be 5.8*)

1.3 Physical Sciences

- 1.3.1 Atomic, molecular and chemical physics (physics of atoms and molecules including collision, interaction with radiation; magnetic resonances; Moessbauer effect)
- 1.3.2 Condensed matter physics (including formerly solid state physics, superconductivity)
- 1.3.3 Particles and fields physics
- 1.3.4 Nuclear physics
- 1.3.5 Fluids and plasma physics (including surface physics)
- 1.3.6 Optics (including laser optics and quantum optics)
- 1.3.7 Acoustics
- 1.3.8 Astronomy (including astrophysics, space science)

1.4 Chemical Sciences

- 1.4.1 Organic chemistry
- 1.4.2 Inorganic and nuclear chemistry
- 1.4.3 Physical chemistry
- 1.4.4 Polymer science
- 1.4.5 Electrochemistry (dry cells, batteries, fuel cells, corrosion metals, electrolysis)
- 1.4.6 Colloid chemistry
- 1.4.7 Analytical chemistry

1.5 Earth and related Environmental Sciences

- 1.5.1 Geosciences, multidisciplinary
- 1.5.2 Mineralogy
- 1.5.3 Palaeontology
- 1.5.4 Geochemistry and geophysics
- 1.5.5 Physical geography
- 1.5.6 Geology
- 1.5.7 Volcanology
- 1.5.8 Environmental sciences (*social aspects to be 5.7*)
- 1.5.9 Meteorology and atmospheric sciences

⁴⁵ OECD (2015), Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development, The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities, OECD Publishing, Paris, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264239012-en>.

Classification at a third level is done according to the "Revised Field of Science and Technology (FOS) Classification in the Frascati Manual (DSTI/EAS/STP/NESTI(2006)19/FINAL)", Working Party of National Experts on Science and Technology Indicators, 26-Feb-2007, OECD.

1.5.10 Climatic research

1.5.11 Oceanography

1.5.12 Hydrology

1.5.13 Water resources

1.6 Biological Sciences (*Medical to be 3, and Agricultural to be 4*)

1.6.1 Cell biology, Microbiology

1.6.2 Virology

1.6.3 Biochemistry and molecular biology

1.6.4 Biochemical research methods

1.6.5 Mycology

1.6.6 Biophysics

1.6.7 Genetics and heredity (*medical genetics to be 3*)

1.6.8 Reproductive biology (*medical aspects to be 3*);

1.6.9 Developmental biology

1.6.10 Plant sciences, botany

1.6.11 Zoology, Ornithology, Entomology, Behavioural sciences biology

1.6.12 Marine biology, freshwater biology, limnology

1.6.13 Ecology

1.6.14 Biodiversity conservation

1.6.15 Biology (theoretical, mathematical, thermal, cryobiology, biological rhythm), Evolutionary biology

1.6.16 Other biological topics

1.7 Other Natural Sciences

2. Engineering and Technology

2.1 Civil Engineering

2.1.1 Civil engineering

2.1.2 Architecture engineering

2.1.3 Construction engineering

2.1.4 Municipal and structural engineering

2.1.5 Transport engineering

2.2 Electrical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Information Engineering

2.2.1 Electrical and electronic engineering

2.2.2 Robotics and automatic control

2.2.3 Automation and control systems

2.2.4 Communication engineering and systems

2.2.5 Telecommunications

2.2.6 Computer hardware and architecture

2.3 Mechanical Engineering

2.3.1 Mechanical engineering

2.3.2 Applied mechanics

2.3.3 Thermodynamics

2.3.4 Aerospace engineering

2.3.5 Nuclear related engineering (*nuclear physics to be 1.3*);

2.3.6 Audio engineering, reliability analysis

2.4 Chemical Engineering

2.4.1 Chemical engineering (plants, products)

2.4.2 Chemical process engineering

2.5 Materials Engineering

2.5.1 Materials engineering

2.5.2 Ceramics

2.5.3 Coating and films

2.5.4 Composites (including laminates, reinforced plastics, cermets, combined natural and synthetic fibre fabrics; filled composites)

2.5.5 Paper and wood

2.5.6 Textiles (including synthetic dyes, colours, fibres)

(nanoscale materials to be 2.10; biomaterials to be 2.9)

2.6 Medical Engineering

2.6.1 Medical engineering

2.6.2 Medical laboratory technology (including laboratory samples analysis; diagnostic technologies)

(Biomaterials to be 2.9 [physical characteristics of living material as related to medical implants, devices, sensors])

2.7 Environmental Engineering

2.7.1 Environmental and geological engineering, geotechnics

2.7.2 Petroleum engineering (fuel, oils)

2.7.3 Energy and fuels

2.7.4 Remote sensing

2.7.5 Mining and mineral processing

2.7.6 Marine engineering, sea vessels

2.7.7 Ocean engineering

2.8 Environmental Biotechnology

2.8.1 Environmental biotechnology

2.8.2 Bioremediation, diagnostic biotechnologies (DNA chips and biosensing devices) in environmental management

2.8.3 Environmental biotechnology related ethics

2.9 Industrial Biotechnology

2.9.1 Industrial biotechnology

2.9.2 Bioprocessing technologies (industrial processes relying on biological agents to drive the process) biocatalysis, fermentation

2.9.3 Bioproducts (products that are manufactured using biological material as feedstock), biomaterials, bioplastics, biofuels, bio-derived bulk and fine chemicals, bio-derived novel materials

2.10 Nano-technology

2.10.1 Nano-materials (production and properties)

2.10.2 Nano-processes (applications on nano-scale)

(biomaterials to be 2.9);

2.11 Other Engineering and Technologies

2.11.1 Food and beverages

2.11.2 Other engineering and technologies

3. Medical and Health Sciences

3.1 Basic Medicine

3.1.1 Anatomy and morphology *(plant science to be 1.6)*

3.1.2 Human genetics

3.1.3 Immunology

3.1.4 Neurosciences (including psychophysiology)

3.1.5 Pharmacology and pharmacy

3.1.6 Medicinal chemistry

3.1.7 Toxicology

3.1.8 Physiology (including cytology)

3.1.9 Pathology

3.2 Clinical Medicine

3.2.1 Andrology

3.2.2 Obstetrics and gynaecology

- 3.2.3 Paediatrics
- 3.2.4 Cardiac and Cardiovascular systems
- 3.2.5 Peripheral vascular disease
- 3.2.6 Hematology
- 3.2.7 Respiratory systems
- 3.2.8 Critical care medicine and Emergency medicine
- 3.2.9 Anaesthesiology
- 3.2.10 Orthopaedics
- 3.2.11 Surgery
- 3.2.12 Radiology, nuclear medicine and medical imaging
- 3.2.13 Transplantation
- 3.2.14 Dentistry, oral surgery and medicine
- 3.2.15 Dermatology and venereal diseases
- 3.2.16 Allergy
- 3.2.17 Rheumatology
- 3.2.18 Endocrinology and metabolism (including diabetes, hormones)
- 3.2.19 Gastroenterology and hepatology
- 3.2.20 Urology and nephrology
- 3.2.21 Oncology
- 3.2.22 Ophthalmology
- 3.2.23 Otorhinolaryngology
- 3.2.24 Psychiatry
- 3.2.25 Clinical neurology
- 3.2.26 Geriatrics and gerontology
- 3.2.27 General and internal medicine
- 3.2.28 Other clinical medicine subjects
- 3.2.29 Integrative and complementary medicine (alternative practice systems)

3.3 Health Sciences

- 3.3.1 Health care sciences and services (including hospital administration, health care financing)
- 3.3.2 Health policy and services
- 3.3.3 Nursing
- 3.3.4 Nutrition, Dietetics
- 3.3.5 Public and environmental health
- 3.3.6 Tropical medicine
- 3.3.7 Parasitology
- 3.3.8 Infectious diseases
- 3.3.9 Epidemiology
- 3.3.10 Occupational health
- 3.3.11 Sport and fitness sciences
- 3.3.12 Social biomedical sciences (includes family planning, sexual health, psycho-oncology, political and social effects of biomedical research)
- 3.3.13 Medical ethics
- 3.3.14 Substance abuse

3.4 Medical Biotechnology

- 3.4.1 Health-related biotechnology
- 3.4.2 Technologies involving the manipulation of cells, tissues, organs or the whole organism (assisted reproduction)
- 3.4.3 Technologies involving identifying the functioning of DNA, proteins and enzymes and how they influence the onset of disease and maintenance of well-being (gene-based diagnostics and therapeutic interventions (pharmacogenomics, gene-based therapeutics)
- 3.4.4 Biomaterials (as related to medical implants, devices, sensors)
- 3.4.5 Medical biotechnology related ethics

3.5 Other Medical Sciences

- 3.5.1 Forensic science
- 3.5.2 Other medical sciences

4. Agricultural Sciences

4.1 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

- 4.1.1 Agriculture
- 4.1.2 Forestry
- 4.1.3 Fishery
- 4.1.4 Soil science
- 4.1.5 Horticulture, viticulture
- 4.1.6 Agronomy, plant breeding and plant protection
(*Agricultural biotechnology to be 4.4*)

4.2 Animal and Dairy science

- 4.2.1 Animal and dairy science (*Animal biotechnology to be 4.4*)
- 4.2.2 Husbandry
- 4.2.3 Pets

4.3 Veterinary science

4.4 Agricultural biotechnology

- 4.4.1 Agricultural biotechnology and food biotechnology
- 4.4.2 GM technology (crops and livestock), livestock cloning, marker assisted selection, diagnostics (DNA chips and biosensing devices for the early/accurate detection of diseases)
- 4.4.3 Biomass feedstock production technologies, biopharming
- 4.4.4 Agricultural biotechnology related ethics

4.5 Other agricultural sciences

5. Social Sciences

5.1 Psychology and Cognitive Sciences

- 5.1.1 Psychology (including human - machine relations)
- 5.1.2 Psychology, special (including therapy for learning, speech, hearing, visual and other physical and mental disabilities)

5.2 Economics and Business

- 5.2.1 Economics, Econometrics
- 5.2.2 Industrial relations
- 5.2.3 Business and Management

5.3 Education

- 5.3.1 Education, general (including training, pedagogy, didactics)
- 5.3.2 Education, special (to gifted persons, those with learning disabilities)

5.4 Sociology

- 5.4.1 Sociology
- 5.4.2 Demography
- 5.4.3 Anthropology, ethnology
- 5.4.4 Social topics (Women and gender studies; Social issues; Family studies; Social work)

5.5 Law

- 5.5.1 Law, criminology, penology

5.6 Political science

- 5.6.1 Political science
- 5.6.2 Public administration
- 5.6.3 Organisation theory

5.7 Social and economic geography

- 5.7.1 Environmental sciences (social aspects)

- 5.7.2 Cultural and economic geography
- 5.7.3 Urban studies (Planning and development)
- 5.7.4 Transport planning and social aspects of transport (*transport engineering to be 2.1*);

5.8 Media and communications

- 5.8.1 Journalism
- 5.8.2 Information science (social aspects)
- 5.8.3 Library science
- 5.8.4 Media and socio-cultural communication

5.9 Other social sciences

- 5.9.1 Social sciences, interdisciplinary
- 5.9.2 Other social sciences

6. Humanities

6.1 History and Archaeology

- 6.1.1 History (*history of science and technology to be 6.3, history of specific sciences to be under the respective headings*);
- 6.1.2 Archaeology

6.2 Languages and Literature

- 6.2.1 General language studies
- 6.2.2 Specific languages
- 6.2.3 General literature studies
- 6.2.4 Literary theory
- 6.2.5 Specific literatures
- 6.2.6 Linguistics

6.3 Philosophy, Ethics and Religion

- 6.3.1 Philosophy
- 6.3.2 History and philosophy of science and technology
- 6.3.3 Ethics (except ethics related to specific subfields)
- 6.3.4 Theology
- 6.3.5 Religious studies

6.4 Arts (arts, history of arts, performing arts, music)

- 6.4.1 Arts, Art history
- 6.4.2 Architectural design
- 6.4.3 Performing arts studies (Musicology, Theater science, Dramaturgy)
- 6.4.4 Folklore studies
- 6.4.5 Studies on Film, Radio and Television

6.5 Other humanities

Note: The abovementioned listing may be subject to updates.

ANNEX II: Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

Article 1

Enterprise

An enterprise is considered to be any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form. This includes, in particular, self-employed persons and family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity.

Article 2

Staff headcount and financial ceilings determining enterprise categories

1. The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.
2. Within the SME category, a small enterprise is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million.
3. Within the SME category, a microenterprise is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million.

Article 3

Types of enterprise taken into consideration in calculating staff numbers and financial amounts

1. An "autonomous enterprise" is any enterprise which is not classified as a partner enterprise within the meaning of paragraph 2 or as a linked enterprise within the meaning of paragraph 3.
2. "Partner enterprises" are all enterprises which are not classified as linked enterprises within the meaning of paragraph 3 and between which there is the following relationship: an enterprise (upstream enterprise) holds, either solely or jointly with one or more linked enterprises within the meaning of paragraph 3, 25 % or more of the capital or voting rights of another enterprise (downstream enterprise).

However, an enterprise may be ranked as autonomous, and thus as not having any partner enterprises, even if this 25 % threshold is reached or exceeded by the following investors, provided that those investors are not linked, within the meaning of paragraph 3, either individually or jointly to the enterprise in question:

- (a) public investment corporations, venture capital companies, individuals or groups of individuals with a regular venture capital investment activity who invest equity capital in unquoted businesses ("business angels"), provided the total investment of those business angels in the same enterprise is less than EUR 1250000;
 - (b) universities or non-profit research centres;
 - (c) institutional investors, including regional development funds;
 - (d) autonomous local authorities with an annual budget of less than EUR 10 million and fewer than 5000 inhabitants.
3. "Linked enterprises" are enterprises which have any of the following relationships with each other:

- (a) an enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise;
- (b) an enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;
- (c) an enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
- (d) an enterprise, which is a shareholder in or member of another enterprise, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that enterprise, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that enterprise.

There is a presumption that no dominant influence exists if the investors listed in the second subparagraph of paragraph 2 are not involving themselves directly or indirectly in the management of the enterprise in question, without prejudice to their rights as stakeholders.

Enterprises having any of the relationships described in the first subparagraph through one or more other enterprises, or any one of the investors mentioned in paragraph 2, are also considered to be linked.

Enterprises which have one or other of such relationships through a natural person or group of natural persons acting jointly are also considered linked enterprises if they engage in their activity or in part of their activity in the same relevant market or in adjacent markets.

An "adjacent market" is considered to be the market for a product or service situated directly upstream or downstream of the relevant market.

4. Except in the cases set out in paragraph 2, second subparagraph, an enterprise cannot be considered an SME if 25 % or more of the capital or voting rights are directly or indirectly controlled, jointly or individually, by one or more public bodies.

5. Enterprises may make a declaration of status as an autonomous enterprise, partner enterprise or linked enterprise, including the data regarding the ceilings set out in Article 2.

6. The declaration may be made even if the capital is spread in such a way that it is not possible to determine exactly by whom it is held, in which case the enterprise may declare in good faith that it can legitimately presume that it is not owned as to 25 % or more by one enterprise or jointly by enterprises linked to one another. Such declarations are made without prejudice to the checks and investigations provided for by national or Community rules.

Article 4

Data used for the staff headcount and the financial amounts and reference period

1. The data to apply to the headcount of staff and the financial amounts are those relating to the latest approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis. They are taken into account from the date of closure of the accounts. The amount selected for the turnover is calculated excluding value added tax (VAT) and other indirect taxes.

2. Where, at the date of closure of the accounts, an enterprise finds that, on an annual basis, it has exceeded or fallen below the headcount or financial ceilings stated in Article 2, this will not result in the loss or acquisition of the status of medium-sized, small or microenterprise unless those ceilings are exceeded over two consecutive accounting periods.

3. In the case of newly established enterprises whose accounts have not yet been approved, the data to apply is to be derived from a bona fide estimate made in the course of the financial year.

Article 5

Staff headcount

The headcount corresponds to the number of annual work units (AWU), i.e. the number of persons who worked full-time within the enterprise in question or on its behalf during the entire reference year under consideration. The work of persons who have not worked the full year, the work of those who have worked part-time, regardless of duration, and the work of seasonal workers are counted as fractions of AWU. The staff consists of:

- (a) employees;
- (b) persons working for the enterprise being subordinated to it and deemed to be employees under national law;
- (c) owner-managers;
- (d) partners engaging in a regular activity in the enterprise and benefiting from financial advantages from the enterprise.

Apprentices or students engaged in vocational training with an apprenticeship or vocational training contract are not included as staff. The duration of maternity or parental leaves is not counted.

Article 6

Establishing the data of an enterprise

1. In the case of an autonomous enterprise, the data, including the number of staff, are determined exclusively on the basis of the accounts of that enterprise.
2. The data, including the headcount, of an enterprise having partner enterprises or linked enterprises are determined on the basis of the accounts and other data of the enterprise or, where they exist, the consolidated accounts of the enterprise, or the consolidated accounts in which the enterprise is included through consolidation.

To the data referred to in the first subparagraph are added the data of any partner enterprise of the enterprise in question situated immediately upstream or downstream from it. Aggregation is proportional to the percentage interest in the capital or voting rights (whichever is greater). In the case of cross-holdings, the greater percentage applies.

To the data referred to in the first and second subparagraph is added 100 % of the data of any enterprise, which is linked directly or indirectly to the enterprise in question, where the data were not already included through consolidation in the accounts.

3. For the application of paragraph 2, the data of the partner enterprises of the enterprise in question are derived from their accounts and their other data, consolidated if they exist. To these is added 100 % of the data of enterprises which are linked to these partner enterprises, unless their accounts data are already included through consolidation.

For the application of the same paragraph 2, the data of the enterprises which are linked to the enterprise in question are to be derived from their accounts and their other data, consolidated if they exist. To these is added, pro rata, the data of any possible partner enterprise of that linked enterprise, situated immediately upstream or downstream from it, unless it has already been included in the consolidated accounts with a percentage at least proportional to the percentage identified under the second subparagraph of paragraph 2.

4. Where in the consolidated accounts no staff data appear for a given enterprise, staff figures are calculated by aggregating proportionally the data from its partner enterprises and by adding the data from the enterprises to which the enterprise in question is linked.

ANNEX III: List of applicable Laws and Regulations

The List of Applicable Laws and Regulations can be found in the Greek version of the Work Programme.

RESTART 2016-2020 WORK PROGRAMME – VERSION 16.1

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