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Cyprus tomorrow
RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN

Republic of Cyprus

RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOUNDATION

RESTRICTED CALL

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY VOUCHER (IP VOUCHER)

CALL OF PROPOSALS

IP VOUCHER/1223

Version	Date	Changes
Version 1	21/12/2023	
Version 2	03/01/2024	Deminimis Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 entered into force on 01.01.2024

INTRODUCTION

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) announces the Call for Proposals for the «**IP Voucher»** Programme and invites the Beneficiaries to submit proposals who have received a recommendation to apply for the Voucher as part of the IP Protection Strategy Service which has been approved by the RIF Director General or his designee.

The present Call will be funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility of the NextGenerationEU instrument, in the frame of the action C3.2I1 «Creation and operation of a Central Knowledge Transfer Office» of the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan. The Action is implemented under Policy Axis 3: «Strengthening the Resilience and Competitiveness of the Economy», and specifically the Component 3.2 «Enhanced Research and Innovation», in the context of the implementation of Investment 1 (C3.2I1): Creation and operation of a Central Knowledge Transfer Office.

The «IP Voucher» Programme is based on the document "Framework of Operations of the Central Office of Knowledge Transfer and its Annexes/Appendices". The definitions and the general regulations and procedures as defined in the Work Programme of the RESTART Programmes 2016-2020 also apply.

GENERAL DETAILS OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Programme	**IP VOUCHER**
Call Identifier	**IP VOUCHER/1223**
Source of funding Invitation	**EU Recovery and Resilience Mechanism**
Budget	**€490,000**
Maximum Funding	**€10,000**
Publication Date	**21 December 2023**
Deadline	**Open Call for Proposals until ~~30 October 2026~~ ~~or~~** 17 June 2027 or **until the budget is exhausted.**

OBJECTIVES

The «IP Voucher» Programme aims to support obtaining intellectual property protection for intellectual assets which have resulted from RDI activities carried out by Cypriot entities, and which have significant potential for commercialisation.

DESCRIPTION

The «IP Voucher» Programme will complement the services of the CKTO by providing funding to cover part of the costs of securing eligible intellectual property rights (IPRs) for one or more intellectual assets in an Intellectual Asset Bundle which is the subject of services provided by the CKTO (IP Protection Strategy), upon a recommendation by the CKTO and approval by the Director General of the RIF or his Designee.

BENEFICIARIES

The Beneficiaries of the «IP Voucher» are restricted to the Beneficiaries of CKTO Service – IP Protection Strategy.

If there are multiple owners of rights in the Intellectual Asset Bundle which was the subject matter of the IP Protection Strategy Service, only one Beneficiary will receive the IP Voucher. This Beneficiary must be an owner of at least one right in Intellectual Asset Bundle for which the recommendation was made by the CKTO and, in case of joint ownership, have agreed to bear the IP costs to which the Voucher will be applied. The **Declaration of Approval of Submittal and Acceptance of the Specific Beneficiary to Receive the IP Voucher if the Proposal is Accepted** signed by *all* Beneficiaries of the Service delivery Plan must be submitted to the CKTO experts for inclusion with their positive recommendation submittal. (It will also be uploaded on IRIS as part of the proposal.) The Beneficiaries may have additional agreements among themselves concerning recoupment or allocation of costs for obtaining and maintaining IP protection. Such agreements are a matter solely between the Beneficiaries. The RIF nor the CKTO experts cannot provide any support/advice on such matters. Such agreements, if in place, are not required to be submitted to the RIF.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DURATION

Up to 30 Months

BUDGET

€490,000

MAXIMUM FUNDING PER PROJECT

€10,000

The aid intensity will amount to 50% of the eligible costs as documented in accordance with Specific Conditions specified below. Funding will be granted in accordance with the Provisions of the State Aid Regulations presented in the "Framework of Operations of the Central Office of Knowledge Transfer and its Annexes/Appendices" and the regulations and procedures as defined in the Work Programme of the RESTART Programmes 2016-2020.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND COSTS

Eligible Activities

The activities listed below may receive funding through the «IP Voucher»:

- Obtaining a patent or industrial design at national level covering Cyprus or another European or third country, through the submission of an application to the competent national authority.

- Obtaining a patent by applying to the European Patent Office (EPO) or an industrial design through the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), or

- Obtaining IP rights in additional countries under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) or the Hague System of International Registration of Industrial Designs administered by the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO)

- Obtaining IP rights in any country through Utility Models

Eligible Costs

Actual costs incurred relating to the acquisition, validation and protection of patents and/or other intellectual asset protection listed in Section 3.3 of the "Framework of Operations of the Central Office of Knowledge Transfer and its Annexes/Appendices", may receive financial support. Costs incurred by Beneficiaries for personnel or other internal activities, including access to data bases, are not eligible, per Section 3.6 of the "Framework of Operations of the Central Office of Knowledge Transfer".

Contracting Authorities must comply with the provisions of the Law on Public Procurement of 2016 (73 (I) 2016) for the procurement of legal services regarding the registration and protection of IP rights.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

In the context of this Call for Proposals the following special conditions apply:

- After the completion of the Project, the applicant must submit to the RIF a Final Progress Report, which includes a description of the work carried out by the vendor and a copy of the receipt of the application from the competent authority.
- In addition, a Payment Request must be submitted which includes the contract with, and invoices (with dates of services, amounts billed, and verification/proof of payment) from, the legal counsel(s), patent attorney(ies), or other vendor(s) for the eligible expenses for which reimbursement is being sought.
- The Final Progress Report is submitted up to thirty (30) calendar days after the completion date of the project implementation. The Payment Request is submitted no less than sixty (60) calendar days before the end of the allowable performance period.
- Only one payment will made at the end of the project directly to the Beneficiary receiving the voucher, upon the approval by the RIF of the Final Progress Report and Payment Request.
- Private sector entities must ensure that at the submission of the application the Certificate issued by an Independent Auditor certifying that the Undertaking is not in Difficulty is valid and in effect on the IRIS Portal. In the event that an already uploaded Certificate it is not valid, an updated / valid Certificate must be uploaded.

SUBMISSION

Only the Coordinator for the Service Delivery Plan in connection with which the recommendation for an IP Voucher was made may submit an application. The Coordinator must be registered in advance on the IRIS Portal (https://iris.research.org.cy) and must be the Legal Representative of the Beneficiary (the Beneficiary can be either a legal entity or a natural person) who will receive the Voucher (please note: the contract for the IP Voucher will be between RIF and the Beneficiary receiving the Voucher).

The applicants are advised to use the «Guide for Applicants», which contains guidelines and clarifications regarding the Submission procedure on the IRIS Portal and the «IRIS Portal User Manual» which can be found on the IRIS Portal (https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary).

The application consists of the following parts:

- Part A – General Information (electronic form (fields) to be completed online in the IRIS Portal).

- Annex II – Call Specific Information (documents to be uploaded as Annex II on the IRIS Portal in PDF format) as follows:
  - Copy of the Recommendation for an IP Voucher made by the CKTO.
  - *Declaration:* Approval of Submittal and Acceptance of the Specific Beneficiary to Receive the IP Voucher, signed by all Beneficiaries with rights in the intellectual asset bundle addressed through the Service Delivery Plan.

For Private Sector Beneficiaries:

- *Declaration of Non-Debts to State Authorities.*

If the Beneficiary is a Large Enterprise (Deminimis Regulation applies)[1]:

- ~~*Written Declaration (Form K.E.2) which is issued pursuant to Regulation 3(2) of the Control of State Aid (Minimum Aid) Regulations of 2009 and 2012, completed and signed, and*~~
- *Single Undertatikng Declaration.*

If the Beneficiary is a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME)

- *Declaration pursuant to Article 28 of GBER 651/2014 "Innovation Aid for SMEs".*

SELECTION

For the evaluation of the Proposals, an internal evaluation process will be applied. Proposals will be evaluated in a first-in-first–served order. During the internal evaluation of the proposal, the RIF may request additional information.

Evaluation criteria

1) Completeness of the Proposal, including any appendices.
2) The asset(s) which will be protected under the IP Voucher Programme are at least protected as trade secret or under a common law designation at the time of submittal of the Application.
3) Recommendation to the RIF by the Central Office of Knowledge Transfer.
4) Reasonableness of the request as determined by the RIF Director General or his Designee.

[1] Deminimis Regulation 2023/2831 entered into force on 01.01.2024

Selection

The Proposals are selected in order of priority of submission to the RIF (i.e. they are not subject to competitive procedures) provided that a relevant applicable recommendation for a IP Voucher has been made by the CKTO and deemed eligible on the basis of the internal evaluation as provided for in the Framework of Operations of the Central Office of Knowledge Transfer and its Annexes/Appendices, until the total requested funding of approved Proposals, equals the total Call Budget.

Incomplete proposals (in terms of supporting documents, completion of relevant fields, etc) or proposals with poor justification will be encouraged to revise their proposal and resubmit it. A request for redress may be submitted only if it pertains to the erroneous rejection of an application during internal evaluation after resubmittals. The Redress Committee shall only examine the correctness of the application's rejection during the internal evaluation.

INFORMATION - CONTACT DETAILS

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The Research and Innovation Foundation may, at its discretion, extend or revoke the validity of this Call by applying the same method of publication.