



## FUNDING SCHEME

«RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation of the Research and Innovation Foundation

## PROGRAMME

**BRIDGE2HORIZON**

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**BRIDGE2HORIZON/0326**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Republic of Cyprus



RESEARCH  
& INNOVATION  
FOUNDATION

## INTRODUCTION

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) announces the Call for Proposals of the "BRIDGE2HORIZON" Programme within the framework of the «RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period May 2022 – December 2026 and invites potential beneficiaries to submit relevant Project Proposals (Proposals).

The present Call will be co-financed by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in the frame of the Operational Programme «ΘΑΛΕΙΑ» 2021-2027 under Priority 1: «Competitive, Smart and Digital Economy» and the Specific Objective (1i): «Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies».

## GENERAL CALL INFORMATION

<b>Pillar</b>	<b>PILLAR III "Transformation of RTDI System"</b>
<b>Programme</b>	<b>BRIDGE2HORIZON</b>
<b>Call Identifier</b>	<b>BRIDGE2HORIZON/0326</b>
<b>Source of Funding</b>	<b>Operational Programme «ΘΑΛΕΙΑ» 2021-2027 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)</b>
<b>Call Budget</b>	<b>500.000 Euro</b>
<b>Maximun Funding Per Project</b>	<b>100.000 Euro</b>
<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>26 March 2026</b>
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	<b>Open Call until 29 May 2026, 13.00 (CY time) or until the available budget is exhausted</b>

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

## OBJECTIVES

The "BRIDGE2HORIZON" Programme aims to strengthen the capacities of Cypriot R&I entities and promote scientific excellence in specific thematic areas and fields of the Smart Specialization Strategy for Cyprus (S3CY) for the period 2023-2030 which are in turn aligned with the thematic priorities and challenges that the EU seeks to address in the context of upcoming Work Programmes of the EC's Horizon Europe Programme for Research and Innovation. By extension, the Programme also aims to increase the coordination of collaborative projects and the leadership of pan-European networks by Cypriot entities in proposals submitted in Pillar II - Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness and the European Missions of the Horizon Europe Programme.

Additionally, the Programme is expected to contribute to the internationalization of the R&I ecosystem of Cyprus through the cooperation between Cypriot and foreign entities within the framework of their participation in the Horizon Europe Programme.

## **DESCRIPTION**

Within the framework of the BRIDGE2HORIZON Programme, it is expected that R&I projects will be implemented to address challenges that have been identified following an analysis of the participation of Cypriot entities in Horizon Europe from the start of the programme to date. In the context of this analysis, shortcomings have been identified in proposals coordinated by Cypriot entities, with the lowest scores in the Evaluation Summary Reports appearing in the "Excellence" criterion. In this specific criterion, the objectives and methodology of the proposed projects and the extent to which the activities are ambitious and go beyond existing knowledge at an international level are evaluated.

The projects to be funded under the Programme should:

- be about the implementation of R&I projects in specific thematic areas and fields of the S3CY which are also aligned with the thematic priorities and challenges that the EU seeks to address in the context of upcoming Pillar II or European Missions Work Programmes,
- be in line with the objectives of larger scale projects for the implementation of which a proposal will be submitted to the EU to secure funding for collaborative projects in Calls which require the creation of a Consortium, announced within the framework of Pillar II or the European Missions of the Horizon Europe Programme. Proposals should be submitted to Horizon Europe within the duration of the projects funded by RIF.
- include activities related to the preparation of the Horizon Europe proposal. The budget for these activities may include personnel costs and travel expenses for proposal writing purposes and should not exceed 10% of the total project budget.

With the aim of supporting the creation of Consortia, Foreign Research Organizations can also participate in the funded projects.

## **MANAGEMENT & EXPLOITATION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Ownership of background and foreground Intellectual Property (IP), as well as relevant conditions for the use of IP, shall be settled accordingly through bilateral or other agreements among Consortium Partners.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

Research Organisations (A.1, A.2), Enterprises (B.1, B.2, B.3) Other Organisations (C1., C.2)

## **SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION**

The Host Organisation (HO) must be a Research Organisation (A.1, A.2), Enterprise (B.1., B.2, B.3) or Other Organisations (C1., C.2)

Research Organisations (A), Enterprises (B) or Other Organisations (C) may participate as additional Partner Organisations.

The Consortium must consist of at least one Enterprise (Category B) and one Research Organisation (Category A).

Each enterprise may participate in up to two (2) proposals in total, either as a Host Organization or as a Partner, and may receive funding for only one (1) Project as a Host Organization under the present Call. In cases where an enterprise participates in more than two (2) proposals, only the first two proposals submitted will be taken into consideration.

Participation of Large Enterprises (including Private Universities) is only permitted when an SME is also participating in the Cypriot Consortium, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

The participation of Foreign Research Organisations (FRO) is permitted.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

The Projects must include the following type of activities: Basic Research and/or Industrial Research and/or Experimental Development.

Dissemination activities are eligible only for entities falling under Category A (Research Organisations) and Category C2 (Other Public and Broader Public Sector Entities).

For the purposes of justifying the relevance of the national project to the proposal to be submitted to the Horizon Europe Programme, proposals should include a specific reference to the Pillar II Cluster or European Mission, as well as the Destination or Call where coordination of a collaborative project will be sought by the beneficiary. Submission of the proposal to another Cluster, European Mission or to a Destination or Call other than the one stated in the project contract will not be accepted.

## **DURATION OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

12 Months

## **BUDGET**

€ 500.000

## **MAXIMUM FUNDING PER PROJECT**

€ 100.000

## **ELIGIBLE COSTS**

Personnel costs, Cost for Foreign Research Organisations, Costs for External Services, Costs for Travelling Abroad, Consumables, Other Specific Costs, Overheads.

Expenditure for dissemination activities is eligible only for entities falling under Category A and Category C2.

Proposals should include a specific reference to the costs relating to the coordination of proposals, which should not exceed 10% of the total project budget. The budget for these activities may include personnel costs and travel expenses relating to proposal writing.

In order to check that proposals abide by this restriction, the proposal should include a specific Work Package (WP3) describing the activities and a table presenting the costs relating to the preparation of the proposal to be submitted to Horizon Europe. During project implementation, a specific form outlining costs relating to this Work Package should be submitted along with the Payment Request.

It should be noted that, in cases of expenses incurred under a contract between a Contracting Authority and foreign research institutions, the “Law on the Regulation of Public Procurement Procedures and Related Matters of 2016 – 73(I)/2016” applies.

All beneficiaries that have not previously participated in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, should make use of the simplified cost Method «Standard Scales of Unit Costs» for the calculation of personnel costs.

## **SERVICES OF THE NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS**

With the aim of strengthening the competitiveness of the proposals to be submitted to the Horizon Europe Programme in the frame of this Call for Proposals, pre-screening of the proposal to be submitted to the EC by the National Contact Points of Cyprus for Horizon Europe is **obligatory** in the frame of the present Call and will be a deliverable of the project.

## **RESTART 2016-2020 WORK PROGRAMME**

All general rules and procedures for the participation of organisations and individuals, the eligible activities and costs, as well as the specific information regarding the «Innovation Vouchers» Programme, as well as the other RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, are included in the **RIF’s Work Programme for the «RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2026**, which is the main reference document and an important information source for interested parties and can be found on the Research and Innovation Foundation’s **IRIS (Innovation Research Information System) Portal** (<https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary>).

## SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

In the frame of the present Call, the following specific conditions apply:

- Project Coordinators who received funding under the BRIDGE2HORIZON/0823 Call are not eligible to submit a proposal under the present Call.
- Enterprises that received funding under the BRIDGE2HORIZON/0823 Call, either as Host Organisation or as Partners, are not eligible to submit a proposal under the present Call.
- The Host Institution with the research team participating in the project funded by RIF, are obliged to submit a Proposal as a Coordinator to the EU's Horizon Europe Programme within the duration of project implementation and no earlier than six (6) months after its start. The proposal should be submitted to the Cluster of Pillar II or the European Mission, as well as the Destination or Call indicated in the contract of the project funded by RIF. **Submission of the European proposal to another Cluster, European Mission or to a Destination or Call other than that stated in the project contract will not be accepted.**
- For the projects funded under this Call, pre-financing corresponds to 50% of the Requested Funding and is paid upon Contract signature. Upon approval of the Final Progress Report, the Final Payment is paid, 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. The Final Payment will be made provided that a proposal has been submitted as a Coordinator to the European Union's "Horizon Europe" program in accordance with the provisions of this call for proposals.
- Proof of submission of the proposal to the Horizon Europe Programme is a deliverable of the project and a condition for the final payment of project funding.
- An extension of up to six (6) months may be granted to funded projects, following submission of a request to RIF through the IRIS Portal.
- All private organisations (Host Organisation and Partner Organisations) are required to register the updated data regarding their ultimate beneficial owners in the Competent National Registry / Archive, as per «The prevention and suppression of money laundering and terrorist financing Law of 2007 (188(I)/2007)». The RIF maintains the right to proceed with the appropriate checks in the competent Registries to verify the registration. For this purpose, all private organisations should submit an official proof for the data registration during the Contract Preparation stage. Furthermore, all private organisations (Host Organisation and Partner Organisations) who request funding exceeding 150.000 Euro, during the Contract Preparation stage will be required to also submit the data (Name and Surname, ID / Passport Number and Date of Birth) of their ultimate beneficial owners through the relevant Declaration.
- Funded Projects should comply with the «Do No Significant Harm» principle, according to which they must not include or support activities that could cause significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives, as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852, on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment.

## SUBMISSION

Proposals are submitted through the Research and Innovation Foundation's IRIS Portal (<https://iris.research.org.cy>).

The Project Coordinator and all local participating organizations of the Cypriot Consortium should register in advance on the IRIS Portal.

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

*The Research and Innovation Foundation encourages in all its Calls for Proposals:*

- *the participation of women as Project Coordinators, and*
- *a gender-balanced participation in Projects.*

**The Project Proposal consists of the following parts:**

1. Part A – General Information & Budget (electronic form (fields) to be completed online through the IRIS Portal).
2. Part B – Technical Annex (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format). **Note:** *The template provided for this Call must be submitted **without any alterations**. The Part B template for this Call can be found on the IRIS Portal, under the relevant Call for Proposals (Call Documents).* – **Obligatory Submission**
3. Annexes (documents to be uploaded as Annexes on the IRIS Portal in PDF format).
  - Annex I: CVs of the Coordinator and the key personnel of the project team.  
– **Obligatory Submission**  
*It is recommended that CVs are created according to the EUROPASS format and do not exceed 5 pages per person.*

It is noted that, upon submission of the proposal, beneficiaries are required to select keywords corresponding to those used by the EU for the relevant Destination or Call of their choice.

## PROJECT SELECTION

### Evaluation Procedure

For the evaluation of Proposals to be submitted under the «BRIDGE2HORIZON» Programme, a Proposal Preliminary Check and a remote scientific evaluation procedure by two (2) independent evaluators will be followed, as described in [RIF's Work Programme for the «RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2026](#). In case the requested documents have not been submitted the proposal will be deemed ineligible during the preliminary check.

Prior to the scientific evaluation of each Proposal according to the evaluation criteria, evaluators are requested to assess the Proposal's compatibility with:

- the Objectives of the Programme and the Call for Proposals, and
- the selected priority sector/sub-sector of the S3CY and the Horizon Europe Work Programme chosen, and
- the «Do No Significant Harm» principle, and

the compatibility of the proposed type(s) of research with those allowed by the Call for Proposals.

The evaluator will not proceed with the assessment of the evaluation criteria should the Proposal fail the compatibility assessment.

## Evaluation Criteria

### 1. Excellence – Weight 40%

- *Quality of Project Objectives and contribution to the development of the scientific area addressed by the project.*
- *Degree of Project Innovation and Originality in relation to the current state of the art at international level.*
- *Soundness, credibility and feasibility of the proposed idea.*
- *Compatibility of the proposed types of activities (basic research, industrial research, experimental research) with the project, Programme and Call objectives.*

### 2. Added Value and Benefit – Weight 30%

- *Scientific and/or technological and/or social and/or economic impact at national level and measures to maximize it.*
- *Effectiveness of the proposed measures for the exploitation of results (including management of Intellectual Property Rights) and maximizing their dissemination.*
- *Creation of potential for the successful coordination of Projects in the Horizon Europe Programme and contribution to the internationalization of involved CY entities through the enhancement of capacities and research excellence in thematic areas and domains in line with the S3CY and the thematic areas and challenges the EU wishes to tackle in the framework of upcoming Horizon Europe Work Programmes.*

### 3. Implementation – Weight 30%

- *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 or the Host Organisation (in case there is no Consortium) for the implementation of the Project (at the level of Organisations and/or individuals) and the achievement of the proposed objectives.*
  - *Ability and research track record (e.g. publications, invitations to present awards, distinctions and project funding received) of the Project Coordinator and the other researchers.*

- *Relevance of the project to the S3CY and the thematic priorities and challenges that the EU seeks to address in the context of the selected Horizon Europe Work Programme.*

*Suitability and adequacy of the proposed management activities, including identification and handling of potential risks.*

- *Justification of the Coordinator's ability to coordinate the project.*
- *Completeness and credibility of the Contingency Plan in the frame of the implementation of the Project.*

### **Selection**

Prioritised in order of submission to the RIF (non-competitive procedures apply) on the condition that proposals have been deemed eligible for funding following the evaluation procedure until the sum of:

- (a) The requested funding in proposals submitted to the RIF and that of ongoing projects, and
- (b) the approved funding for projects that have been completed, equals the total Call budget.

### **Funding Payment**

For this Call, regardless of the provisions described in Chapter 3.7 Funding Payment of the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme, funding payment will be provided as follows:

- **Pre-financing:** pre-financing corresponds to 50% of the Requested Funding and will be paid upon Contract signature.
- **Final Payment:** the Final Payment, 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 that the proposal, coordinated by the Host Institution, has been submitted to Horizon Europe and the Final Progress Report has been approved by the RIF as specified in the section "Specific Conditions" of the current Call.

## **INFORMATION – CONTACT DETAILS**

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### **RIF Support Service**

#### **E-mail**

[callsupport@research.org.cy](mailto:callsupport@research.org.cy)

#### **Telephone**

+35722205000

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*The Research and Innovation Foundation may at its discretion, proceed to the extension or revocation of the present Call by applying the same publication procedure.*