RESEARCH
& INNOVATION
FOUNDATION

LOCAL KTO STAFFING & CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

RIF-CKTO/CAP-ENHANCE/0526

INTRODUCTION

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) announces the Call for Proposals for the **«Local KTO Staffing & Capacity Enhancement» Programme** and invites potential beneficiaries to submit relevant Project Proposals (Proposals).

The present Call «CAP-ENHANCE» will be funded by the Republic of Cyprus.

GENERAL CALL INFORMATION

Programme	**Local KTO Staffing & Capacity Enhancement**
Call Identifier	**RIF-CKTO/CAP-ENHANCE/0526**
Funding Source	**NATIONAL FUNDING**
Call Budget	**700.000 Euro**
Maximun Funding Per Local Knowledge Transfer Office (LKTO)	**35.000 Euro**
Publication Date	**29 May 2026**
Deadline	**Open Call until 17 December 2026 or until the exhaustion of budget**

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 and DESCRIPTION

The National Knowledge Transfer System operates under a Hub-and-Spoke model, where the Central Knowledge Transfer Office (CKTO) at the Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) functions as the central hub, while Local Knowledge Transfer Offices (LKTOs) are hosted within Research Organizations as the spokes.

The "Local KTO Staffing & Capacity Enhancement" programme aims to support Local Knowledge Transfer Offices (LKTOs) in hiring one (1) full-time staff member (Knowledge Transfer Officer) dedicated exclusively to knowledge transfer (KT) activities through co-funding of the employment cost. The ultimate objective is to strengthen the operational capacity, quality of knowledge transfer services provided, and long-term sustainability of the LKTOs. Through the programme, the following are expected:

- establishment of stable and professional knowledge transfer structures,
- enhancement of the skills of staff employed at LKTOs,

• improvement of the quality and effectiveness of knowledge transfer services offered to researchers and businesses,
• harmonisation of operational standards and skill levels across the national network of Knowledge Transfer Offices,
• ensuring the sustainability of LKTOs after the end of the funding period.

BENEFICIARIES

The Host Organisation may be a Local Knowledge Transfer Office (LKTO) that has been approved as a "SPOKE" by RIF through an application submitted under one of the following Calls: RIF-KTO/SPOKES/1023, RIF-CKTO/SPOKES/0424, and RIF-CKTO/SPOKES/0326. All beneficiaries must comply with the provisions of the respective Call under which they were approved as a SPOKE.
Under this specific Call, a LKTO may receive funding as a Host Organisation (HO) in only one Project.
The Proposal must be submitted by the Legal Representative of the Host Organisation, who will assume the role of Project Coordinator.
The Knowledge Transfer Officer must be employed on a full-time basis by the HO throughout the duration of the Project. In the event of departure, only one replacement is permitted during the Project. The Host Organisation is required to maintain the position of the Knowledge Transfer Officer for at least one year following the completion of the Project.
The Knowledge Transfer Officer must devote 100% of their working time to knowledge transfer activities and the exploitation of research results.
Beneficiaries falling under Category C.1 (private academic institutions not classified as research organisations) will be funded under the De Minimis Regulation 2023/2831.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The individual hired under the Call will be engaged exclusively in knowledge transfer activities, such as:
• management of research result disclosures,
• support on intellectual property matters,
• liaison with businesses and other stakeholders,
• support for knowledge transfer agreements,
• participation in KT actions and training activities.

DURATION

24-36 months

BUDGET

€700,000

MAXIMUM FUNDING – AID INTENSITY

The maximum funding per LKTO is €35,000.
The Aid Intensity can be up to 50% of eligible costs.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Personnel Costs

Only the employment cost of the Knowledge Transfer Officer employed by the LKTO is eligible.

For the "Personnel Costs" category, all eligible entities that have not previously participated in the RESTART 2016-2020 programs are required to use the simplified method of "Standard Scales of Unit Cost" to calculate personnel cost.

SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS

Within the framework of the proposal, measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be defined, relevant to the maturity level of the organisation. Indicative KPIs may include:

• Number of research projects or research results assessed for exploitation and knowledge transfer potential to enhance impact.

• Number of technology descriptions with potential market analysis or Innovation Briefs referring to potential applications or markets.

• Number of market opportunity assessments conducted for research results or technologies.

• Number of IP protection support cases (e.g. patents, designs, copyrights, etc.).

• Number of organised meetings or contacts with businesses for exploring collaborations or exploitation opportunities for research results.

• Number of knowledge transfer or industry collaboration agreements (e.g. licensing agreements, collaborative research, contract research), as well as support for spin-off creation.

• Activities aimed at developing a knowledge transfer culture within the organisation (e.g. awareness actions, workshops, presentations to researchers) and number of KT or innovation events organised internally.

• Professional development and specialised training activities for the Knowledge Transfer Officer on KT-related topics, including obtaining professional titles, certifications, etc.

• Number of research results advanced to a higher level of technological or commercial maturity (e.g. TRL progression or market interest validation).

• Number of researchers or research teams participating in KT activities or collaborating with the LKTO for research exploitation.

• Number of internal staff trained to support knowledge transfer and documentation of LKTO procedures and tools.

• Number of proposals submitted to European programmes that secured funding, in which the LKTO provided KT and/or commercialisation services.

• Participation plan in activities of international knowledge transfer organisations (e.g. AUTM, ASTP), as well as the number of events attended by the LKTO.

- The Host Organisation must ensure the retention of knowledge and procedures within the organisation relating to knowledge transfer matters.
- Beneficiaries are required to participate in all events to which they are invited by RIF.

- Knowledge Transfer Officers will join an organised and dynamic network established and coordinated by RIF, aimed at strengthening cooperation and networking among them. The network will serve as a platform for exchanging knowledge, best practices, and experiences, while also providing ongoing support on issues related to knowledge transfer, innovation, and research exploitation.
- The Host Organisation shall submit to RIF an Interim and Final Progress Report, as well as a Final Payment Request. It is clarified that the supporting documentation for Personnel Costs is specified in detail in Section 5.4.1 of the RESTART 2026–2020 Programmes Work Programme.
- As part of the Interim Progress Report evaluation, RIF will conduct an on-site monitoring visit to verify whether the Project KPIs are being implemented according to the Contract.
- As part of the Final Progress Report evaluation, RIF will conduct an evaluation with the participation of an independent evaluator to determine whether the Project KPIs have been achieved in accordance with the Contract.
- The Host Organisation should submit to Competent National Registries updated data regarding their ultimate beneficial owners as per «The prevention and suppression of money laundering and terrorist financing Law of 2007 (188(I)/2007)». RIF reserves the right to carry out checks in the competent Registers and to request an official proof for the registration. For this purpose, during the Contract preparation phase, all private law entities are required to submit the Declaration regarding Beneficial Owners accompanied by the official proof of registration.
- 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 the Host Organisation should register in advance on the IRIS Portal. Potential applicants are advised to use the **«Guide for Applicants»**, which contains guidelines and clarifications regarding the Submission procedure and the **«IRIS Portal User Manual»** which can be found on the IRIS Portal (**https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary**).

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). Applicants are requested to describe, among others:*
   (a) the professional development plan for the Knowledge Transfer Officer; and
   (b) a concise overview of the current status of the Local Knowledge Transfer Office (LKTO) and the main achievements attained during the past three (3) years.
   At minimum, the Proposal should include:
   - *Total Research & Development (R&D) funding*
   - *Number of disclosures*
   - *Number of patent applications*
   - *Number of granted patents*
   - *Number of licensing agreements and/or other revenue-generating agreements*
   - *Number of active spin-offs*
   - *Revenue from licensing and research contracts with businesses (Cypriot, European, or international)*
   - *Equity-based investments raised by spin-off companies*

3. ANNEX I – Curricula Vitae **- Mandatory Submission** (Curriculum Vitae of the proposed hire). The CV must document relevant professional experience in knowledge transfer and/or related activities.

4. ANNEX III – **Mandatory Submission** Call Specific Information (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format) **- Mandatory only for organisations under Category C.1:**

   - Single Undertaking Declaration, completed and signed.

PROJECT SELECTION

Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation of the proposals for the Program will follow a Preliminary Check procedure followed by remote evaluation by an Independent Evaluator.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Strategy and Institutional Commitment to Knowledge Transfer – Weight: 35%

Evaluation focuses on the level of commitment of the Host Organisation to developing KT activities and supporting the role of the Knowledge Transfer Officer.

- Clarity of the organisation's objectives regarding knowledge transfer and research exploitation.

- Integration of knowledge transfer into the organisation's strategy and policies.
- Role and positioning of the Knowledge Transfer Officer within the organisational structure and operations.
- Degree of support provided by management to the Officer for implementing activities, including provision of necessary resources (financial and non-financial), as well as commitment of a specific budget for intellectual property activities (e.g. IP protection, management, and exploitation).
- Prospects for continuation and sustainability of the Knowledge Transfer Officer role and KT activities after the end of funding.

2. Knowledge Transfer Development and Activities Plan – Weight: 35%

Evaluation focuses on the quality, clarity, and suitability of the proposed project for developing KT activities.

- Clarity and completeness of the proposed KT activities plan, in relation to the organisation's maturity level.
- Suitability of the proposed activities (e.g. assessment of research results, support for IP protection, development of collaborations with enterprises).
- Suitability of the qualifications, skills, and experience of the individual to be hired as Knowledge Transfer Officer.
- Adequacy of organisational resources and internal procedures supporting implementation.

3. Expected Results and Impact – Weight: 30%

Evaluation focuses on the extent to which the proposed project is expected to contribute to research exploitation and strengthening knowledge transfer within the organisation.

- Clear, measurable, and realistic definition of expected outcomes and KPIs, taking into account the organisation's maturity level.
- Potential to strengthen exploitation of research results and IP management.
- Potential to strengthen collaborations with businesses and external stakeholders.
- Contribution of the Knowledge Transfer Officer to developing a culture of innovation and knowledge transfer within the organisation.

Selection

Proposals are selected on a first-come, first-served basis (not through a competitive ranking process), provided they are eligible for funding, until the total approved funding reaches the total budget available under the Call.

Funding Payment

For this Call, RIF 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 and the Final Aid Intensity.

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 Programmes RESTART 2016-2020 **are included in the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme for the period May 2022 - December 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**).

INFORMATION – CONTACT DETAILS

RIF Support Service

Email
callsupport@research.org.cy

Telephone
+35722205000

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.