DRIVING GROWTH

Call for Proposals
«STRENGTHENING INNOVATION SUPPORT
STRUCTURES» Programme
SUPSTRUCTURES/0524
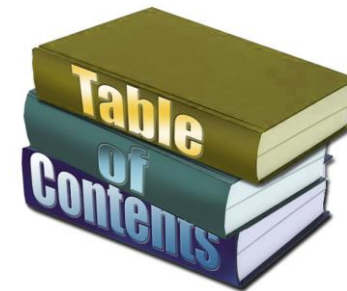
June 2024

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RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOUNDATION

Contents

Objectives

- ✓ Supporting local **Innovation Support Structures** to implement **structured cycles of supporting programs** addressed to startups
- ✓ Enhancing the **quality of services and related activities** provided by the Innovation Support Structures
- ✓ Increasing the **chances of success** for participating startups, in terms of **market penetration and income generation** from sales and/or from the acquisition of private investments
- ✓ Focusing on **mature startups**, which have **prospects for shorter market penetration**

General Call Information

- **Call Budget:** €300,000
- **Maximum Funding Per Project:** Up to € 10.000 per startup to cover the full or part of the supporting structure's cost, and up to € 100.000 per support structure, taking into account the Call's available budget and the number of the support structures to be selected for funding
- **Duration of Project Implementation:** Up to 12 Months
- **Announcement Date:** 29 May 2024
- **Deadline:** 26 June 2024, 13:00
- **Co-funded by the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility**

*Funding will be awarded in the form of the Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to **de minimis aid**.*

Beneficiaries / Conditions for Participation (1)

- Host Organisation (HO) can be **any organisation (legal entity)**, regardless of its status, which is **legally established and active in the Republic of Cyprus**, which will implement, in the frame of the RIF's Programme, a up to **12 months structured startups support program cycle**
- A structured program may include at a minimum an impartial **startup selection process** and the **provision of added value services to startups**
- Each structured program should include a **minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 startups**
- Participating startups should be **registered** (<5 years since registration) and **legally established and active** in the Republic of Cyprus
- Startups that have **previously received funding from the RIF** are not eligible for funding from the present Programme
- Startups that have **already received private investment from the support structure** in exchange for equity capital are not eligible for funding

Beneficiaries / Conditions for Participation (2)

Expected Impact for each funded structure:

✓ attraction of **private investments of at least €80,000**, or
✓ **sales of at least €50,000**

for **one of the enterprises** that will be supported, during the implementation of the program.

❑ *A structure that will not manage to fulfil the above target, <u>will not</u> have the right to participate in the second Call.*
❑ *Private investments and revenues through sales should not come by <u>linked parties</u>.*

Beneficiaries / Conditions for Participation (3)

Other Specific Conditions:

- The support structure's program cycle **start date** should be **later than the agreed project start date with the RIF**, following the completion of the selection procedure

Project Activities

Structured startups support programs should include at a minimum the following services/activities:

- ✓ **Digital Acceleration** Services,
- ✓ **Access to markets** and **commercialisation training**, and
- ✓ Coaching/mentoring in **startup entrepreneurship** issues.

Eligibility of Costs

Eligible Costs:

- Personnel Cost* for the structure's staff involved
- Costs for External Services (for mentors/coaches, trainers, staff training, events organisation etc)

The following Costs are not eligible:

- **Operating costs** of the structure such as rent, utilities, secretarial support etc
- Direct or indirect **financing of the structures to the enterprises** such as **seed funding**, or **hosting of an enterprise in an incubator**

* Beneficiaries that have not previously participated in the RESTART 2026-2020 Programmes, should make use of the simplified cost Method «Standard Scales of Unit Costs» for the calculation of personnel costs.

Funded by the European Union
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Proposal Submission

Proposals are submitted through the Research and Innovation Foundation's IRIS Portal (https://iris.research.org.cy). The Project Proposal consists of the following parts:

1. **Part A – General Information & Budget** (electronic form (fields) to be completed online)
2. **Part B – Technical Annex – Application Form** (document to be uploaded on the IRIS Portal in PDF format).
3. **ANNEX I – Curricula Vitae – <u>Mandatory Submission</u>** (document to be uploaded as an Annex on the IRIS Portal in PDF format and includes the CVs of the **Coordinator and the key personnel involved in the program implemenation**). It is recommended that, CVs are created according to the EUROPASS format and do not exceed 5 pages per person.
4. **ANNEX III – Call Specific Information** (documents to be uploaded as Annexes on the IRIS Portal in PDF format, duly completed and signed):
   *(a) **Declaration** of the Host Organisation,*
   *(b) Declaration for confirmation of **non-debts to state Authorities**, and*
   *(c) **Single Undertaking Declaration.***

Useful Documents and Guidelines

- Call for Proposals Document (GR, EN)
- Application Form (Part B)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- IRIS Portal Registration Manual
- Proposal Preparation Manual

Evaluation / Project Selection (1)

- **Remote evaluation** by an **Evaluation Committee** consisted by three Independent Evaluators, with a **Consensus Report**
- The final decision regarding the selection of a proposal for funding by the RIF, is at the discretion of the Committee (**Go, No-Go**)
- The Evaluation Committee's decision, which will be **communicated to the Project Coordinator**, is <u>final</u> - the submission of request for redress is not allowed
- Proposals/Support Structures (**Up to 6**) which have been deemed eligible for funding following the evaluation procedure, are **selected for funding**
- The first **five (5) startups per structure will be considered as eligible** and then, in **order of submission***, the sixth, seventh, etc. per structure, depending on the number of structures to be supported, and until the budget is exhausted

* At the proposal submission, startups will be prioritised by the applicant structure

Evaluation / Project Selection (2)

- **Evaluation Criteria**:

  - ✓ *Alignment of the proposed program with the startup needs and goals. More specifically, it is evaluated whether the proposed program is tailored to the specific needs, goals and stage of development of participating startups*

  - ✓ *Selection Procedure. The selection procedure for the startups to be supported by the structure is adequate and reliable, and the selection criteria are relevant to the objectives and the regulations of the Call for Proposals.*

  - ✓ *Skills and previous experience of the Project Coordinator and Key Personnel responsible for the program implementation*

  - ✓ *Mentor Quality and Expertise: The calibre and availability of mentors, advisors, trainers to be involved in the delivery of the program, is evaluated*

  - ✓ *Utilisation of networking opportunities with investors and/or potential customers*

  - ✓ *Post-program support: The level of support provided to startups after they graduate from the program, is evaluated. This may include continued access to resources, ongoing mentorship, alumni networks etc*

  - ✓ *Diversity and Inclusion: The program's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion among participating startups, and the diversity of the mentor/coaches/trainers, are evaluated.*

  - ✓ *Previous success stories of startups supported by the Structure in terms of market introduction/turnover, and acquisition of private investments.*

Completion

Upon the completion of its structured cycle program the Structure submits to the RIF:

- **A «Progress Report»** which includes the **results of the program**
- **A «Payment Request»** which includes the **relevant documentation justifying the** _personnel cost_, **and the** _cost for external services_ **(invoices)**

- ✓ _Provided that the necessary conditions are met, the **approved funding** will be released **to the Support Structure**_
- ✓ _If the program's **cost per startup**, as justified in the «Progress Report» and the «Payment Request» is less than 10.000 Euro, then the RIF will award funding according to **real verified costs**_

Contact / Support

For More Information
RIF Website: www.research.org.cy
IRIS Portal: https://iris.research.org.cy/

Supporting RIF's Clients
RIF Support Service:
support@research.org.cy | Tel. 22-205000

▸ **Thank you!**

Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF)

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