**First Call for Financial Assistance in relation to costs incurred by Researchers on the research vessel (R/V) Gaia Blu**

**Application for Financial Assistance for undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU in relation to eligible costs incurred on behalf of Malta-Based Researchers that are employed with them**

This application form must be submitted to Xjenza Malta at international.xjenzamalta@gov.mt by the above mentioned undertaking concerned in relation to the expenses incurred on behalf of their employee collaborating as a researcher with the Italian National Research Council (CNR). The Principal Investigator should have applied to CNR on behalf of the team requesting ship time in line with the Call requirements for access to the R/V Gaia Blu, as detailed on the CNR website: [CNR Gaia Blu Call](https://www.cnr.it/it/news/13013/aperta-la-prima-call-per-l-accesso-alla-nave-da-ricerca-gaia-blu).

Requests for access to the R/V Gaia Blu must be submitted exclusively via *Posta Elettronica Certificata* *(PEC)* to protocollo-ammcen@pec.cnr.it, addressed to the Interim Director of the Research Infrastructure Office, by midnight on **30th November 2024 (Deadline extended to 6th December 2024, 19:00 CET)**.

To apply for financial assistance from Xjenza Malta as outlined in this document,applications by Malta-based undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU collaborating with the Principal Investigator mentioned above, must be submitted to Xjenza Malta by **4th December 2024, 23:59 CET (Deadline extended to 6th December 2024, 23:59 CET)**.

Financial support is provided exclusively for eligible costs incurred on behalf of the Malta-based researchers. Such costs are limited to travel and operational expenses, not covered by CNR. Funding is not extended to other international partners or for activities outside the scope of the Malta-based researchers' involvement.

An application by a Private Entity may include costs incurred in relation to multiple researchers employed with it. Each application to Xjenza Malta must be accompanied by the final application submitted to CNR by the Principal Investigator.

The financial assistance mentioned in this document is **applicable only to legal entities[[1]](#footnote-1), specifically undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU**.

# **Financial Support**

Xjenza Malta offers financial support covering travel costs and other operating expenses up to **€6,000 per Malta-based researcher.** This support is provided on a reimbursement basis, following the completion of activities. Applicants should list the envisaged costs in the application form and claim only the actual costs incurred by their employee/s, ensuring effective utilisation of the requested budget in the application form. Xjenza Malta will only reimburse eligible costs that do not exceed the total budget requested in the application form. Additionally, all costs must be justified and documented to facilitate the reimbursement process.

Applicants must submit the following items within four weeks after the expedition during the post-expedition phase:

1. A financial reimbursement form. All reimbursement claims must be substantiated with original receipts, invoices, and other relevant documentation proving the expenditure was incurred for the project. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in partial or no reimbursement.
2. One drafted article, accompanied by photos, reflecting on the ship-time research experience, which should acknowledge the financial assistance received from Xjenza Malta, using the following words:

 ‘*[Entity Name] is financially supported by Xjenza Malta to participate in the research expedition aboard the R/V Gaia Blu*.”

Additionally, all communication and outreach rules stipulated by CNR must be respected.

# **Required Annexes to be submitted with this application form**

1. **The final application submitted to CNR by the Principal Investigator**
2. **CVs of the researcher(s) expenses of whom will be claimed by the Undertaking/Entity**
3. **State Aid Declaration (*de minimis*)**

# **Details of the Undertaking/Entity and details of the Malta-based researcher/s.**

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| **Legal Name of Undertaking/ Entity**  |       |
| **Name of Department/Institute/Centre**[if applicable] |       |
| **Website link:** |       |
| **More information on the entity:*** Brief history, when established, number of employees
* Field of activity and core competencies
* Research capacity & track record in related activities
* Other relevant information
 |       |
| **VAT number:**  |  |
| **Legal Form of Undertaking / Entity:** |  |
| **Registration/Identification number:** |  |
| **Entity / Undertaking Size:**  | *Select from: Micro / Small / Medium / Large* |
| **Business Activity** [please state NACE code]:A list of NACE Codes may be accessed by [clicking here](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5902521/KS-RA-07-015-EN.PDF). |  |
| **Researcher/s Information [repeat as necessary]** | *Name:*      *Designation:*      *Gender:*      *Contact Number:*      *E-mail address:*      ☐ *I consent to receive information about other initiatives by Xjenza Malta* |
| *Name:*      *Designation:*      *Gender:*      *Contact Number:*      *E-mail address:*      ☐ *I consent to receive information about other initiatives by Xjenza Malta* |

# **Eligible Costs**

Xjenza Malta provides financial assistance of up to **€6,000 per person** in each application. Eligible costs include:

1. **Travel expenses**:
	* Economy flights (the total amount for each flight should be estimated as costing no more than €1,000 for EU countries), public transport, and other travel-related costs incurred for the purpose of the project, with priority given to the most economical solutions.
	* Travel insurance.
	* Subsistence allowance (inclusive of accommodation) - when subsistence costs are calculated the local entity’s pre-approved subsistence allowances should be used. If this is not available, official [per diem rates](https://finance.gov.mt/en/The-Ministry/Departments-Directorates-Units/fpmd/Pages/Per-Diem-Rates.aspx) established by the Ministry for Finance could be used for guidance.
2. **Other operating expenses**: Direct costs incurred as a result of the research activities, to be detailed in the financial reimbursement form after the conclusion of activities.

Xjenza Malta will not be responsible for arranging any relevant activities including, travel plans, accommodation, logistics planning, insurance coverage for any participant travel, etc.

Consumables and equipment cannot be funded under this assistance measure. Expenses related to loans, interests and recoverable value added tax are also considered as ineligible costs.

Eligible costs are to conform to the following and are subject to the final audit scrutiny:

1. Any expenses incurred during the project must be consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
2. Commercial transactions between any applicants or consortium partners, or between any applicants or a consortium partner and a company with similar shareholding to a consortium partner, is not allowed. All transactions need to be carried out in line with the arm’s length principle.

Participants will be funded if the amount they request falls within the *de minimis* threshold. Article 3(2) of the de minimis Regulation stipulates that a single undertaking cannot receive more than €300,000 in de minimis aid over 3 years, including de minimis aid from schemes offered by entities other than the Agency. Applicants will be required to submit a signed de minimis declaration form indicating any de minimis aid received and/or applied for during the applicable three-year period.

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| **Breakdown of Costs being requested**  |
| **Number of Malta-based researchers is**       |
| **Travel expenses** *(Indicate type of travel expense using one row per person)* |
| *E.g. Flights – Researcher name* | €      |
|  | €      |
|  | €      |
|  | €      |
| **Other operating expenses** *(total for all researchers)* | €      |
| **Total** *(Indicate total of all researchers - up to €6,000 per person)* | €      |

# **State aid**

This Call is being implemented in line with the terms and conditions of 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 (OJ L, 2023/2831, 15.12.2023) (herein referred to the as de minimis Regulation (link below)).

The *de minimis* Regulation stipulates that a single undertaking cannot receive more than €300,000 in *de minimis* aid over 3 years, including de minimis aid from schemes offered by entities other than the Agency. This three-year period is assessed on a rolling basis.

Any *de minimis* aid received in excess of the established threshold will have to be recovered, with interest from the undertaking receiving the aid.

Undertakings in all sectors may be eligible for assistance under this scheme with the exception of the following, as per Article 1 of the *de minimis* Regulation:

1. Aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products.
2. Aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of price or quantity of products purchased or put on the market.
3. Aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products.
4. Aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in one of the following cases:
5. Where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned;
6. Where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers.
7. Aid granted to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, the establishment and operation of a distribution network or other current expenditure linked to the export activity.
8. Aid contingent upon the use of domestic good and services over imported goods and services.

Where an undertaking is active in the sectors referred to in points (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) above, and is also active in one or more of the other sectors falling within the scope of the *de minimis* Regulation or has other activities falling within the scope of the *de minimis* Regulation, the *de minimis* Regulation shall apply to aid granted in respect of the latter sectors or activities, provided that the Agency ensures, by relying on appropriate means such as separation of activities or separation of accounts, that the activities in the sectors excluded from the scope of this Regulation do not benefit from the de minimis aid granted in accordance with this Regulation.

The rules on cumulation of aid as outlined in Article 5 of the *de minimis* Regulation (link below) will be respected.

Applicants will be required to submit a signed *de minimis* declaration indicating any *de minimis* aid received and/or applied for during the applicable three-year period.

More information on the *de minimis* Regulation can be found on the following link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2831>

# Declarations

## Personal Data Protection

1. **Contact Email Address of the Data Protection Officer:** dpo.xjenzamalta@gov.mt
2. **The Legal Basis and Purpose of Processing:** The personal data collected by Xjenza Malta (hereinafter ‘the Agency’) via this written application for financial assistance and its subsequent processing by the Agency to evaluate data subject’s request for aid under the Scheme is in line with:
	1. 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 (herein referred to as the ‘*de minimis* Regulation’).
	2. Data Protection Act (CAP 586 of the Laws of Malta) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).
3. The legitimate basis to process personal data submitted by the data subject by virtue of his/her written application for aid is Regulation 6 (1)(b) of the General Data Protection Regulation (“GDPR”), as *‘processing is necessary in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract’.*
4. **Data Retention Period:** The data collected by the Agency as submitted by the data subject via this written application for aid will be retained for a period of ten (10) years from the date of when the aid is granted to the Entity represented by the data subject in relation to this written application for aid, in line with Article 6 of the *de minimis* Regulation.
5. In the case of applications not supported, data collected by the Agency as submitted by the data subject, shall need to be retained for the duration of the scheme.
6. **Pursuant to the GDPR Regulation, you have the right to access personal data, rectify inaccurate personal data, request to erase personal data, and request the Agency to restrict the processing of personal data.** To exercise such rights, you are to submit a written request to the Data Protection Officer via the contact e-mail address. Any erasing and/or rectification of personal data and/or restriction of processing as referred to above may:
	1. Render one or more cost items or the Entity ineligible for assistance under the Scheme or render void the notification issued in favour of the Entity for assistance under the Scheme in relation to this written application for aid.
	2. Lead the Agency to enforce a recovery of aid granted to the Entity as part of this written application for aid.
7. Sharing of data where strictly necessary and required by law: For the purpose of processing this written application for aid in line with the ‘*de minimis* Regulation’ , the Agency may share the data provided via this application with other Government Entities, subject that such processing satisfies at least one of the grounds listed under Regulation of the GDPR.
8. If you feel that your data protection rights have been infringed, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information and Data Protection Commissioner.
9. **Authorisation to engage with the Agency on matters** **related to this application**:

I the undersigned, as the legal representative of the Applicant Entity, authorise the following Legal Bodies and/or Natural Persons to act on my behalf with the Agency concerning matters related to this written application for aid and any subsequent documentation exchanged between the two parties concerning the same written application for aid.

*The person giving authorisation should correspond to the data subject of personal data contained in this application as well as represent the Applicant Entity as its legal representative.*

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| Name of Applicant (Undertaking/Entity) | Name and Surname of Natural Person Granted Authorisation[[2]](#footnote-2) | E-Mail Address of Party Granted Authorisation[[3]](#footnote-3) |
|            |       |       |
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| Name And Surname of The Person Giving Authorisation | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| E-Mail Address of The Person Giving Authorisation | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Signature Of Person Giving Authorisation |  |
| Designation | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Date | Click or tap here to enter text. |

*The person giving authorisation should correspond to the data subject of personal data contained in this application as well as represent the Applicant Entity as its legal representative.*

## Cumulation of Aid

## The undersigned declares that aid approved under this Call is in line with the terms and conditions set out in this application form and in line with the rules on cumulation outlined in Article 5 of 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.

## Double Funding

The undersigned confirms that there has not been any approval or has been granted any public funding, financing or fiscal benefit in respect to the cost items included in this request for aid and will not seek funding or fiscal benefits for these cost items through other National and/or European Union measures. Such measures may include:

1. Schemes administered by Xjenza Malta, Malta Enterprise, the Planning and Priorities’ Coordination Division (PPCD), the Measure and Support Division, Jobsplus, the Energy and Water Agency, and other government-funded schemes operated by other entities (such as JAMIE financial instrument).
2. Schemes funded through Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, ERDF, ESF and any other European Union programmes/instruments.

The undersigned also confirms that the costs covered by Xjenza Malta are exclusive to the Maltese researchers and that no costs covered under this request will be duplicated or funded through the CNR application.

## Outstanding Recovery Order

The undersigned confirms that the applicant is not subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid granted by Malta illegal and incompatible with the internal market.

## Transparency Obligations

By submitting this application, I hereby acknowledge that the Agency shall abide with any applicable transparency rules and may publish and make available to third parties’ information as required by such rules.

## CNR Eligibility

The undersigned declares that the applicant is eligible as per the CNR guidelines and requirements for participation in the Call. The undersigned also acknowledges that financial support from Xjenza Malta is contingent on approval and acceptance from CNR.

By submitting this application, I hereby acknowledge that the Agency shall abide by any applicable transparency rules and may publish and make available to third parties’ information as required by such rules.

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| I confirm that: |
| The information given in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if it is later established that the information is misrepresented, the application or funded activities may be ineligible or terminated respectively. | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I have read and accept the terms and conditions stipulated within the declarations above and confirm that I agree with the eventual publication of personal data and activities, proposal content information of successful applicants, including the name of the entity, project contacts, title of proposed activities and summary. | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I accept and confirm that the personal data and project/activities proposal content information can be passed on to Xjenza Malta to be used solely for the purposes of administering, processing, and review of the application. | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I accept and confirm that the personal data and proposal content information can be passed on to third parties i.e., the Partner Organisation/s with whom I will be carrying out these activities, solely for use in said activities, and that any misuse of the data or provision of data to parties outside this agreement will incur legal action.  | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| No expenses, such as ticket purchases or other expedition-related preparations, will be eligible for reimbursement by Xjenza Malta if incurred before the approval notification by both CNR and Xjenza Malta.  | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I understand that approval from Xjenza Malta for financial assistance is contingent upon successful approval of the project by the CNR, and that no funding will be disbursed unless both approvals are in place. | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I have never been found guilty by any competent Court in Malta or elsewhere of any crime[[4]](#footnote-4) and that I have never been adjudged bankrupt or insolvent by, or filed an application for insolvency before, any competent Court in Malta or elsewhere. | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I have never been disqualified[[5]](#footnote-5) or excluded from participation in any Public Tender either by the Government of Malta or by the European Union or by any public entity in Malta. | **I AGREE** ☐ |
| I have never been disqualified[[6]](#footnote-6) or excluded from participation in any Public and/or European Union funding scheme. | **I AGREE** ☐ |

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| Name of Legal Representative: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Position in Entity: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Contact Details: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Date: | Click here to enter a date. |
| Signature of Legal Representative & Entity Stamp |  |

1. A legal entity is defined as any entity created within the European Union, having an operating base in Malta and which has legal personality, and which may, acting under its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations.

The researchers listed in this application form must be employed with a legal entity as defined above. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Leave empty if authorisation is intended for any natural person engaged with the Legal Entity. Otherwise, specify the name and surname of the person(s) working for the Legal Entity to whom the authorisation is intended. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Written communication with the Legal Entity and/or Natural Person granted authorisation via email will only be accepted via the email address specified in the table above. The Undersigned should be copied (via the email address specified in this application) in any communication between the Agency and the Person granted authorisation as per above table. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *This Declaration does not extend to any traffic related offences where these have been made.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *This Declaration does not extend to disqualification of any tender proposal due to technical reasons.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *This Declaration does not extend to disqualification of any tender proposal due to technical reasons.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)