

Call Text

Xjenza Malta – Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)

2025 Joint Call for Research Proposals

1. Introduction

In 2024, **Xjenza Malta** and **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)** signed a Scientific Cooperation Agreement and Cooperative Programme Agreement. This joint Call is co-funded by Xjenza Malta and CNR to promote and strengthen international research collaboration between Maltese and CNR researchers and is governed by the agreement between the two entities. The Call is launched as part of the Xjenza Malta **SPIRE programme**. This Call specifically provides **seed grants** for **small-scale research projects** that are intended to serve as a preliminary foundation for subsequent larger-scale initiatives.

1.1 Call Process and Snapshot

The Call process consists of one (1) stage as per the flow chart below:



1.2 Call Snapshot

National Rules for Participation Each Managing Authority has its own National Rules & Regulations. Thus, apart from adhering to the said requirements in this Call Text, applicants will also need to ensure that they abide by their own respective National Rules & Regulations.	The Rules and Regulations for the Malta-based applicants can be found in the Call page on the Xjenza Malta website: CNR researchers may refer to their respective rules on the CNR website.
Application Form	The Application form for Malta-based

	<p>Participants can be found in the Call page on the Xjenza Malta website:</p> <p>Other Annexes to be submitted with the Application form, for Malta-based participants can be found on the Xjenza Malta resource page:</p>
Project Consortia	At least one eligible legal entity operating in Malta and at least one CNR researcher
Research Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine and Maritime - Digital Technologies - Health - Sustainable Use of Resources - Smart Manufacturing - Aerospace, Aviation, and Space - Cultural Heritage
TRL Levels Supported	1-7
Project Duration	24 months
Max. funds that can jointly be requested by Malta-based partner/s per project	€12,000
Max. funds that can be requested by CNR researchers per project	€12,000
Submission Deadline of Proposal	29th May 2025 at 12:00 PM CET
Xjenza Malta Submission Email	international.xjenzamalta@gov.mt

2. Aim and scope of the Call

The aim of this Joint Call is to foster impactful research collaborations that directly address the following objectives:

- **Foster Research Partnerships:**

Facilitate the formation of research collaborations between Maltese and CNR research institutions, enabling fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to shared challenges.

- **Enable Innovative Research Development:**

Provide the necessary support for initial research activities, such as collecting preliminary data, formulating research questions and testing early-stage hypotheses, further developing established idea, to strengthen the foundation for future large-scale research.

- **Promote Knowledge and Expertise Exchange:**

Support the mobility of research personnel from Malta-based entities and CNR institutes, fostering the transfer of specialised knowledge, advanced methodologies, and innovative techniques to enhance collaborative research outcomes.

3. Thematic Areas

The Call focuses on the following thematic areas:

- Marine and Maritime
- Digital Technologies
- Health
- Sustainable Use of Resources
- Smart Manufacturing
- Aerospace, Aviation, and Space
- Cultural Heritage

Proposals must directly address the aim of the Call and needs to clearly align with at least one of the thematic areas of this Call.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Each project proposal shall need to be in accordance with the following requirements. However, apart from adhering to below eligibility requirements in this Call Text, applicants will also need to ensure that they abide by their own respective National Rules & Regulations:

4.1 Project Proposal

- The types of projects that are eligible within this Call encompass Fundamental Research, Industrial Research and Experimental Development
- Proposals must directly address the aim of the Call and need to clearly align with at least one of the thematic fields of this Call.
- The projects will be implemented through the exchange of researchers and knowledge.
- The project should aim to produce a tangible outcome or follow-up initiative that builds on the achievements of the proposed research. This could include further collaborative research and identified opportunities for funding, collaboration, commercialisation, or any other initiative that capitalises on the project's results and opens avenues for future impact or funding.
- While submitting the project proposal form, the costs which are requested in the scope of the project must be stated in detail and justified. The eligible and ineligible costs are also detailed in the respective National Rules & Regulations.
- In the case of any exchange of researchers to be made within the scope of the projects, the sending party meets all the travel expenses. The visitor should have insurance entitling the holder to free emergency medical treatment in the host country. The receiving Party will provide the visitor with all indispensable organisational assistance in situations requiring such steps.
- CNR researchers can only travel to Malta, within the scope of the project. They cannot travel to third countries as part of the project activities. Furthermore, each visit should be for a minimum of three days to ensure sufficient time for meaningful collaboration and exchange.
- Proposals should strive to be balanced between the two countries with respect to the volume of work and activities and also in terms of funding.
- Proposals submitted to Xjenza Malta must be written in English.

4.2 Consortium Composition

- Each consortium must include at least one Maltese partner and at least one CNR researcher, each eligible for funding from their respective Funding Agencies.

These will be considered and referred to as 'project partners' for the duration of the project. Each National Applicant shall need to consult the National Rules for Participation imposed by the corresponding Managing Authority. Applications which are found to be ineligible by one of the Managing Authorities will automatically render the whole proposal as ineligible.

- The CNR and Maltese partners shall form a project consortium and prepare a joint scientific project.

4.3 Submission

- Each collaborating side must have at least one Principal Investigator (PI), representing the proposal consortium for each country. The PI from each country shall assume the role of Lead Applicant and will be responsible to submit the application form to the Managing Authority of his/her country.
- Malta-based applicants are eligible to submit more than one proposal under this Call; however, CNR researchers may only submit one proposal. Therefore, if a Malta-based applicant wishes to submit multiple proposals, they must collaborate with different CNR researchers for each submission.

4.4 Participation of Entities from Other Countries

- Participation of entities from third countries is not allowed. Malta-based entities are only eligible to collaborate with CNR researchers for this call.

For full eligibility criteria, refer to the respective **National Rules for Participation**.

5. Eligibility Check

Each proposal received within the designated submission deadline shall pass through an administrative/eligibility check by the respective Managing Authority. The administration/eligibility check procedure is defined in the respective National Rules & Regulations set forth by each Managing Authority. Applicants shall need to satisfy the criteria set forth by both Managing Authorities to be eligible to move forward to the scientific evaluation stage.

6. Budget and Funding

For each project, Xjenza Malta will provide up to €12,000 to the Maltese team, and CNR will provide up to €12,000 to CNR researchers, for the duration of the project.

For additional budget details, refer to the respective **National Rules for Participation**.

7. Project Duration

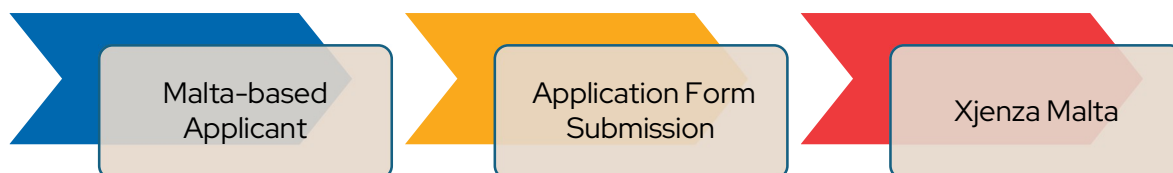
The duration of a research project is **24 months**.

Projects must start on **1st January 2026** and be completed on **31st December 2027**.

8. Application Process

The Applicants should ensure complete compliance with their respective **National Rules for Participation** prior to applying to this Call. No amendments or negotiations are allowed after submission, unless requested by the respective Authorities. Any unapproved deviations will result in the failure of the application during the administrative check. The content of the Application Form will be directly appended to the Grant Agreements for successful applicants and will constitute the Grant Agreement technical obligations.

A National Application Form needs to be submitted electronically by each Malta-based applicant to international.xjenzamalta@gov.mt, by 29th May 2025 12:00 PM CET.



Only complete Application Forms submitted by the stipulated deadlines shall be considered.

9. Evaluation Process

The proposals that are found administratively eligible will be scientifically evaluated individually by Xjenza Malta and CNR. Following the scientific evaluation, CNR and Xjenza Malta will exchange the Project Proposal Evaluation Forms for perusal. The two authorities will then come together to discuss the evaluation marks and collectively decide on the projects to be awarded. Only the project proposals approved jointly by CNR and Xjenza Malta will be supported within the available budget.

The intent of this Call is to award up to five high-ranking projects.

10. Notification of Awards

Xjenza Malta and CNR will independently coordinate the notification of awards for their respective national partners. Maltese entities will enter into a Grant Agreement with Xjenza Malta, while CNR researchers will enter into a Grant Agreement with CNR.

11. Post Selection Process

For successful projects, the beneficiary from each country will sign a Grant Agreement directly with the respective Managing Authority. The National Rules & Regulations will form an integral part of each respective Grant Agreement, which will further define the terms and conditions, including the funding disbursement schedule for both parties. Projects must start and end on the same date for all partners within the project consortium and should start by 1st January 2026. Other requirements that are specifically required by each of the Managing Authorities shall need to be adhered to by the said counterparts.

12. National Contact Points

For further information or assistance, applicants should contact the relevant national contact point:

Correspondence from **Malta-based** entities should be directed to:

Name: Francesca Grillo

Position: Executive (Internationalisation)

E-mail: francesca.grillo@gov.mt

Phone: +356 23602232

Correspondence from **CNR researchers** should be directed to:

Name: Maria Gerunda

Position: Responsible for the scientific cooperation agreement with Malta

E-mail: maria.gerunda@cnr.it

Phone: +39 0649932469

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