GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR YOUTH, RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION

XJENZA MALTA

CANCER
RESEARCH & INNOVATION
HUB MALTA

R&I Thematic Programmes: Cancer Research Programme 2025

Rules for Participation 2025: *Rules for State Aid (Option A)*

THEMATIC
PROGRAMMES

Contents

1 Introduction

The R&I Thematic Programmes aim to financially support innovative projects through specific, top-down initiatives with the support of Maltese Public Entities and Authorities. These thematic initiatives are supported through national funds managed by Xjenza Malta.

The aim of these thematic initiatives is to improve the R&I landscape in Malta, by producing a cohesive system by which Maltese researchers and entrepreneurs may develop their innovative ideas in a comprehensive, well-adapted environment which caters specifically for their sector. With these requirements in mind, an adaptive system can only be developed with the collaboration of Maltese public entities, authorities and agencies who boast a deep technical understanding of specific sectors within their remit.

These collaborative initiatives will allow Maltese researchers to benefit from the synergy between the technical abilities of these Maltese Public Entities and Authorities, and the R&I experience and networking capabilities of Xjenza Malta.

The main objectives of the R&I Thematic Programmes are:

- To develop a cohesive R&I landscape in Malta
- To create dedicated, sector specific support
- To engage with the Maltese R&I community
- To concentrate the efforts of Maltese researchers and entrepreneurs into addressing topics of national interest

The R&I Thematic Programmes are aimed to address immediate concerns of national interest.

2 The Cancer Research Programme

2.1 Programme Scope and Focus

Following the proposal of the Action Plan for the Health and Well-being Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) and after a succession of consultations between Xjenza

Malta and the Cancer Research and Innovation Hub Malta (CRIHM), several avenues for collaboration were identified, including a dedicated thematic programme for cancer research.

The Cancer Research Programme aims to support research that might in the future help reduce the incidence of cancer, improve cancer treatment, survival, and the quality of life of cancer patients.

The Cancer Research Programme aims to support capacity-building efforts related to:

Molecular Research and Diagnostic Innovations

This priority area focuses on advancing the understanding of cancer at the molecular level to innovate diagnostic techniques. By integrating cutting-edge technologies such as genomics, proteomics, and bioinformatics, the aim is to identify novel biomarkers and develop precision diagnostic tools. This approach enables early detection and personalized treatment strategies, ultimately improving patient outcomes and streamlining clinical workflows.

Community-Based Cancer Research

Community-Based Cancer Research seeks to bridge the gap between research and real-world impact by involving local communities in the fight against cancer. This approach emphasizes the importance of community engagement, and culturally sensitive interventions. By fostering partnerships with community organizations, and patients, we aim to develop research initiatives that address local cancer burdens, improve access to care, and promote public health education.

Therapeutic Development and Clinical Strategies

This priority area is dedicated to advancing therapeutic development and refining clinical strategies to combat cancer more effectively. Through collaborative research efforts, the focus is on discovering novel therapies, optimizing existing treatment protocols, and enhancing patient safety.

Psychosocial Support and Patient-Centred Approaches

Recognizing the holistic needs of cancer patients, this priority emphasizes the importance of psychosocial support and patient-centred care. These initiatives should aim to enhance the quality of life for patients and their families by providing psychological counselling, social services, and supportive care tailored to individual

needs. By fostering compassionate communication and empowering patients through education, we aspire to create a supportive environment that addresses emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.
For projects which are commercially applicable, this programme targets either early stage or applied research, hence targeting research between TRL 1 and TRL 7.

While encouraging innovative and impactful cancer research, the following types of studies fall outside the scope of this initiative:

- **Confirmatory Studies** – Research that primarily seeks to validate existing findings without introducing new mechanistic insights or advancements.
- **Descriptive Screenings** – Studies that focus solely on the screening of molecules or phenotypes without exploring underlying mechanisms or contributing to innovative discovery.
- **Reagent Generation & Technology Optimization** – Projects centred on the development of reagents or the refinement of existing technologies without a direct application toward novel research questions or patient outcomes.
- **Routine Data Collection** – Efforts that involve the ongoing compilation of existing statistics without integrating new methodologies, analytical approaches, or translational insights.
- **Descriptive Epidemiology Studies** – Research that only presents statistical descriptions of cancer incidence, prevalence, or mortality without a clear hypothesis-driven approach or intervention component.

This delineation ensures that funded research aligns with our mission to drive forward-thinking, translational, and patient-centred cancer innovations.

The following table summarises the different Priority Areas and Subareas related to this Programme, where R&I have potential to develop in Malta:

Priority Areas	Molecular Research and Diagnostic Innovations	Community-Based Cancer Research	Therapeutic Development and Clinical Strategies	Psychosocial Support and Patient-Centred Approaches (for cancer patients and carers)
Subareas	Molecular Mechanisms Molecular Diagnostics Theranostics (Therapy combined with Diagnostics)	Community engagement to enhance effectiveness of cancer prevention Community engagement for early detection strategies	Biological Therapeutics Pharmaceutical Therapeutics Proximity to cure Pre-clinical Innovation Clinical Methodologies	Emotional Support Social Support Psychological Support

2.2 Contacts

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3 Definitions

Kindly note that the below definitions are harmonised throughout schemes administered by Xjenza Malta, and some terms might not be present within the text of these Rules as they are not relevant.

Agreement Date	The term refers to the date on which the Grant Agreement is signed by the legal representative of Xjenza Malta.
Applicant	The term refers to any representative of a local entity that is eligible for participation in a Project in terms of these National Rules for Participation and who applies for funding under this initiative.

Arm's length	The term means that the conditions of the transaction between the contracting parties do not differ from those which would be stipulated between independent undertakings and contain no element of collusion. Any transaction that results from an open, transparent and non-discriminatory procedure is considered as meeting the arm's length principle.
Beneficiary	The term Beneficiary refers to the entity that having submitted an application form for funding under this Programme in accordance with these National Rules for Participation, is selected for funding.
Due Diligence	An investigation of an entity or person prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement conducted in order to establish the suitability of the Applicant to receive funding under this Programme.
Effective Collaboration	The term means collaboration between at least two independent parties to exchange knowledge or technology, or to achieve a common objective based on the division of labour where the parties jointly define the scope of the collaborative project, contribute to its implementation, and share its risks, as well as its results. One or several parties may bear the full costs of the project and thus relieve other parties of its financial risks. Contract research and provision of research services are not considered forms of collaboration. Through Effective Collaboration the aid intensity may increase if the conditions set in Article 25(6)(b) of Commission Regulation 651/2014, as amended, are satisfied.
Eligible Direct Costs	The term refers to those costs incurred directly by the national beneficiaries during the duration of the project and used primarily for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the project. All eligible expenses must be incurred between the Start Date and the End Date of

	the Project and capped at the approved requested funding value.
Eligible Undertakings	The term refers to undertakings planning to carry out Industrial Research and/or Experimental Development projects and must either be: i. A partnership constituted under the Companies Act, being a partnership *en nom collectif, en commandite* or a limited liability company; or ii. Duly registered as a co-operative society under the Co-Operative Societies Act, or iii. Professional body; or iv. NGOs; or v. Non-profit making entities (including Foundations). 'Professional Body' may be an organisation, an association, a chamber, society, institute, or a group of professional persons not being enrolled or registered in terms of The Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap. 492 of the Laws of Malta) or not being otherwise recognised in terms of Law, and which is generally recognised and acknowledged by the professional persons it seeks to represent as their representative body. For the purposes of this Definition, a professional person is one who has undergone a period of study at a university or a recognised institution of higher learning and has obtained the formal qualification entitling the person to practise the respective profession; and who provides a specialised service to the public, based primarily on a fiduciary relationship between herself/himself and the party to whom s/he provides such service on his own personal credibility and responsibility. 'NGO' means any Voluntary or Non-Governmental Organisation set up in accordance with The Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap. 492 of the Laws of Malta). Provided that a duly registered NGO, or a duly

	registered Professional Body shall also be considered to be NGOs for the purposes of these Rules of Participation. 'Non-profit making' is an entity where: i. The statute of which includes an express exclusion making profits as a purpose; and ii. An entity the statute of which expressly excludes in its purposes the promotion of private interests, other than a private interest which has a social purpose; and iii. An entity that makes no part of its income, capital or property available directly or indirectly to any promoter, founder, member, administrator, donor or any other private interest. Provided that if a promoter, founder, member, administrator or donor is another enrolled non-profit making organisation, the limitation in this paragraph (iii) shall not apply where the availability of such income, capital or property is subject to conditions which are consistent with the general purposes of the grantor entity: Provided further that an organisation shall continue to be deemed as non-profit making notwithstanding that: i. It obtains a pecuniary gain from its activities when such gain is not received or credited to its members but is exclusively utilised for its established purposes; ii. It buys or sells or otherwise deals in goods or services where such activities are exclusively related to its principal purposes; iii. It is established for the general entertainment, pastime, education or other similar benefit only of its members; or

	iv. It is established for the promotion of the social role, ethics, education and values of a trade or profession provided it does not promote the private interests of its members.
End Date	This term refers to the date when the Project Period, having commenced on the Start Date, expires.
Grant Agreement	This term refers to the funding agreement concluded between the Managing Authority and the Beneficiary/ies and specifies the rights and obligations of the contracting parties
In-kind	The term refers to any non-monetary contribution, such as a service or a good.
Innovation	The term is defined as the internationally novel scientific/technological development of a technological process, product, or service. Also, the definition of Innovation within the same context can also be applied to developments which though not novel represent a step-changing or ground-breaking enhancement of existing technological processes, products, or services, or even the application of existing knowledge to new novel applications of these solutions to deliver step-change competitiveness through such an application.
Intellectual Property (IP)	IP means statutory and other proprietary rights and includes patents, trademarks, designs, and confidential information/trade secrets, copyright.
Lead Agency	The primary organization tasked with overseeing and coordinating the entirety of the call process.
Large Undertaking	The term is defined as an undertaking not fulfilling the criteria laid down in Annex I of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Article 107 and 108 of the Treaty, as amended.

Legal Entity	The term refers to any entity created within the European Union, having an operating base in Malta and which has legal personality, which may, acting under its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations.
Managing Authority	The term refers to Xjenza Malta, a Managing Authority established as per Subsidiary Legislation 595.49.
Operating base in Malta	Having an Operating base in Malta refers to a Legal Entity that: i. Owns, leases, or has been given the right of use by a third party, an adequate premise from where to conduct an eligible economic activity in the region of Malta; and ii. Employs at least one person that is based in Malta and is liable to pay income tax in Malta.
Partner	The term is defined as an entity within a consortium of a funded project.
Person months / Person hours	The term refers to a calculation of 'human effort' to evaluate the relationship between the estimated work to be performed and the activities and deliverables to be achieved during the implementation period in months or hours. This is calculated as follows: if 1720 hours are worked in 1 year, equivalent to 215 days of 8 hours each, then 1 person month is equivalent to 143.3... person hours, and to circa 17.91 days.
Personnel costs	The term means the costs of researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the relevant project or activity.
Principal Investigator	The term refers to the lead researcher on behalf of the local Applicant/Beneficiary of a project consortium. May be the same as the Project Coordinator and/or the Project Contact Point.
Project Contact Point	The term refers to the individual, appointed to act on behalf of the Beneficiary and who is responsible for

	communicating with the Managing Authority about the Project. The Project Contact Point(s) shall have the following responsibilities: i. To ensure compliance with the obligations in terms of the Grant Agreement. ii. To compile Periodic Reports and Final Reports including their timely submissions and effective execution of the project. iii. To ensure the submission of all required financial reporting as per the contractual obligations for the partner. iv. To execute the project activities according to set timeframes and deliverables.
Project Grant	The term is defined as the funding provided to the Beneficiary under the Programme.
Project Period	The term refers to the time required to execute the Project as indicated in the Grant Agreement and runs from the Start Date to the End Date.
Project Value	The term refers to the project budget needed by the Applicant to carry out the project, including any co-financing.
Research and Development	This term is defined as the systematic investigation, work or research carried out in any field of science or technology through experiment, theoretical work or analysis undertaken to acquire new knowledge, primarily directed towards a specific practical aim or objective, and includes: a) **Industrial Research** means the planned research or critical investigation aimed at the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for developing new products, processes, or services or aimed at bringing about a significant improvement in existing products, processes or services including digital products, processes or services, in any area, technology, industry or sector

	(including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as super-computing, quantum technologies, block chain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud technologies). It comprises the creation of components parts of complex systems and may include the construction of prototypes in a laboratory environment or in an environment with simulated interfaces to existing systems as well as of pilot lines, when necessary for the industrial research and notably for generic technology validation. b) **Experimental Development** means acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as for example super-computing, quantum technologies, block chain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud or edge technologies). This may also include, for example, activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services. Experimental development may comprise prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set. This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is necessarily the final commercial product, and which is too expensive to produce for it to be used only for demonstration and validation purposes.

	Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services, and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.
Research and Knowledge-Dissemination Organisation (RKDO)	The term refers to an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, Innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. Where such entity also pursues economic activities the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, in the quality of, for example, shareholders or members, may not enjoy preferential access to the results generated by it.
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME)	The term refers to an undertaking which fulfils the criteria laid down in Annex I of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, as amended.
Single Undertaking	The term means all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other: i. One enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise; ii. One enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative,

	management or supervisory body of another enterprise; iii. One enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence on another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or pursuant to a provision in its Memorandum and Articles of association; iv. One enterprise, which is a shareholder in or member of another enterprise, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that enterprise, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that enterprise. Enterprises having any of the relationships referred to in points (i) to (iv) above through one or more other enterprises shall be considered to be a Single Undertaking.
Start Date	The term refers to date established for the official start of the project in the Grant Agreement.
Start of Works	This term refers to the earlier of either the Start of Works relating to the investment, or the first legally binding commitment to order equipment or any other commitment that makes the investment irreversible. Buying land and preparatory works such as obtaining permits and conducting feasibility studies are not considered 'Start of Works'. For take-overs, 'Start of Works' means the moment of acquiring the assets directly linked to the acquired establishment.
Start-up	The term shall be defined as an undertaking that has been established for less than five (5) years following its registration. For Eligible Undertakings that are not subject to registration, the five-year eligibility period shall start from either the moment when the undertaking starts its economic activity or the moment it becomes liable to tax with regard to its economic activity, whichever is earlier.

Subcontracted Activity	The term refers to any activity related to the project, (including but not limited to consultancy), which is not carried out directly by a Beneficiary or its employees but is carried out under any terms by any third party (local or foreign) individual, company, partnership, or entity.
Undertaking in Difficulty	The term refers to an undertaking in respect of which at least one of the following circumstances occurs: i. In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital. For the purposes of this provision, 'limited liability company' refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex I of Directive 2013/34/EU and 'share capital' includes, where relevant, any share premium. ii. In the case of a company where at least some of its members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. For the purposes of this provision, 'a company where at least some of its members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company' refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex II of Directive 2013/34/EU. iii. Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its

	domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors. iv. Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan. v. In the case of an undertaking that is not an SME, where for the past two years: a. The undertaking's book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7.5 and b. The undertaking's EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1.0.
Wide Dissemination	The term refers to the criterion stipulated by Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/ 2014, as amended. For the purposes of this scheme, the results of the project are deemed to be widely disseminated if this is done through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software.

4 Eligibility Criteria and Applications

This section provides details on applicant eligibility that fit within this programme.

These Rules for Participation are exclusively applicable to undertakings **that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU.** This section provides details as to the criteria which must be checked in order to assess the entity's or consortium's eligibility to apply and the application's fit within this Programme.

Any **eligible undertaking**, with an operating base in Malta, as defined in Section 3, may apply and will be eligible for funding subject to the terms and conditions laid out in this document and in particular the conditions for eligibility. Applicants who fall within the definition of eligible undertaking, will be required to provide the following documents (to be included with the application form) which will then be considered during the administrative check:

- Management accounts, including detailed profit and loss, as well as balance sheet, for the current year.

If the Applicant is a start-up and the above documents are not available, the Applicant shall provide the financial projections for three (3) years signed by an auditor, including:

- An income statement
- A cash flow statement
- A statement of financial position

Other forms of documentation can be requested depending on the nature of the eligible undertaking.

Applicants, who fall within the definitions of professional bodies and NGOs, will still be required to provide relevant financial documents as well as, including but not limited to, an authenticated constitutional document (e.g. Statute/ Deed) and VO certificates.

All applications should be accompanied by the relevant declarations duly completed within the Appendices of the Application Form.

Kindly note that applicants may only receive one grant under the Cancer Research Programme.

4.1 Eligibility for Participation

Any applicants that at the time of proposal submission are considered by Xjenza Malta to be non-compliant with respect to Grant Agreement obligations on other active projects funded by Xjenza Malta, may be immediately deemed ineligible at application stage or will not be awarded funding under this programme. This also applies to situations whereby the applicant is outside approved project timelines on other projects funded by Xjenza Malta, and where the applicant is in recognised default.

Any application submitted by or including the participation of any legal person or legal entity having, in totality or in majority ownership, the same shareholders, partners or persons holding and/ or exercising a controlling power in any other legal entity which will have been at any time prior to such application declared as non-compliant or defaulting on any other contract or agreement entered into with Xjenza Malta, shall be automatically declared as inadmissible.

Funding under this Programme is made available on the basis that none of the Beneficiaries have benefited and will not benefit from any other grant or financial incentive of whatever nature, applied for and/or utilised for the same scope as that subject of the funding requested under this Programme. Provided that, in the case where the application covers work that is part of a larger project, the Beneficiary must submit a table as an appendix to the application form that shows a comprehensive list of the items of work and the source of funding for each item.

Applicants under the State Aid (*Option A*) regime must understand that, should they be found to be in breach of the conditions of the applicable State Aid Regulation, the Managing Authority will enforce the retrieval of disbursed funds with interest, in part or in full, as the case may necessitate.

The Applicant also undertakes to comply faithfully and immediately with any decision of the European Commission or a Maltese Judicial Authority declaring Article 107(1) TFEU to be applicable to the project or activity.

Xjenza Malta also reserves the right to terminate any applications that have followed in part or in full the State Aid (*Option A*) regime, should Xjenza Malta not be satisfied with the segregation of work packages, activities, tasks and deliverables, as well as budgets.

Both sole applicants and consortia are eligible to apply for the Cancer Research Programme. **Given the aims of the programme, it is integral that any proposal that will be considered for funding implements a scientific basis and highlights the research methodology to be conducted.**

4.2 Conflicts of Interest

Applicant/s and/or Beneficiary/ies shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective processing of their Application for funding, the awarding of the Grant or the supervision or the implementation of the Grant agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect or perceived interest (conflict of interests).

Applicant/s and/or Beneficiary/ies shall formally notify the Managing Authority without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to an actual or perceived

conflict of interest and immediately take all of the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

The Managing Authority may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

Where a beneficiary wilfully breaches any of its obligations under this Rule, this shall be deemed to constitute an Event of Default and the Application may be deemed ineligible or the Grant awarded may be reduced and/or terminated.

5 Consortium

5.1 Composition

A project application may also be submitted by a Consortium, consisting of two or more Maltese Legal Entities. It is permissible for a consortium to consist of one or more Partners applying under these State Aid (Option A) Rules for Participation, and one or more Partners applying under the non-state aid (Option B) Rules for Participation.

In the case of a Consortium, one of the Partners should be designated as the Lead Partner and as the Principal Investigator. The Lead Partner will be responsible for the application submission of the R&I project, the appointment of a project contact point and the correct execution of the project. Any person may only be involved with one project partner (Refer to 5.3).

In the case of a Consortium, the project proposal must be submitted by the Lead Partner, with prior endorsement and signature of the application by the legal representative of each Partner. Should the endorsement be absent, a delegated authority should be sought and achieved. The role of the Project Contact Point shall be performed by a physical person who is an employee of the Lead Partner.

A Consortium Partner wishing to withdraw from a Project, must present their case to Xjenza Malta through their Principal Investigator. As a result, and at its discretion, Xjenza Malta may request the refunding of money disbursed to that partner back to the Cancer Research and Innovation Hub Malta, and may even terminate the Cancer Research Project in its entirety. All Project partners would still be obliged to provide all

technical and financial reporting at their own expense. In extenuating circumstances, Xjenza Malta may at its discretion, consider suggestions for replacement of a Partner. However, the project proposal would need to be re-evaluated. Should this be the case, the overall rules for participation would need to be adhered to and the technical and financial distribution of the projects should remain unchanged.

The Principal Investigator has overall responsibility for the project, and shall have the following responsibilities:

- ✓ To **coordinate the timely development of the project**, including establishing and managing project activities, timeframes and financial estimates;
- ✓ To **coordinate the timely activities of the individual project partners** on an ongoing basis, and to ensure that they fulfil their obligations in terms of the Contractual Agreement;
- ✓ To **compile all reports** including Technical and Financial Reports including submissions by all project Partners in a timely manner;
- ✓ To **act as the main point of contact between Xjenza Malta and the project Partners;**

5.2 Lead Partner

In the case of a consortium, the **Principal Investigator** (lead partner) must ensure that the consortium complies with all obligations assigned within the contract governing this grant, including being responsible for the timely submission of reports and effective execution of the project. A **Project Contact Point** has to be appointed.

5.3 Conflict with Fundamental Aim of Programme

Pertaining to the Arm's length principal, the participation of individuals in a Consortium must not be of such nature as to create conflicts with the fundamentals of knowledge

transfer and commercialisation, which are the foremost aims of the Cancer Research Programme.

Two legal entities shall be regarded as independent of each other where neither is under the direct or indirect control of the other or under the same direct or indirect control as the other. Control may take either of the following forms:

a) The direct or indirect holding of more than 50% of the nominal value of the issued share capital in the legal entity concerned, or a majority of the voting rights of the shareholders or associates of that entity.

b) The direct or indirect holding, in fact or in law, of decision-making powers in the legal entity concerned.

The following relationships between legal entities shall not in themselves be deemed to constitute controlling relationships:

a) The same public investment corporation, institutional investor or venture-capital company has a direct or indirect holding of more than 50% of the nominal value of the issued share capital or a majority of voting rights of the shareholders or associates.

b) The legal entities concerned are owned or supervised by the same public body.

Partners in the same Consortium cannot be involved in any commercial transaction with another Partner in the same Consortium, or any other entity with shared shareholding, or any other entity within the same group of companies as the Partner, on any matter related to the R&I Project.

6 Applicable State Aid Regulations and Obligations

Applicants may opt for one of two funding modalities governed by the following two State aid Regulations:

- The de minimis Regulation (Regulation A);
- The General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) (Regulation B)

6.1 Undertakings applying under *de minimis* (Regulation A)

Assistance provided under Regulation A of these Rules for Participation is in line with the terms and conditions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023[1] 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)

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

Applicants should ensure and declare that they are eligible for the requested grant under State Aid rules before applying.

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. In the case of successful applications, an updated declaration form shall be provided at the time of the signing of the Grant Agreement, ensuring that the applicant remains eligible for funding under the State Aid regime.

In line with Article 1 of the de minimis Regulation, no aid will be granted to the following undertakings and/or sectors, since these are expressly excluded from the scope of the *de minimis* Regulation:

(a) aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products;

(b) 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;

(c) aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;

[1] **More information available here:** https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2831

(d) aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in one of the following cases:

(i) 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;

(ii) where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;

(e) 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;

(f) aid contingent upon the use of domestic goods and services over imported goods and services.

Where an undertaking is active in the sectors referred to in points (a), (b), (c) or (d) 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 Xjenza Malta 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 will be respected.

In line with Article 6(1) of the *de minimis* Regulation, as of 1 January 2026, information on *de minimis* aid granted under this scheme shall be made publicly available in the central register at national or Union Level.

The following information shall be made public:

- the identification of the beneficiary,
- the aid amount,

- the granting date,
- the aid instrument, and
- the sector involved on the basis of the statistical classification of economic activities in the Union ('NACE classification').

6.2 Undertakings applying under GBER (Regulation B)

Assistance provided under Regulation B of these Rules for Participation is in line with the terms and conditions of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17th June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) No 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards aid for port and airport infrastructure, notification thresholds for aid for culture and heritage conservation and for aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures, and regional operating aid schemes for outermost regions and amending Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 as regards the calculation of eligible costs, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 as regards its prolongation and amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards its prolongation and relevant adjustments, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, and by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty and Regulation (EU) 2022/2473 declaring certain categories of aid to undertakings active in the production, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (the General Block Exemption Regulation, GBER) *[link below]*.
Assistance will not be granted if the aid is:

i. related to export activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to the other current expenditure linked to export activity.
ii. contingent upon the use of domestic in preference to imported goods.
iii. granted in the sector of processing and marketing of agricultural products, in the following cases:

a. 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.
b. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers.

iv. granted in favour of a beneficiary which is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid granted by Malta illegal and incompatible with the internal market.
v. granted in favour of an undertaking in difficulty defined in terms of the GBER, unless the undertaking was not in difficulty on 31 December 2019 but then became an 'undertaking in difficulty' in the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021.

Aid approved by the Managing Authority in terms of these Rules for Participation will be suspended until the undertaking has reimbursed unlawful and incompatible aid that is subject to a recovery.

Rules on cumulation of aid shall be in line with Article 8 of the GBER *[link below].*

In determining whether the notification thresholds and the maximum aid intensities are respected, the total amount of State aid for the aided activity or project or undertaking shall be considered.

Where EU funding centrally managed by the institutions, agencies, joint undertakings or other bodies of the EU that is not directly or indirectly under the control of the Member State is combined with State aid, only the latter shall be considered for determining whether notification thresholds and maximum aid intensities or maximum aid amounts are respected, provided that the total amount of public funding granted in relation to the same eligible costs does not exceed the most favourable funding rate laid down in the applicable rules of Union law.

Aid granted under this incentive may only be cumulated with:

a) any other State aid, if those measures concern different identifiable eligible costs,
b) any other State aid, in relation to the same eligible costs, partly or fully overlapping, only if such cumulation does not exceed the highest aid intensity or aid amount applicable to the aid under GBER and these rules.

Aid awarded under this regulation of these Rules for Participation shall not be cumulated with any *de minimis* aid in respect of the same eligible costs if such cumulation would result in an aid intensity exceeding those laid down in these rules.

For any individual aid awarded in excess of €100,000 (or for beneficiaries active in primary agricultural production or in the fishery and aquaculture sector, each individual aid award exceeding €10,000), the details of the beneficiary, the aid awarded, and the project details shall be published as provided for in Article 9 of the General Block Exemption Regulation.

In determining whether the notification thresholds and the maximum aid intensities are respected, the total amount of State aid for the aided activity or project or undertaking shall be considered.

More information on the GBER can be found on the following links: Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) No 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards aid for port and airport infrastructure, notification thresholds for aid for culture and heritage conservation and for aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures, and regional operating aid schemes for outermost regions and amending Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 as regards the calculation of eligible costs, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 as regards its prolongation and amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards its prolongation and relevant adjustments, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty and Regulation (EU) 2022/2473 declaring certain categories of aid to undertakings active in the production, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, and as may be subsequently amended.

The following declarations will need to be included with the application form to justify the aid intensity:

1. Undertaking in Difficulty form
2. Enterprise Size Declaration form
3. Declaration of Effective Collaboration/ Wide Dissemination/Licence Availability

7 The Application Process

The Call for Project Proposals will be open **for eight weeks** between **17 March 2025 to 23:59PM on the 12 May 2025. Proposals which are received after the deadline stipulated will be deemed administratively non-compliant.** The selection and funding of proposals under this Programme shall be on a competitive basis.

Applicants should refer to the eligibility criteria in Sections 4, 5 and 6.

7.1 Application Submission

The Cancer Research Programme project application must present a coherent, comprehensive and credible plan based on:

- ✓ Reasonable estimates of human resources, finance, deliverables and timeframes;
- ✓ Templates provided by Xjenza Malta

Submission, evaluation and selection of project applications will be in the form of a one-stage process. The applicant must ensure complete compliance with the 'Rules for Participation 2025' prior to submission as no amendment or negotiation thereto will be allowed after submission.

Applicants are to submit an application for assistance under this scheme before the start of works.

The legal representative of each participating organisation (within a consortium) must sign off on the application, physically or electronically, and enter the date

of signature. The legal representative of each participating organisation within a consortium must also sign off all relevant declarations found within the Appendices of the Application Form.

All applications shall be evaluated according to the procedure outlined under Section 11 of these Rules for Participation. The application process is a **single stage** process. This means that once an application has been submitted, modifications thereto will not be allowed. Moreover, requests made by the applicant to allow negotiations on the content of the proposals, after submission will be rejected.

In instances where errors in the budget are noted during the evaluation process, these will be categorised by the Managing Authority into major deviations (**affecting 10% or over of the grant value**) or minor deviations (**affecting less than 10% of the grant value**) e.g., if the grant value requested is €300,000, any errors in the budget exceeding €30,000, would be considered as a major deviation. Minor deviations will be amended by the Managing Authority and evaluated on that basis. Should the cumulative value of all minor deviations at any point exceed the threshold for a major deviation this will be considered as a major deviation. The beneficiary will be given the opportunity to accept or decline proceeding with the project if awarded. On the other hand, major deviations will be considered as administratively non-compliant.

In cases, where deviations from the mandatory deliverables or budgets detailed herein are required, applicants should be guided by the necessary section below. **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.**

Any text within the submitted application, which are more than the prescribed maximum word count and/or page limits, shall be **disregarded in the scientific evaluation process**.

Application Forms should be sent electronically to rtdi.xjenzamalta@gov.mt keeping Mr. David Camilleri (david.camilleri.4@gov.mt) and Ms. Giulia Aquilina (giulia.aquilina@gov.mt) in copy, with "Cancer Research Programme Application Submission – [Project Acronym]" as a subject.

In both cases, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a confirmation of receipt is provided.

7.2 Submission Documents

All Submissions must include:

- ✓ **The application form in MS Word** (.docx) format and a **signed scanned copy** (to be sent by email) including:
  - A precise plan of project activities, timeframes, and deliverables, including a visual representation through a Gantt Chart
  - A detailed plan of how Beneficiary's knowledge and, where applicable subcontractors or co-collaborators, will be used to perform the project tasks and to achieve the project objectives (At this stage, if subcontractors have not been identified, one should mention the tasks that will be passed on and the expertise required.)
- ✓ **Curricula Vitae** of key researchers including relevant track records. These should clearly establish that there is the potential in carrying out the project (The Principal Investigator or one of the key researchers within the research team must have a track record in the mentioned scientific field for at least three years).
- ✓ The **Budget Breakdown Form**
- ✓ A **Gantt Chart** should be included in Section 5.3.3 b of the application
- ✓ A **Dissemination and Externalisation Plan**
- ✓ An **IP agreement** signed by all Project Partners *(in the case of consortia)*
- ✓ **Additional Declarations** by all Project Partners
- ✓ **Management Accounts**, including detailed profit and loss, as well as balance sheet, for the current year.

- ✓ In the event that the applicant is a start-up, and the above documents are not available, the applicant shall provide the **financial projections for three (3) years** signed by an independent certified public accountant, including:
  - An income statement,
  - A cash flow statement, and
  - A statement of financial position

- ✓ Where *de minimis* is the selected route of aid, the **signed *de minimis* State Aid Declaration Form** *(kindly note that* an updated State Aid Declaration form is to be submitted upon the signing of the Grant Agreement should the project be selected for funding).

- ✓ Where GBER is the selected route of aid:
  - **Entity Size Declaration Form**
  - **Undertaking in Difficulty Form**
  - **Effective Collaboration/ Wide Dissemination/Licence Availability Declaration Form**

Amendments to the forms are not permitted following the submission deadline of the application and the consensus result would be final.

The additional documentation to be submitted for this call can be found on the Xjenza Malta resource page here: https://xjenzamalta.mt/resources-page/

Undertakings applying under these Rules for Participation will also be subjected to a Due Diligence evaluation which will make use of the documents submitted as well as documents within public record.

It should be noted that large email may be automatically rejected by the system. The applicant may make use of cloud storage or mass file transfer systems (e.g., wetransfer). **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that application documents are sent out successfully**. All received applications shall be acknowledged by email. **Proposals which are received after the deadline stipulated of the call will not be considered and will be deemed administratively non-compliant. Incomplete applications as at the deadline of this call will not be considered.**

7.3 Considerations at Application Stage

7.3.1 Respecting Lead Times

All organisations, including Xjenza Malta, have their internal procedures for processing, approving and signing off on legally binding documents. Beneficiaries are to ensure that they are aware of these lead times in their organisation as well as in the other organisations which may be involved. It is the applicant's responsibility to ask for information on lead times pertaining to the Managing Authority.

Applicants should also consider personal commitments, vacation leave etc, when planning to apply. **All project application submissions which must reach Xjenza Malta by not later than 23:59pm (CET) on the day of the deadline, must be dated and signed by the Lead Partner's legal representative.**

In the case of consortia, signatures of the legal representatives of each respective participating organisation are required.

7.3.2 Assistance with Applications

Prospective Project Applicants are encouraged to seek the advice of Xjenza Malta in the preparation of the project application. This should help identify any areas of concern prior to the submission of the application and lead to a better quality of submission. Advice shall only be given in respect to these Rules for Participation and not on technical grounds. **Applicants are particularly encouraged to seek Xjenza Malta's and CRIHM's guidance through proposal-specific one-to-one sessions to ensure that the single-stage application documentation is complete and effective, as once submitted, it cannot be edited.** One-to-one sessions and correspondences seeking advice should be done latest one week before the closing date for this call.

8 Confidentiality of Submissions

Unless otherwise indicated, all project application submissions except for the name of the entity, project contacts, title of proposal and the abstract shall be treated in strict confidence.

The data collected by the Managing Authority and CRIHM, via the application for the aid and its subsequent processing by the Managing Authority and CRIHM to evaluate the data subject's request for aid under the Scheme is in line with:

i. The Rules for Participation;

ii. Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) No 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards aid for port and airport infrastructure, notification thresholds for aid for culture and heritage conservation and for aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures, and regional operating aid schemes for outermost regions and amending Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 as regards the calculation of eligible costs, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 as regards its prolongation and amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards its prolongation and relevant adjustments, by Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, and by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty and Regulation (EU) 2022/2473 declaring certain categories of aid to undertakings active in the production, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (for projects implemented in line with Regulation B of these Rules for Participation).

iii. 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 (the de minimis Regulation), for projects implemented in line with Regulation A of these Rules for Participation.

iv. Data Protection Act (CAP 586 of the Laws of Malta) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Managing Authority 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).

v. 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'.

Further information may be found within the application form.

9 Programme Parameters

Xjenza Malta, in collaboration with the Cancer Research and Innovation Hub Malta, reserve the right to carry out financial and/or technical audits at their discretion, at any time during the duration of the project to ensure that Programme Parameters, as per contractual obligations are being observed.

9.1 Project Start Date and Duration

The project must start by at least **1 September 2025** or as otherwise stated by Xjenza Malta. The possible project duration is up to **36 months, without the possibility of an extension**.

9.2 Project Grant

The **maximum** possible grant value for a project is €300,000.

9.3 Deliverables

Deliverables are tangible outcomes of the project and must be **submissible** (such as technical reports, presentations, articles, video recordings, conference papers, journal articles etc…) These deliverables must be carried out between the start date and end date of the project. Deliverables not planned within the project timelines will

not be considered. **If the project is awarded, detailed and comprehensive evidence should be submitted for each deliverable described in the application form to ensure that it has been attained successfully.**

The content of each deliverable should be proportionate to the research effort carried out to obtain such results. **At application stage, each deliverable proposed should be described by a percentage reflecting the contribution to the overall project (i.e. The higher the impact of that deliverable on the project, the higher the percentage). Cumulatively, these should add up to 100%, including both mandatory and additional deliverables.** The End of Project Audited Financial Report is not assigned a percentage weighting, as it holds independent and absolute significance, accounting for 100% of its own importance.

It is required that:

- File storing and synchronization service e.g., Google Drive or Dropbox, is set up and shared with the Managing Authority to support the project monitoring process. The shared folder should reflect the structure of deliverables provided in the application form i.e., every deliverable should have its own sub-folder with evidence saved within.
- Xjenza Malta should be notified by email each time there are new documents updated within the file storage system, detailing a log of added, removed and/or modified documents are necessary.

- Following each due date a soft copy of the final version of the deliverable/s will be held at Xjenza Malta which will then be considered the final version. Where deliverables require periodic submissions (e.g., monthly reports, reports on IP status), it is only the final submission that will be considered as the final deliverable. All submitted deliverables should still be held on the file storage system for at least 6 months following the successful closure of the project.

- A copy of all deliverables must be presented to Xjenza Malta before any retention is disbursed.

- The content of each deliverable should be proportionate to the research efforts carried out to obtain such results.

9.3.1 Mandatory Deliverables

The Beneficiary must:

- ✓ Report on project progress as per the list hereunder and in line with the templates provided:

    - At least one article in public media (e.g., local newspapers or magazines) to raise public awareness, **including an acknowledgement to the Managing Authority and CRIHM**. A copy should be presented to Xjenza Malta within two weeks of publication. *These should not contain intellectual property but should raise awareness about the project and its benefits.*
    - Actively participate and be involved in the **organisation of research conferences/ events held by Xjenza Malta and CRIHM**, to disseminate the project results and the experience of obtaining funding.
    - Report on project progress through reports and meetings, and in line with the templates provided by the Managing Authority:
        - Hold a project **progress meeting** to verbally update the Managing Authority every six (6) months, including a kick-off meeting at the start of the project. Progress meetings include delivering a presentation (Kindly note, that the contracting authority may, at its own discretion, request additional meetings if required).
        - **Interim Technical and Financial Reports** (Mid-way through the project)
        - End of **Project Technical Report**.
        - End of **Project Audited Financial Report**, together with the Audit Check List and Inventory List.

The Reports must include sufficient evidence on the achievement of the project objectives, as well as the parameters indicated in the application, and they must be provided in accordance with the templates presented to the Principal Investigator by Xjenza Malta.

The Project Technical Report must be submitted prior to the termination of the project within which it is due.

The Project Audited Financial Report must be submitted within two months from the completion of the project to account for lead time and payroll in the lifetime of the project.

Any changes to the project objectives, work-packages or any other parameter committed to in the application, are to be communicated in writing with clear justification to Xjenza Malta prior to the deadline. The written request will be referred to the Unit Director for approval.

Acceptance or otherwise of any changes shall be at the sole discretion of the Xjenza Malta and CRIHM, and the decision shall be binding, final and irrevocable. Any other communication shall not be considered valid or binding.

9.3.2 Recommended Deliverables

Further to the mandatory deliverables, Xjenza Malta recommends that additional deliverables are included. The proposed recommended deliverables **should not exceed ten (10)**. Although the deliverables cited below are not mandatory, if the applicant includes such recommended deliverables at the proposal stage, this enhances the strength of the application form. The recommended deliverables may include:

- ✓ A strategic plan to assess the research after its conclusion, how to further exploit and develop the results.
- ✓ The attainment of any certification, degrees or IP generation.
- ✓ Reports after the conclusion of testing, to highlight the generation of new knowledge.
- ✓ Dissemination activities, including but not limited to social media content creation, articles in local newspapers, presentations in conferences, publications (preferably in open access journals[2]), project exhibitions etc.

Any activities which are related to project set-up shall not be considered as acceptable deliverables. These include:

[2] [2] Costs incurred with relation to this deliverable are not eligible as part of the project costs under the Cancer Research Programme. Beneficiaries have the possibility of applying to the Xjenza Malta Schemes for Open Access Journal Support. Additionally, Xjenza Malta Schemes for Open Access Journal Support will be subject to the timelines governed by a separate agreement. Therefore, applying to these schemes with the intent to publish open access peer-reviewed research papers may be sufficient as a deliverable.

- Recruitment of personnel
- Procurement of equipment
- Internal meetings between the research team/ with collaborators.

Kindly note that the list of examples given above are not exhaustive.

Moreover, in the case of deliverables that will be submitted periodically during the project lifetime (e.g., progress reports, reports on IP generation etc.), only the final version (collating all the information), will be considered as the deliverable.

In the case of publications, these should take place during the duration of the project, and where available and possible, deposited in the entity's repository, including an acknowledgement to Xjenza Malta and CRIHM.

Provided further that if the Beneficiary claims that such an attempt to publish a research paper will have been unsuccessful, the Beneficiary must prove to the satisfaction of the Managing Authority/s and through the submission of sufficient documentary evidence that such an attempt to publish a research paper in terms of the requirements of this clause was made. Sufficient and adequate documentary evidence includes evidence that the paper was submitted for publication and documentary evidence that the paper was rejected for publication. If the Managing Authority is satisfied with the evidence provided, then the Beneficiary will not be held in breach of this particular obligation.

A copy of all publications and proposed deliverables must be presented to Xjenza Malta before any retention is disbursed.

The format of deliverables to be submitted must be included at application stage. Deliverables may take the form of presentations, reports, correspondence, legal agreements, images, event agendas, audio and video recordings, databases, certificates or manuscripts).

Xjenza Malta appreciates that the fulfilment of the recommended deliverables may be dependent on external factors. The Beneficiary is expected to consider these deliverables when submitting their application form. **Although these deliverables are**

non-compulsory, if listed as committed deliverables at application stage, they must be adhered to.

10 Eligible Costs

Eligible direct costs are those costs incurred directly by the applicant during the lifetime of the project, and which are primarily used to achieve the objectives of the project. All eligible expenses must be incurred between the Start Date and the End Date of the Project and must be limited to the budgeted value.

The **Eligible Direct Costs** are:

- Personnel Costs

Costs of employed researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project.

There are no limitations posed with regard to the number of employees involved in a single project. Furthermore, both new and existing personnel shall be eligible for funding. **A minimum of 30% of the project value must be dedicated to research hours**.

Management costs are limited to **10% of the project value**. Any project management which is not carried out by any of the partners shall be deemed to be subcontracting and, apart from being subject to the 10% maximum threshold detailed herein, will also be calculated as part of the 25% maximum referred to in the subcontracting costs.

The hourly rate (z) is calculated using the following formula:

€ z = (basic salary + allowances)/yearly workable hours of the employee

Eligible salaries are pinned to the hourly rates in the Table below (including National Insurance and other contributions) and personnel limits per project:

Role in Project	Hourly rates 2025		Hourly rates 2026		Hourly rates 2027		Hourly rates 2028		Limits per project
	min	max	min	max	min	max	min	max	

Management	NA	€54.46	NA	€57.78	NA	€60.67	NA	€63.70	Max 2 per project
Senior Researcher[3] or equivalent	€30.40	€41.98	€31.93	€44.08	€33.53	€46.28	€35.21	€48.59	No Limits
Researcher[4] or equivalent	€15.92	€30.39	€16.72	€31.92	€17.57	€33.52	€18.45	€35.20	No Limits
Operational, technician, research support assistant or equivalent	€10	€15.91	€10.50	€16.71	€11.03	€17.55	€11.58	€18.43	No Limits

*The rates stated in the table above are for the **years 2025-2028**. For subsequent years a 5% increase per year is allowed. Kindly ensure that only hourly rates are provided in the application form.*

Personnel in salary brackets that are higher than those noted above will still only be reimbursed at the rates of the eligible brackets above, depending on their role in the project.

The hourly rates will have to be noted in the application, along with the number of hours on the project per individual *(Please note that the maximum number of reimbursable hours per individual personnel through the project is **1760 per year**)*. In the case of existing personnel, the names of the individuals will have to be noted in the application and within the budget sheet and their respective CVs need to also be submitted.

Students can be engaged on the project and be paid an annual stipend of € 6,000 when reading for a full-time Master's degree or an annual stipend of € 8,000 when reading for a full-time Doctoral degree. In the case of a part-time Post-graduate degree, the respective stipend will be calculated pro-rata and at the discretion of the Xjenza Malta. Students must be engaged through a Maltese academic entity. Where

[3] The term 'senior researcher' is to be used for a postdoctoral researcher with a specialist and high level of local and international experience in the field. Individuals possessing a high level of experience in industry can still be considered. The applicant is to confirm this judgement with Xjenza Malta well in advance of submitting the application form.

[4] The term 'researcher' is to be used for a Bachelor's, Master's or a Ph.D. degree holder and hence the hourly rate should be equivalent to the degree held by the relevant individual.

the applying entity is not a Maltese Academic Entity, reasonable supervisory fees are eligible under subcontracting.

Note that for every engaged student, 1 full-time equivalent researcher must be employed by the consortium.

In case of GBER applications, management costs that are not related to the eligible research type activities will not be deemed as eligible costs.

With respect to the following eligible direct costs, kindly make sure that detailed information and specifications are provided for individual line items.

- **Specialised equipment:** Purchasing and leasing of specialised equipment including software. For an individual item of equipment over 15% of the project value, it is recommended that specifications and justification are provided in the application form. The overall value of specialised equipment cannot exceed 20% of the project value.

  For equipment valued at over €15,000, technical specifications are to be provided in the application form. If a specialised Laptop/PC is going to be purchased, please provide a letter justifying the planned project utilisation of such equipment in relation to its performance characteristics.

  For GBER applications, costs of equipment are eligible to the extent and for the period used for the project. Where such equipment is not used for its full life for the project, **only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project,** as calculated based on generally accepted accounting principles **are considered as eligible.** The deprecation costs must be verified by a Certified Public Accountant.

- **Consumables**: The overall value of consumables cannot exceed 30% of the project value. For **GBER applications**, consumables must be incurred directly as a result of the project.

- **Travel**: Travel is permitted for attending a conference or coordinating with foreign collaborators or stakeholders, up to a maximum of € 4,000.

For GBER applications, costs of travel are ineligible.

- **Overheads and other Operating Expenses:** Overheads (also known as indirect costs) will be covered at 20% of the direct eligible costs, for all line items being requested. This also includes other operational expenses which are directly related to the project. For GBER applications, such costs will only be eligible if they are incurred directly as a result of the project.

10.1 Subcontracted Activities

Subcontracted Activities must not exceed 25% of the project value. Subcontracted Activity means any activity related to the project, (including but not limited to consultancy), which is not carried out directly by the Beneficiary or its employees but is conducted by any third party (local or foreign) individual, company, partnership, or entity, under whatsoever terms and conditions.

For **GBER applications**, such costs are eligible only if used exclusively for the project.

Where a component of the project work is a Subcontracted Activity, the following considerations shall apply:

- ✓ The applicant remains responsible for the timely delivery of the subcontracted tasks;
- ✓ The applicant shall ensure that such a third party is selected in a manner which is transparent, fair and impartial in line with the applicant's procurement processes.
- ✓ The applicant shall ensure that there is no discrimination between bidders and that all bidders are treated equally and transparently in all calls for quotations.
- ✓ The applicant should ensure that the attainment of any services or goods respect their procurement guidelines.

Subcontracting to foreign companies should only be resorted to if suitable expertise is not available locally at a competitive price. This course of action must be duly justified. The Beneficiary may consider joint bids from subcontractors (local or foreign) if these are presented in the form of a supplier consortium. Preference will be given to partners who have previous experience working together on similar projects. Beneficiaries have

to ensure that there is no discrimination between bidders, and that all bidders are to be treated equally and transparently in all calls for quotations.

10.2 Ineligible Costs

The non-exhaustive list below demonstrates examples of ineligible costs:

- ✓ Expenses related to loans, interest, etc
- ✓ Recoverable value added tax (VAT)
- ✓ Expenses which are recoverable through other funding mechanisms
- ✓ Re-purchase of equipment originally procured through other funding mechanisms
- ✓ Purchase of equipment from partners or their subsidiaries within the consortium
- ✓ Opportunity costs related to foregone production and production downtime arising from the allocation of resources to the Project.
- ✓ Any activity related to the reproduction of a commercial product or process by a physical examination of an existing system or from plans, blueprints, detailed specifications or publicly available information.
- ✓ Standard office equipment/ stationery
- ✓ Organising conferences or business lunches
- ✓ Personnel hours for travelling.
- ✓ Employee Overtime
- ✓ Patent renewal/maintenance fees
- ✓ Scientific Publication Costs
- ✓ Applying for or registering relevant Intellectual Property (e.g. patents for inventions, trademarks, copyrights, or design rights as applicable)

- ✓ Any costs related to the submission of the End of Project Audited Financial Report

Kindly note that this is a non-exhaustive list, and any line items not seen to be compliant with the nature of the Cancer Research Programme or state aid regulations will be subtracted from the grant.

In the event a cost which is not clearly ineligible/eligible is to be proposed, kindly contact Xjenza Malta for clarification. Any clarification is to be performed at least 2 working days prior to the submission deadline.

10.3 Collaborators

Should the applicant have any collaborators, these must be included in the application form. The expected contribution/s by the said collaborators should be stated and supported by a **letter of intent**. These collaborators may be foreign or local. They are not eligible to receive direct funding through this grant.

Should a letter of intent be absent for a specific collaborator, that collaborator will not be considered at evaluation stage. Moreover, the respective letter of intents should be composed within the last three months before the deadline of the application.

10.4 Co-Financing under *de minimis* (Regulation A)

The Programme's financial contribution to a Beneficiary which is applying under the *De minimis state aid option* shall be limited to 75% of eligible costs incurred by that Beneficiary. Therefore, such a Beneficiary must contribute the remaining co-financing.

It is not possible for a Beneficiary to cover the contribution 'in-kind'.

10.5 Co-Financing under GBER (Regulation B)

The only types of research eligible under this programme are **Industrial Research** and/or **Experimental Development**.

The financial contribution to a Beneficiary applying under GBER shall be 25% of the eligible costs incurred on the project by that Beneficiary. The aid intensity can be topped up as follows:

Aid Intensity for large enterprises	Top-up according to Undertaking Size		Additional top-up if the project involves Effective Collaboration and/ or Wide Dissemination and/or Making licences available, as described below
25%	Small Undertaking	+ 20%	+ 15%
	Medium-sized Undertaking	+ 10%	

The partner must finance the remaining percentage of the eligible costs. It is not possible for a partner to cover this percentage contribution 'in-kind'.

The aid intensity may be topped up by an additional 15% if one or more of the following conditions are fulfilled:

(a) The project involves effective collaboration:

– between undertakings among which at least one is an SME, or is carried out in at least two Member States, or in a Member State and in a Contracting Party of the EEA Agreement, and no single undertaking bears more than 70 % of the eligible costs, OR

– between an undertaking and one or more research and knowledge dissemination organisations, where the latter bear at least 10 % of the eligible costs and have the right to publish their own research results;

(b) the results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software;

(c) the beneficiary commits to, on a timely basis, make available licences for research results of aided R&D projects, which are protected by intellectual property rights, at a market price and on non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis for use by interested parties in the EEA;

Travel-related and Dissemination-related costs are not eligible direct costs under this state aid route.

The amount of assistance granted to beneficiaries under this option will not exceed the applicable thresholds laid down in Article 4(1) (i) of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014, as amended.

11 Evaluation

Project applications will be evaluated through a three-step process. Primarily, projects will undergo an administrative compliance evaluation. At this stage, if any errors with the budget are noted, these will either be considered as a major deviation or a minor deviation (kindly refer to Section 7.1 for further guidance).

If deemed successful, a project application will be forwarded to a Committee of Evaluators to confirm that the proposal is a 'Research Project' and proceed with the external evaluation, and subsequently for a Due Diligence assessment. Any proposal which is not deemed as a 'Research Project' will not be eligible for funding.

The highest ranked proposal from each Priority Area will be awarded. Subject to the availability of funds, the remaining projects will form a ranking list irrespective of the Priority Area and the Managing Authority will award according to this list until the funds are consumed.

In the event that the Due Diligence assessment results in too high an exposure risk to the Managing Authority, the Applicant will no longer be entitled to participate in the project or further assurances may be requested.

11.1 Evaluation Criteria

Failure to achieve a minimum of **65%** pass from the external evaluation will fail the project application. For a project application to be successful, it must pass all three steps.

External Evaluators will be evaluating project applications for the following criteria:

Excellence (40%): Threshold 30%

- ✓ Are the proposal's aims and objectives clear? Are they reasonable and ambitious within the context of this programme? Is the proposal's scientific basis and research methodology clear? Does it address an identified gap in the specific sector?
- ✓ Is the research innovative? Does it challenge current methods, barriers, or applications in its field? What is the likelihood that the research will lead to new discoveries or advances over the current state of affairs?
- ✓ Does the proposal appear to be technologically and practically feasible in achieving the set-out objectives? Does the research develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, technologies, applications, treatments, tools, and/or interventions?

Impact (35%): Threshold 20%

- ✓ Does the proposal enhance the knowledge of local researchers resulting in disciplinary or interdisciplinary advancement giving them an international competitive edge?
- ✓ Has the proposal been able to characterise the influences and impacts that the research has on the end-users, and on society at large?
- ✓ Is the proposal aligned with National Policies and Strategies? Does the research go beyond comparable solutions at European level?
- ✓ Does the proposal outline potential impacts resulting from dissemination measures or describe in detail the possibility of journal publications?

Implementation (25%): Threshold 15%

- ✓ Does the applicant/s have the required skills and expertise to undertake the project successfully and deliver the objectives? Does anyone from the research team have a track record in the mentioned scientific field for at least three years?

- ✓ Has the applicant identified the resources currently available for the project which are fundamental to performing the proposed research? Does the applicant/consortium possess the required resources (personnel, equipment,

or contractors) to complete the project when taking into consideration the items to be acquired within the project's lifetime.

- ✓ Is the general scientific and technical approach proposed sound and credible? Are the tasks proposed appropriate for the timeframe allowed? Is the proposal coherent and effective in terms of the work plan, including the appropriateness of the allocation of deliverables, tasks and resources?

- ✓ Is the requested budget appropriate and convincing in relation to this proposal's ambitions? Are the line items being requested pertinent to the project? Are they consistent with the current market price of those items?

- ✓ Have potential risks been described and will they be managed as such to ensure the best possible chances of success in the outcomes of the research?

Other considerations:

If two or more projects obtain the same mark following evaluation, then Xjenza Malta shall give priority to that project which provides the best consideration to the implementation of gender equality in the research project.

11.2 Quality Approved Process

Should a proposal score more that 80 marks yet not be granted due to funds being consumed by higher ranked proposals, the proposal will receive a "**Quality Proposal Acknowledgment" (QPA)**. Using the QPA, the Managing Authority will seek further funding on behalf of the applicant. Please note that there is no guarantee that these funds will be secured in favour of the proposal. The applicant will be notified following the evaluation and ranking of all proposals if they receive a QPA.

The Managing Authority will have 3 months from the notification date to seek the funding requested and respond to the applicant. Should a project be granted further funding through this mechanism, The awarded process (Further evaluations, agreement, etc.) continue as regular. Should the 3-month window elapse, the project will not be successful and will not be granted funding. Should multiple proposals be provided with a QPA and insufficient funds provided to grant all QPA projects, the

Managing Authority will respect the ranking devised through the evaluation process and award the next best ranked projects.

12 Post Selection Process

12.1 The Grant Agreement

Following the successful evaluation of the application, the beneficiary and any consortium partners (*if applicable*) will be invited to sign a Grant Agreement establishing the terms and conditions governing the financing of the project. The Grant Agreement will include the original project proposal as an annex. The beneficiary will be expected to execute the project in line with the original proposal. The Project Application including but not limited to milestones, compliance and reporting obligations, and the IP agreement shall constitute an integral part of the Grant Agreement as will the rules for participation.

Hard copies of the Grant Agreement must be signed by the beneficiary and any consortium partners (if applicable) within two (2) weeks from the date on which the Principal Investigator receives them. The Principal Investigator must ensure that the respective legal representative/s are available to endorse the Grant Agreement within this 2-week timeframe, where a legal representative is not available a proxy should sign. Failure to endorse the Grant Agreement within the stipulated timeframe may result in a withdrawal of the offer for funding.

Together with the signed copies of the Grant Agreement, the Principal Investigator must provide an abstract of the project **within five (5) working days.** This may be used, in-part or in-whole, by the Managing Authority and CRIHM to publicise or externalise the award of funds. No proprietary intellectual property should be included in this draft.

12.2 Start Date and End Date

The project will start on a pre-determined date as agreed by all the respective parties and as stipulated in the Grant Agreement.

The CRIHM will endeavour to transfer the first tranche of funding to the project account held by the Beneficiary as soon as possible after the Agreement Date, as described in the Grant Agreement.

Between the Agreement Date and the Start Date, the Beneficiary should ensure that all activities required for a smooth project start are completed. These may include but not limited to:

- ✓ obtaining quotations for procurement purposes
- ✓ issuing a human-resources call
- ✓ opening a bank account for the depositing of the first tranche (refer to section 14.4).

To be eligible for funding, all expenses must be incurred between the Start Date and the End Date of the Project.

13 Double Funding

Funding under this Programme is made available on the basis that none of the Beneficiaries have benefited and will not benefit from any other grant or financial incentive of whatever nature, applied for and/or utilised for the same scope as that subject of the funding requested under this Programme. Provided that, in the case where the application covers work that is part of a larger project, the Beneficiary must submit a table as an appendix to the application form that shows a comprehensive list of the items of work and the source of funding for each item.

By signing the Grant Agreement, Beneficiary is automatically accepting and authorising Xjenza Malta to exchange essential information related to the project with other funding agencies, both local and overseas, for any necessary checks. Any occurrence of double funding should be communicated in writing to the Unit Director prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement.

14 Funding, Management and Progress Monitoring

14.1 Allocation and Disbursement of Funding

For the purposes of funding and reporting, a project submission shall be considered to be up to a **36-month period.** A project will be divided into funding tranches: one will be provided at the beginning of the project, one half-way through and the retention tranche at the end.

Total financial contribution over the lifetime of the project shall not exceed the funding limit as established in the Grant Agreement, irrespective of actual expenditure.

Funding will be allocated according to the following schedule:

1. At the beginning of the project, the CRIHM will provide the relevant pre-financing to the Beneficiary, which amounts to 50% of the grant amount. This will include both direct and indirect eligible costs.

2. The CRIHM will provide a further 30% of the grant amount mid-way through the project.

3. A retention consisting of 20% of the project grant shall be withheld by the CRIHM and only released upon the successful completion of the project. The amount of retention will be deducted from the pre-financed funds.

Underspends will be retrieved by the Managing Authority following the submission of the financial audited report. Xjenza Malta reserves the right to modify tranche payments if it deems that the underspend within the previous reporting period is considerable.

14.2 Reporting & Audit

The Principal Investigator shall set a schedule for periodic progress meetings with the Managing Authority. During such meetings, the beneficiary should verbally update Xjenza Malta on progress via presentation, as indicated in Section 9.3.1.

As indicated in Section 9, the Principal Investigator will be required to submit an End of Project Technical Report and an Audited Financial Report to the Managing Authority with details of actual expenditure. Both reports must be approved by the Managing Authority before proceeding with the issuing of the retention tranche.

Technical and financial reports should be submitted mid-way and at the end of the project by the Principal Investigator. The latter should contain details of actual expenditure over the past reporting period, together with an updated forecast of projected expenditure for the following reporting period. In the case of a consortium, details must be broken down for each Project Partner.

The End of Project Technical Report should include an account of the activities and achievements carried out throughout the reporting period as compared with the contents of the application (and/or additional annexes within the Grant Agreement outlining the tasks and deliverables of the beneficiary) as originally submitted. This should follow the template provided by Xjenza Malta.

The beneficiary shall appoint a certified auditor to conduct a detailed financial audit, following the completion of the project, where the auditor is responsible for the financial audit and approved by Xjenza Malta once submitted. The Managing Authority reserves the right to appoint an auditor to audit the Project Financial Audit as submitted. This audit should determine the total eligible costs, and it should be conducted to align with the Audit Checklist provided by Xjenza Malta.

The End of Project Audited Financial Report must contain a detailed account of the actual expenditure disbursed for the entirety of project, including:

1. Accounts
2. Physical Inventory (Provided using the Inventory Checklist template)
3. Timesheets and Payslips/employee contracts
4. Receipts for all equipment and consumables
5. Bank statements for the Project Account

The End of Project Audited Financial Report shall be submitted up to eight (8) weeks from the stipulated end of project date.

When the audits are finalised and verified, the CRIHM shall release the retention money due to the Beneficiary. In the case of overpayment, the Beneficiary will be required to refund the unutilised to the CRIHM.

The Managing Authority may at any time request supplementary information and documentation on the projects and may request additional progress meetings. The Managing Authority may make such additional enquiries into a project as deemed necessary. Any required documentation not submitted within Final Reports, or documentation not submitted within the specified timeframes, may render the whole project ineligible, and may result in the Managing Authority recovering all funds disbursed across the project. If the project is found to be in breach of the Grant Agreement or to materially depart from the submitted application, the Managing Authority reserves the right to discontinue the award, and the beneficiary may be required to refund the Grant in part or in full. In any such event, the Managing Authority may also exclude a beneficiary from participating in future calls.

Templates for any mandatory reports will be provided with the grant agreement.

Over and above the audit responsibilities of the lead partner, Xjenza Malta may conduct a detailed audit consisting of a financial and a technical part, following the completion of the project. The 3-part audit will consist of the following:

The financial audit

- *Accounts*
- *Physical Inventory*
- *Time-sheets and payslips*
- *Receipts for all equipment and consumables*
- *Bank statements for the R&I Project Account*

The Project Management Audit

- *Schedule management*
- *Change management*
- *Deliverables*

- *Achievements compared with Key Performance Indicators*

Technical Audit

- *Brief summary of the project including scientific hypothesis investigated*
- *Interpretation of Research Results*
- *Project's impact, including Prototypes and IP/patent check*

Xjenza Malta reserves the right to request additional project-related information and conduct intermediate audits at any time.

14.3 Transfer of Funds

Applicants should note that:

- Transfers of project funds between line items **over the course of the project** that are **cumulatively less than 20% of the grant value are automatically eligible** provided that:
    i. the limits mentioned in the Rules of Participation in Section 9 are adhered to
    ii. expenses are exclusively used throughout the project lifetime to the sole benefit of the project
    iii. requested costs should be eligible as per Rules of Participation
- Should transfers of project funds between line items are **cumulatively greater than 20% of the grant value, these will be considered as significant alterations to the proposal and will not be eligible.**

Kindly note that with respect to transfer of project funds, these should be reflected in the project progress meetings and in the Project Audited Financial Report.

In case of consortia, the 20% transfer limit is set for the grant value of the respective partner.

Kindly note that the structure of the line items will be as follows:

- Transfers between different budget categories will always contribute to the 20% limit.

- Each **manager** will be considered as its own line item (transfers between managers will contribute to the 20% limit)

- **Research personn**el will be considered a single line item (transfers between research personnel will not contribute to the 20% limit)

- **Equipment** under €5,000 will be considered a single line item (transfers between equipment (under €5,000) will not contribute to the 20% limit). However, each piece of equipment over €5,000 will be considered their own line items (transfers between equipment (over €5,000) will contribute to the 20% limit).

- **Subcontracted activities** of under €5,000 will be considered a single line item (transfers between subcontracting (under €5,000) will not contribute to the 20% limit). However, subcontracting over €5,000 will be considered their own line items (transfers between subcontracting (over €5,000) will contribute to the 20% limit).

- **Consumables** of under €5,000 will be considered a single line item (transfers between consumables (under €5,000) will not contribute to the 20% limit). However, consumables over €5,000 will be considered their own line items (transfers between consumables (over €5,000) will contribute to the 20% limit).

- **Travel** will be considered a single line item (transfers between travel will not contribute to the 20% limit).

Kindly note that the term 'own line item' refers to a whole budget category whereas 'single line item' refers to one individual line item within a budget category.

Should an equipment/ subcontracting originally proposed to be over €5,000 but get reduced to less than €5,000 over the course of the project, this will still be considered as an individual line item. Should an item of equipment/subcontracting originally proposed to be less than €5,000, be increased to over €5,000 over the course of the project, this will alter to an individual line item.

For reference purposes, please find attached the above transfers in a tabular format:

Will contribute to the 20% limit	***Will not contribute to the 20% limit***
Transfers between different budget categories	
Transfers between managers	*Transfers between research personnel*
Transfers between items of equipment (over €5,000)	*Transfers between items of equipment (under €5,000)*
Transfers between subcontracted activities (over €5,000)	*Transfers between subcontracted activities (under €5,000)*
Transfers between consumables (over €5,000)	*Transfers between consumables (under €5,000)*
	Transfers between travel activities

14.4 Accountability

Applicants must keep a separate bank account or records, which must be clearly distinguishable from its other accounting records. All relevant expenses must be recorded in this account.

Eligible expenses must have been determined in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the Applicant. Direct eligible costs must be backed up with the relevant documentation.

15 Dissemination and Externalisation

15.1 Referencing

Any articles and text material published in relation to the completion of tasks proposed in the project should include the words:

'Project <Project Name> financed by the Cancer Research and Innovation Hub Malta, and managed by Xjenza Malta through the 'R&I Thematic Programmes: Cancer Research Programme'.

Any websites or printed material related to the project should also include the Xjenza Malta logo, the CRIHM logo, or any other logo related to this Programme, and as provided by the Managing Authority, where possible.

If any printed material is published without a mention of the Cancer Research Programme, Xjenza Malta and CRIHM, the Beneficiary shall be obliged to publish a correction at its own expense in the subsequent issue of the publication or for it to be edited accordingly in the cases of online publications. In the case where such publicity does not mention the Cancer Research Programme, Xjenza Malta and CRIHM, associated costs will be considered ineligible and will not be considered to fulfil any deliverables proposed in the application form.

Both the CRIHM and Xjenza Malta reserve the right to request that the beneficiary participates in any Research Conferences or Events to disseminate the project results and the experience in obtaining funding from the Managing Authority.

The Beneficiaries shall always cooperate with the Managing Authority in promoting the Programme by presenting the Awarded Project or through other reasonable means, as requested by the Managing Authority.

16 Supervening Circumstances

The Principal Investigator is obliged to immediately advise the Unit Director, of any internal or external significant event which might either affect the validity or the implementation of the project. This obligation applies to the entire period between the submission of the preliminary project application and the completion of the project.

Xjenza Malta shall acknowledge receipt of the said notification within five (5) working days. The reply will either give such directives as it deems necessary for the furtherance on the project or re-assess the project in its entirety accordingly.

Failure on the part of the Principal Investigator to comply with this obligation may be deemed by Xjenza Malta to constitute material non-compliance on the part of the Beneficiary and Xjenza Malta may, thereafter, take such action as is necessary in terms of the Grant Agreement, and in consequence of such non-compliance.

16.1 Default

If the implementation of a project becomes impossible or implementation is not completed, Xjenza Malta shall be entitled to take any action it deems necessary, including, but not limited to, the withdrawal of funding for the project and the collection of refunds of money already paid out. A similar course of action may be followed if a project is in default as a result of not meeting one or more of its obligations in terms of the grant agreement.

In the event of default on the part of the Beneficiary the Managing Authority may issue a written notice to the Beneficiary outlining the default, the corrective action to be taken and granting a rectification period of one month. The Managing Authority may also issue a second written notice of default granting a rectification period in respect of the same default.

17 Interpretation of Rules

This document endeavours to establish comprehensive and clear rules governing participation in this initiative. However, should circumstances arise where the rules are inadequate, unclear, ambiguous, or conflicting, the Managing Authority shall exercise its discretion in the interpretation of the rules or will extrapolate the rules as necessary through the setting up of an ad hoc committee. These current Rules repeal any Rules previously issued and constitute exclusively the entire Rules issued by the Managing Authority.

In the event of a conflict between the Grant Agreement and these Rules for Participation, the Grant Agreement shall take precedence.

APPENDIX 1

TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVELS (TRLs)

Kindly make reference to the resource page 'Technology Readiness Levels Aid'