



# **Xjenza Malta R&I EXPO Awards 2025**

## *Application Guide*

---

## 1. Introduction

Xjenza Malta is proud to launch the **Xjenza Malta R&I EXPO Awards**, honouring Maltese beneficiaries who have actively contributed to Research and Innovation initiatives administered by Xjenza Malta or the European Union.

These prestigious awards will celebrate the exceptional nationally and EU-funded R&I projects which outcomes have delivered meaningful impact across the scientific research community and highlight their generated tangible socio-economic value.

Maltese Legal entities which have obtained a project grant agreement from Xjenza Malta or the European Union starting from the year **2021** are eligible to apply for these awards.

**These awards are non-monetary.**

## 2. General Information

*Opening Date: 01<sup>st</sup> October 2025*

*Closing Date: 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 17:00 CET*

### 3. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must follow these eligibility criteria:

- **Legal Entities:** All Maltese registered legal entities which are in the possession of a signed grant agreement with budget allocation with Xjenza Malta or European Union (specifically under **Horizon Europe** programme), starting from the year 2021.
- **Researchers:** All researchers who work or have been working with Maltese registered legal entities which are in the possession of a signed grant agreement with budget allocation with Xjenza Malta or European Union (specifically under **Horizon Europe** programme), starting from the year 2021. The researchers must be or must have been performing the research in Malta.

### 4. Application Guidelines

- For the **Outstanding Technological Innovation Award**, applicants may submit multiple applications with different projects, but only one application per project is permitted within this category.
- For the **Outstanding Innovative SME Award**, **Outstanding Transnational Collaboration Award**, and **Outstanding Early-Career Researcher Award**, applicants are permitted to submit only one project within the category; however, they may reference additional projects within the same category to substantiate their submission.
- If a project involves multiple Maltese beneficiaries, all parties must reach a mutual agreement on which entity will submit the application before its submission. **One** legal entity may apply on behalf of the consortium for each project in any given award category.

## 5. Award Categories

The Xjenza Malta R&I EXPO Awards will offer recipients significant visibility and recognition, both within the national and international research communities. Highly ranked applicants will be invited to the award ceremony at the R&I EXPO in November 2025 and the first placed awardees will be presented their awards. The event will be promoted through dedicated promotional channels and have appropriate media coverage.

Furthermore, awardees will benefit from enhanced networking opportunities, increased credibility in future funding applications, and broader engagement with stakeholders across academia, industry, and policy-making spheres.

The Award Categories are the following:

- 1. Outstanding Innovative SME Award***
- 2. Outstanding Technological Innovation Award***
- 3. Outstanding Transnational Collaboration Award***
- 4. Outstanding Early-Career Researcher Award***

## 6. Award Categories in detail

### ***1) Outstanding Innovative SME Award***

This award will be given to the private entity for the project with the best innovation and market potential. The project/s must demonstrate how it developed an innovation with high potential to break into new markets. Emphasis should be placed on originality, scalability, and the potential to disrupt or transform industry landscapes. The award celebrates forward-thinking solutions that bridge creativity with real-world impact.

### ***2) Outstanding Technological Innovation Award***

This award will be given to the entity for the project with the best technological innovation. The project must demonstrate innovation either in the improvement of an existing product or process, submission of patent applications and/or other intellectual property, and the inventive nature of the technology. This award celebrates ingenuity, originality, and the potential for significant impact within the relevant industry, field, and on the country and its citizens.

### ***3) Outstanding Transnational Collaboration Award***

This award will be given to the entity that has demonstrated outstanding achievement in fostering international collaboration. The recipient should exemplify the spirit of global partnership through joint research initiatives, cross-border knowledge exchange, and impactful cooperation with international institutions. Their work should reflect a commitment to advancing research and innovation through collaborative project/s.

### ***4) Outstanding Early-Career Researcher Award***

This award will be given to the principal researcher with a promising early career track (no longer than 5 years since PhD award) record of activities within research projects. The research conducted by the early carrier researcher should be advanced and of state-of-the-art quality. Their work should signal a trajectory toward significant impact in their field and a commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge.

## 7. Evaluation Criteria for Award Categories

All submissions will be assessed according to award-specific criteria designed to reflect the unique objectives and impact areas of each category. Each criterion carries a defined weighting to ensure a balanced and transparent evaluation process.

### **1) Outstanding Innovative SME Award**

Evaluation Criteria (Total: 100%)

- Innovation & Originality (35%) - Uniqueness of the idea, creativity in approach, and novelty of the solution.
- Market Potential & Scalability (35%) - Demonstrated potential to enter new markets, grow, and scale effectively.
- Impact & Disruption (30%) - Likelihood of transforming industry practices or creating significant value.

### **2) Outstanding Technological Innovation Award**

Evaluation Criteria (Total: 100%)

- Technological Ingenuity (35%) - Inventiveness in design, application, or improvement of technology.
- Intellectual Property & R&D (35%) - Evidence of patent filings, IP generation, and rigorous research efforts.
- Industry Impact & Relevance (30%) - Potential to influence or advance the relevant field, sector and impact on the country and its citizens.

### **3) Outstanding Transnational Collaboration Award**

Evaluation Criteria (Total: 100%)

- Scope & Depth of Collaboration (35%) - Number and quality of international partnerships and joint initiatives.
- Knowledge Exchange & Integration (35%) - Effectiveness in sharing expertise and resources.
- Outcomes & Global Impact (30%) - Tangible results, influence on global research, and long-term benefits.

#### **4) Outstanding Early-Career Researcher Award**

Evaluation Criteria (Total: 100%)

- Research Quality & Innovation (35%) – Depth, originality, and state-of-the-art nature of the research.
- Track Record & Engagement (35%) – Participation in research projects, publications, and academic activities.
- Future Potential & Impact (30%) – Likelihood of continued excellence and contribution to the field.

## **8. Submissions**

Applicants need to submit their completed application to Xjenza Malta using this link – [Application Form](https://forms.gle/qBkUB6KBNAWsiJqg7) (<https://forms.gle/qBkUB6KBNAWsiJqg7>) before the on the **24<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 17:00 CET**. Late applications will not be considered.

## **9. Submission of Application and Evaluations**

1. *Applicants must fill in their application form and submit supporting documentation (Copy of grant agreement first page, and Researcher's CV were applicable) to link provided by **24<sup>th</sup> October 2025 17:00 (CET)**.*
2. *Applications will be reviewed and scored by an external evaluation board according to the evaluation criteria as per section 7.*
3. *Shortlisted applicants will be invited to the Xjenza Malta R&I EXPO award ceremony event in November 2025. The winners per category will be announced in the event.*
4. *Any queries related to the Awards shall be addressed to [alessandra.loria@gov.mt](mailto:alessandra.loria@gov.mt) and [horizon.malta@gov.mt](mailto:horizon.malta@gov.mt)*
5. **LATE APPLICATION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED**