



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

**FCT** Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

1<sup>st</sup> CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO INCREASE  
**COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN PORTUGAL, PORTUGUESE-  
SPEAKING AFRICAN COUNTRIES (PALOP) AND ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA**  
JOINTLY WITH PORTUGUESE INSTITUTIONS AND  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (AKDN)

ESTABLISHED UNDER THE PROTOCOL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE  
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC  
AND THE ISMAILI IMAMAT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF MAY 2016

## 1. General Information

Recognizing the long effort of the Ismaili Imamat to foster the welfare of people in Africa as well as the large experience of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in building scientific, technical and social science & humanities research and strengthening the Quality of Life (QOL) in Portugal, Portuguese-Speaking African Countries (PALOP) and elsewhere in Africa, and having in mind the Global Science Agenda, launched by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT, I.P.) in 2009, as well as the establishment of the “International Centre for Advanced Training of Scientists from Portuguese-Speaking Countries in area of Basic Sciences” under the auspices of UNESCO, both aimed to enhance and strengthen scientific skills and capacities in the framework of sustainable international scientific co-operation - the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education and the Ismaili Imamat established a [Protocol of Co-operation on Science and Technology](#).

In order to implement the Agreement of Co-operation, the FCT, I.P. and the AKDN hereby launch a call to increase the funding of collaborative research projects between Portuguese and PALOP institutions aiming to advance academic, scientific, technological and social science & humanities co-operation with developing countries and regions by promoting research capacity, targeting established and promising researchers, addressing timely topics of global importance. These projects aim to foster the welfare of people in PALOP and elsewhere in Africa, and build scientific, technical, social science & humanities research towards advances in QOL in Africa.

The present call is oriented exclusively to existing initiatives and on-going collaborations between academic and scientific institutions in PALOP and Portuguese research and academic institutions, in order to help develop and expand existing initiatives that may consolidate research capacity in those African countries.

## 2. Schedule

This call is opened from the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017 till the 17h00 (Lisbon time) of the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

Tentative calendar:

- Evaluation period: June 2017
- Decision communication and contract signature: end of July 2017



### 3. Call Topics

This Call for Proposals is established under the following main guidelines:

- a) Proposals are accepted **in all scientific topics identified in the Protocol** encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and securing resources of sufficient amount and duration to permit meaningful impact in Portugal and the PALOP:
  - i. Collaborative Research should emphasize emerging issues under the QOL concept, including, but not limited to, food security and biodiversity, early childhood development, education policies and assessment, habitat, sustainable energy systems and urban development, poverty alleviation, and resettlement of migrants, civil society and pluralism;
  - ii. Specific proposals may be developed to foster research on the Portuguese archives of Indian Ocean migration and trade, which could benefit QOL by enriching understanding of cultural and economic history and pluralism;
  - iii. Translational and clinical medical research will be considered through targeted actions and field research in Africa.
  
- b) Proposals are accepted **exclusively to help develop and expand existing initiatives and on-going collaborations** between academic and scientific institutions in PALOP and Portuguese research and academic institutions, in order to lead to scientific capacity building in those countries. Adequate demonstration of impactful research activity during the last 3 years should be provided. The proposals should include collaborative arrangements between academic and research institutions in at least one PALOP and in Portugal.

### 4. Expected Impact of the Call for Proposals and the strengthening of a network of collaborative research institutions in Portugal and the PALOP

This call and the Agreement referred above aim to advance academic, scientific, technological and social science & humanities cooperation with PALOP in collaboration with Portuguese research and academic institutions and the AKDN by promoting research capacity, targeting established and promising researchers, addressing timely topics of global importance, encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration, and securing resources of sufficient amount and duration to permit meaningful impact in those African countries.

These objectives may contribute to the overall commitment established by the Portuguese Government, through FCT, I.P., under the “International Centre for Advanced Training of Portuguese speaking researchers in Basic Sciences”, an UNESCO Type II Centre, enabling the centres and institutions involved in the proposals approved under the present Call may be invited by FCT, I.P. to contribute to the International Centre and help build an effective collaborative research network to promote research capacity in Africa and with strong local and endogenous roots in local activities.



## 5. Funding budget

Each of the projects approved under the present Call for Proposals will be funded up to a maximum of 300.000 € (three hundred thousand Euros) for a maximum of 3 (three) years period.

The overall amount of funding available under the present Call for proposals amounts to a maximum budget of 1.5 M€ (one and a half million euros) by the Ismaili Imamat for a maximum period of 3 (three) years, following the terms of Clause 5 of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education of the Portuguese Republic and the Ismaili Imamat on Science and Technology, as signed in May 2016.

The funding made available through the present call could not represent the total budget of the proposal. This implies that each proposal could have additional funding (a co-funding scheme), combining other national or international funding sources.

## 6. Criteria of the beneficiaries' eligibility

The following institutions in Portugal and in PALOP are eligible for funding: higher education institutions, their institutes and R&D centres; Associated Laboratories; State Laboratories; private non-profit institutions that carry out science and technology activities; non-governmental organizations with social purposes (ONGs); companies, if within projects led by R&D institutions of public or private non-profit character; other public and private non-profit institutions that carry out or participate in research activities.

The Portuguese beneficiaries must fulfil the following eligibility criteria: if notified to do so, and where applicable pursuant to their nature, and without prejudice to other requirement foreseen in the applicable European legislation or in specific applicable regulation:

- a) To be legally incorporated;
- b) To have their tax payments in order with the tax administration and their contributions in order with social security, being that these situations must be verified until the time of signing the acceptance document;
- c) To be able to legally develop activities covered by the typology of the project to which they apply;
- d) To have their situation in order with regard to refunds and within the scope of funding granted through FCT, I.P.

## 7. Criteria of the projects' eligibility

Consortia proposing a collaborative research project must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

- a) The proposal has to provide evidence that it is based on an existing and on-going cooperation between partners over the last 3 years, and that the project submitted will contribute to strengthening regional networks of researchers, leading to foster the training and capacity building for scientific, technological and social science & humanities research in Africa. Existing and on-going cooperation is defined, for this call, as projects with at least



- 2 (two) years of relevant collaboration between the institutions involved during the last 3 years and with proved funding. Documentation to evidence the existing and on-going cooperation must be provided;
- b) Each proposal must involve at least one Portuguese institution and one institution from a PALOP;
  - c) Each consortium has to nominate one Principal Investigator (Coordinator) from a Portuguese Proponent Institution (PI), who shall be co-responsible for the proposing institution, the application, project direction, fulfilment of aims proposed and of rules underlying the granting of funds, and represent the consortium towards FCT, I.P. and AKDN;
  - d) The proposal must ensure that the Coordinator has or shall have at the time of signing the project's acceptance document a labor contract or that he/she holds a post-doctoral grant with the PI or, in case there is no such situation, a written agreement between the parties;
  - e) The proposal must provide a technical characterization and a substantiated budget with a costs structure appropriate to the aims pursued;
  - f) The proposal must provide a plan of disclosure of outputs and dissemination of knowledge and, when applicable, a strategy for knowledge transfer;
  - g) The project must have a maximum duration of 36 months.
  - h) The implementation of the project must begin within 3 months of the communication of the financing decision, except in duly justified and authorized situations;
  - i) The proposal must be submitted in English and only via electronic form by the project's Coordinator (see point 6. Submission of applications), to which it shall be attached the mandatory documentation indicated in point 18.

## **8. Form of support**

Funding will be provided with a maximum of 300.000 € (three hundred thousand Euros) for each project. Supports to be granted are non-refundable.

Payments made directly or indirectly to Portuguese companies through the PI cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the company shareholding, and in the case of non-fulfilment of the thresholds foreseen by Regulation (EU) no. 1407/2013 of 18 December, applicable to Minimis Aids, they must meet the conditions set out in Regulation (EU) no. 651/2014, of 16 June (General Block Exemption Regulation, RGIC) for the exemption of notice foreseen in no. 3 of article 108 of the Treaty to be present.

## **9. Eligible expenses**

The following expenses are eligible:

- a) Direct Costs:
  - i. Expenses with human resources dedicated or related to the development of R&D activities related to the project execution in all mandatory components by the applicable labour legislation, including charges with grant holders directly supported by the beneficiaries;



- ii. Expenses with missions in the country and abroad, and directly attributable to the project;
  - iii. Acquisition of scientific and technical tools and equipment, indispensable to the project if used within the project during their useful life time;
  - iv. Amortization of scientific and technical tools and equipment indispensable to the project and of which the useful life time falls within the execution period, but does not end within that period;
  - v. Subcontracts directly related to the project scientific tasks' execution;
  - vi. Expenses related to the national and foreign record of patents, copyrights, usefulness models and drawings, national models or brands when related to other forms of intellectual protection, namely rates, researches to the status of the technique and consulting expenses;
  - vii. Expenses with the demonstration, promotion and disclosure of project's outputs, namely dissemination fees within the fulfilment and pursuant to national policies of open access;
  - viii. Acquisition of other goods and services directly related to the project execution, including costs with consultants that do not establish subcontracts;
  - ix. Other direct costs such as charges for financial services, reports, or audit certificates;
- b) Overheads or indirect costs, up to 7% of the total direct costs.

## 10. Non-eligible expenses

The following are non-eligible expenses:

- a) Charges with financial operations, commissions and exchange losses and other expenses that are solely financial expenses;
- b) Acquisition of vehicles;
- c) Construction, acquisition or amortization of buildings, including lands;
- d) Grants supplements;
- e) Bonuses, gratifications and wage supplements;
- f) Expenses with fines, legal proceedings and financial sanctions;
- g) Refundable VAT, by any means, even if it was not or shall not be effectively recovered by the beneficiary;
- h) Other taxes, contributions or rates, namely direct taxes and social security contributions on remunerations and wages, except if final and definitively borne by the beneficiary;
- i) Amortization of existing equipment within the component that was co-funded under other national or international programs;
- j) Transactions between entities participating in the project;
- k) Payments in cash made by the beneficiaries to their suppliers, except in situations where this is the usual payment method pursuant to the type of expenses and if under a unit amount lower than 250 euros;
- l) Expenses object of this funding by any other national or European program, with the exception of those framed within State aids, and if the total public support does not exceed the maximum limits foreseen in the community regulation;
- m) Expenses prior to the date of project beginning stated in the acceptance document;



- n) Expenses paid within the scope of contracts carried out through intermediaries or consultants, and in which the amount to be paid is expressed in a percentage of the co-funded amount or the eligible expenses of the operation;
- o) Expenses related to the project execution, and of which the payment is not carried out via bank account of the corresponding beneficiary entity, without prejudice to the situations in which such procedure cannot be ensured and of which the proof of financial flow related to the transaction is provided;
- p) Expenses proven by internal documents issued by beneficiary entities without being accompanied by the corresponding invoices or equivalent documents and payment documents that prove the acquisition and payment of goods and services;
- q) Remunerations and other remuneration supplements from teachers, researchers and other staff with an indefinite period of time contract with Public Administration previously constituted, except if otherwise foreseen in the applications submission notice.

### **11. Submission of applications**

Applicants must fill the Application Form which must be submitted in English. It should be presented as a unique research project with the required documents requested. The application form must be submitted in the following link: [https://concursosfct.formstack.com/forms/aga\\_khan](https://concursosfct.formstack.com/forms/aga_khan)

The documentation indicated in Point 18 should also be submitted jointly with the application form.

Proposals submitted by any other means will not be accepted. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

### **12. Verification of eligibility of applications**

FCT, I.P. will assess the proposals to ensure that they meet the eligibility formal criteria. Proposals not meeting the formal criteria will be rejected. Proposals passing the formal check of eligibility will be forwarded to the reviewers for evaluation.

### **13. Evaluation**

The project should highlight the added value for the current cooperation and have demonstrable impact to foster the scientific capacity and ensure sustainable development and QOL in Portugal, PALOP and elsewhere in Africa.

#### Peer Review

Proposals will be evaluated through a competitive process that will consider the scientific merit and the relevance of the proposal, conducted jointly by FCT, I.P. and AKDN (Joint Implementation



Committee of the Protocol-JIC). The members of the Joint Research Assessment Committee for Collaborative Research (JRAC) will evaluate the proposals submitted in response to this expression of interest. The JRAC members are internationally recognized scientists chosen for their expertise in priority areas defined in the Protocol of Cooperation between the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education of the Portuguese Republic and the Ismaili Imam.

### Evaluation criteria

#### *Criterion 1: Relevance and added value of the project for the cooperation already established*

- Main results of past and on-going cooperation;
- Plan of action for the consolidation of regional networks of researchers;
- Potential future achievements/deliverables demonstrating the added value of the current cooperation, namely in terms of the development of local African Research.
- The inclusion of an AKDN partner is an added-value.

#### *Criterion 2: Scientific quality and relevance*

- Scientific and technical relevance;
- Innovative potential, novelty, originality;
- Feasibility of the proposal as described by work plan;
- The quality of the research plan and the degree to which it builds research cooperation between Portugal and PALOP.

#### *Criterion 3: Potential impact*

- Relevance of the research question to the aim(s) of the expression of interest;
- The feasibility of producing within five years results that could have a meaningful impact in Portugal and PALOP and be applicable elsewhere in developing countries and regions.

#### *Criterion 4: Quality of the R&D team and efficiency of the proposal*

- The competence and record of success of researchers committed to the work;
- The level of mutual participation and commitment offered between Portuguese researchers and those in African institutions;
- The appropriateness of the budget proposed (adequacy of project work plan, time schedule, budget);

### Score definition

- 5 = excellent: clear recommendation for funding;
- 4 = very good: very strong strengths but with room for feasible improvement of certain aspects;
- 3 = good: some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses with the need of significant improvements;
- 2 = fair: proposal broadly addresses the criteria, but has significant weaknesses;
- 1 = poor: clear recommendation for rejection, as at least one of the major aspects is missing or strongly underdeveloped;
- 0 = missing/incomplete information: the criterion cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information or the proposal fails to address the criterion

Each of the 4 (four) criteria is rated using 0-5 (zero-five) scale and half-points are allowed.



The overall rating (0-20; zero-twenty) of each proposal will be the sum of the individual criterion scores.

#### **14. Notice of decision proposal, prior hearing, decision, claim**

a) Notice of decision proposal

The final results will be announced on the FCT, I.P. website ([www.fct.pt](http://www.fct.pt)) and in writing to the Coordinators, including a summary of the written statements (final evaluation report), produced by the JRAC.

b) Prior Hearing

The Coordinator can, if he/she wishes to do so, state his/her opinion on the decision proposal within ten business days counting from the decision proposal notice, and submitted to [programa.agakhan@fct.pt](mailto:programa.agakhan@fct.pt). The comments presented by the Coordinator on the final results are assessed:

- i. By the JIC with regard to administrative and/or procedural aspects;
- ii. By the JRAC which carried out the assessment with regard to matters of scientific nature.

c) Decision

Projects to be funded will be decided jointly by FCT, I.P. and AKDN, taking in consideration the available budget. After the conclusion of the above mentioned procedures, final decision is written to the Coordinator.

d) Claim

After the decision notice, claims can be submitted to FCT, I.P. ([programa.agakhan@fct.pt](mailto:programa.agakhan@fct.pt)), which will articulate with JIC if necessary, within 15 business days.

The claim is analyzed:

- i. by the JIC with regard to administrative and/or procedural aspects;
- ii. by the JRAC, which can nominate other independent experts, with regard to the scientific merit which recommend the maintenance or the change of the decision in a duly justified manner.

Confirmation of the presence of gross errors or negligent acts is the basis for the change of decision. The experts panels mentioned in b) must also elaborate a Final Report including outputs, critiques or recommendations that can contribute to improving the assessment system. The Final Report must identify all interest conflict situations verified during the panel operation.

FCT, I.P. communicates the final decision on the claim process results to the Coordinator.

#### **15. Acceptance document and start date of projects**





The Coordinators of the selected projects and their home institutions must sign the **Terms of Acceptance**, in accordance with the following procedures:

- a) The notice on the project's funding decision is made to the PI and/or to the Coordinator within a maximum of 15 business days after knowing about the final decision approval pursuant to the previous article.
- b) With the funding decision notice sent to the PI and to the Coordinator, the **Acceptance Document** is returned to FCT, I.P. within 30 business days, signed by those who have legal capacity for binding the PI and the Participating Entities, as well as by the Coordinator, being that this deadline can be extended if the PI provides FCT, I.P. grounds for such extension.
- c) In the case of projects carried out in co-promotion, a **Protocol** concluded between the co-promoters involved, who have funding from FCT, I.P., or their own funding, must be provided up to the time of signing the acceptance document, explaining the cooperation scope of the entities involved, the PI identification, the joint responsibility, the parties rights and duties and, if applicable, issues related to confidentiality, intellectual property and the end ownership of goods and products acquired and developed during the project's execution.
- d) Non-return to FCT, I.P., of the duly signed Acceptance Document and the protocol mentioned in the previous number, and within the period mentioned in no. 2, when applicable, and for reasons attributable to the Proposing Institution determines the expiry of the support granting decision.
- e) The project's starting date cannot exceed 90 consecutive days after the date of the notice related to the funding decision to the Coordinator and PI, except in situations duly justified to FCT, I.P..

## 16. Payments

- a) An advance payment of 30% of the funding approved for the project is made to the PI by FCT, I.P., within a maximum of 30 business days after the date of reception of the Acceptance Document.
- b) The PI receives the remaining payments on a yearly basis, after the completion of the following procedure:
  - i. Project year 1 – 30% of the approved funding will be paid following the reception and validation of a proof of audit to the project expenditure (financial report) and a scientific progress report;
  - ii. Project year 2 – 30% of the approved funding will be paid following the reception and validation of a proof of audit to the expenditure (financial report) and a scientific progress report;
  - iii. Project year 3 – 10% of the approved funding will be paid following the reception and validation of a proof of audit to the project expenditure (final financial report) and a final scientific report.

The financial control of the approved projects will be assured by a project audit related with the grant compliance, on the responsibility of the PI, whose results should be analyzed by FCT, I.P./JIC between payments and in the end of the project.

In cases of non-execution of the granted funding, verified in the Audit Certificates, FCT, I.P. will request the missing amounts.



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The above-mentioned reports should be submitted to [programa.agakhan@fct.pt](mailto:programa.agakhan@fct.pt).

**Note:** An Audit Certificate (proof of audit to the project expenditure) is required to accompany the Progress Report - the audit is mandatory, and audit-related costs are eligible according to Point 9.

### **17. Application of the FCT, I.P. national rules for funding of scientific and technological, and social science & humanities research projects**

This call must follow the rules indicated in this notice. With regard to specific rules or regulations, FCT, I.P. national rules for funding of scientific and technological and social science & humanities research projects (<https://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/regulamentofundosnacionais.phtml.en>) will apply, including the Budget execution norms, and diffusion and information norms for nationally Funded Projects (<http://www.fct.pt/apoios/projectos/regulamentos.phtml.en>).

### **18. Documentation to be presented**

The following documents are to be jointly submitted with the application:

- **Declaration of Commitment** duly completed, signed by the Coordinator and the Portuguese Proponent Institution
- **Evidence** of existing and on-going cooperation
- **Timetable** for the proposed activities

### **19. Contacts and Technical Support**

The correspondence between the Coordinator and FCT, I.P. concerning technical support for this call will only be accepted and considered valid if directed to the following email account: [programa.agakhan@fct.pt](mailto:programa.agakhan@fct.pt).