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Subject Third Fixed Call for Proposals under the Plan for European Cooperating States (PECS) in Malta

Ref.: ESA CfP/5-50157/25/NL/MH/yd
Activity No 1000044563 in the esa-star system

Budget Line: E/0908-15 – PECS Malta

Category: Fixed Call for Proposals

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Space Agency (the “Agency” or “ESA”) and Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta hereby invite you to submit a proposal for the above subject.

This Call for Proposals (“CfP”) has been established and will be processed following the Call for Proposals procedure [see: <https://esastar-publication.sso.esa.int/supportingDocumentation/details/37>]

Your tender is required to conform to the conditions specified in this Cover Letter and in the applicable Appendices.

Your Full Proposal shall be submitted **exclusively in electronic format via esa-star Tendering** [see: <https://esastar.sso.esa.int/>]. The CfP Tendering Conditions (“CfP/TC”), attached hereto as Appendix 2, contain further information on esa-star and its operation.

This CfP was published on esa-star Publication (<https://esastar-publication.sso.esa.int>) on the **24 November 2025** and is issued in English only.

1) Please find attached hereto the following documents:

- Appendix 1 – Draft Contract
- Appendix 2 – Call for Proposals Tendering Conditions (CfP/TC)
- Appendix 3 – Full Proposal Template (including proposal Cover Letter and Full Proposal Template)

2) Your attention is drawn to the following:

The present Call for Proposals is addressed only to legal entities of Malta registered in ESA-STAR, as prime tenderer.

While the Call for Proposals is made visible to all ESA Member States, Associate Members and European Cooperating States, the present Call for Proposals is addressed only to legal entities of Malta registered in ESA-STAR, as prime tenderer.

Potential Tenderers are therefore requested to note that the Agency can only consider proposals from legal entities residing in Malta, which operate in accordance with the laws of the Malta. However, consortia including companies and organisations within other ESA Member States may be accepted where clearly justified.

Tasks may be assigned to non-Maltese entities as sub-contracts or external services and shall in any case not constitute the core activities of the proposed study or development. "Core Activities" shall be understood to include any work generating IPR upon which a future product or service would be dependent or any significant specialist/ bespoke elements of the work that would be needed on a recurring basis to enable a recurring product or service should the development be successful.

Tasks assigned as sub-contracts outside of Malta (i.e. providing custom, bespoke or non-recurring work) shall not exceed 20% of the total price. This 20% limit does not apply to external services (standard off the shelf services involving no custom, bespoke or non-recurring work e.g. standard test services).

All work performed by non-Maltese entities, whether sub-contract or external service, shall be highlighted and fully described and scoped in the proposal.

In this document, the term 'national' shall refer to Maltese.

The total maximum budget for this CfP is: 1,575,000 Euro (one million five hundred seventy-five thousand Euro).

3) This CfP foresees the standard activity types listed below:

Type A Research and Preparatory Activities

Type B Product or Service Development (for Flight, Ground Segment or Downstream Applications)

Type D Space Science Activities

Type F Space (downstream) Applications

Type G Education Activities

G1: University Courses

G2: PhD Theses

4) The subject of this CfP is exclusively for the following activity types and the related mandatory requirements relevant to each:

Type A – Research and Preparatory Activities: (e.g. feasibility studies/demonstrators, conceptual design work, competitive landscape survey, user requirements and breadboard-based demonstrators) aimed at preparation for participation in ESA optional programmes or the initial

steps of a recurring product or service development for Space, with potential for use on future ESA missions or commercial missions.

- i) Tenderers are invited to submit proposals up to the following maximum price: a price not higher than 175,000 Euro.
- ii) TRL Requirement: Minimum start TRL 1 and Maximum end TRL 3.
- iii) Prime Contractorship: may be led by either industry, universities/research organisations or other national entities depending on the context.
- iv) Expected Duration of the activity: 9-15 months.
- v) Note: The inclusion of an end-customer is highly encouraged.

Type B – Product or Service Development (for Flight, Ground Segment or Downstream Applications): To build competences and capabilities centred on products or generic technology development with potential for re-use on ESA or commercial missions. This includes equipment (ground communication or space science payload) and optimisation of manufacturing processes (increase of Manufacturing Readiness Level). Ground equipment and mission operation systems (EGSE, MSC, OGSE, ground stations or test equipment related) may also be considered if it is clearly demonstrated that it would lead to a recurring product/service. This also includes mid-TRL downstream application developments as ‘non-hardware’ developments.

- i) Tenderers are invited to submit proposals up to a maximum price: a price not higher than 400,000 Euro for hardware development activities and a price not higher than 250,000 Euro for all other activities.
- ii) TRL Requirement: Minimum start TRL 3 and Maximum end TRL 6.
- iii) Prime Contractorship: must be led by Industry and must include a potential end customer as a subcontractor. Cooperation with Academia is encouraged.
- iv) Expected Duration of the activity: 15-24 months.

Type D – Space Science Activities: Supporting the involvement of national researchers leading to potential of future involvement in ESA science mission core team and publication of peer reviewed scientific papers.

- i) Tenderers are invited to submit proposals up to a maximum price: a price not higher than 80,000 Euro.
- ii) TRL Requirement: not applicable.
- iii) Prime Contractorship: must be led by Academia **AND MUST INCLUDE A NON-MALTESE entity with ESA core science team experience as a subcontractor.**
- iv) Expected Duration of the activity: 36 months.

Type F – Space (downstream) Applications: Products and services making use of ESA/European space infrastructure that is already existing or scheduled for operation in the near term. The goal is to ensure the introduction of a product to a first customer and to enter into customers supply chain.

- i) Tenderers are invited to submit proposals up to a maximum price to ESA: the proposals must be submitted on a co-funded basis. The work carried out by the Tenderer must be co-funded to a minimum level of 25% of the total cost of the activity. The Agency funding must **not exceed 250,000 Euro.** The amount co-funded by the Tenderer shall not include any additional co-financing from other public R&D or other public programmes. No profit is allowed on co-funded activities. The PSS forms must present the overall cost of the activity including the co-funded amount.
- ii) TRL Requirement: Minimum start TRL 5 and **must achieve TRL 8.**

- iii) Prime Contractorship: must be led by Industry with the capability to commercialise the service. **Must include an end user as subcontractor**. May include academia for technical support.
- iv) Expected Duration of the activity: no time indication foreseen.

Type G – Education Activities

G1 – University Courses leading to credits towards a qualification (BSc or MSc) in space-related topics that correspond to the needs of the national space industry and to encourage career in space and answer to national space industry needs. The proposal must aim to develop a long-term recurring course.

- i) Tenderers are invited to submit proposals up to a maximum price: a price **not higher than 75,000 Euro**.
- ii) TRL Requirement: **NOT APPLICABLE**.
- iii) Prime Contractorship: must be led by Academia. Industry must be involved as a subcontractor in the definition of the courses, practical lessons and/or topics.
- v) Expected Duration of the activity: 24-36 months.

G2 – PhD Theses: NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS CFP

Regarding Type G2 activities, Tenderers are invited to refer to the dedicated tender on co-funding opportunities for national PhD Theses, available in esa-star (reference 5-50158).

- 5) For each activity type applicable to this CfP, Tenderers are invited to submit proposals for the following maximum price indicated above. The final selected activities, after successful negotiation, will result in Firm-Fixed-Price contracts. The Agency reserves the right to conduct a pre-award audit, if deemed necessary.

Please note that the Agency will take your proposal into consideration only if the total Firm Fixed Price in Euro as defined in your Full Proposal Template – Appendix 3 (all in, with the exception of import duties and value added taxes in the ESA Member States) remains within the above-mentioned limits. The breakdown of the quoted amount(s) shall be shown in the format specified in sub-section 3.2.1 of the Full Proposal Template.

- 6) General programmatic objectives and constraints:
 - The proposed activity shall have potential for further use or development in at least one of the following:
 - ESA Mandatory activities (ESA Science programmes, technology programmes) or in ESA Optional programmes that the Country subscribes to or intends to subscribe to;
 - foster the development of space-related capabilities, especially in industry;
 - address specific niche markets (no competitive products available elsewhere in Europe or when a second source would be an asset);
 - foster the creation of strong and long-term relations between national firms and space firms in ESA Members States, Associate Members or European Cooperating States;
 - foster the creation of strong and long-term relations between national firms and national universities and research institutions.
 - In addition, the technical subject shall take into account the following special interests:
 - activities leading to cross-sectorial products/services relevant to different types of satellite missions that are used in several types of satellite platforms.
 - activities that prepare the participation of the Country in ESA Mandatory activities or in ESA Optional programmes that the Country subscribes to or intends to subscribe to;

- activities having the potential to increase competitiveness and bring long-term benefits to the national industry and to the Country in its participation in space activities;
 - activities having the potential to stimulate economic growth or other societal benefits within the Country in the medium-term (i.e., within five years) and on a long-term sustainable basis;
 - Activities having the potential to develop key space competences in the Country.
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs):
The Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) of what is being pursued with the activity must also be considered and explicitly addressed in the proposal. In principle, the proposed activity should lead to a product/application/service with national IPRs; however, this requirement may be waived when there is a clear national benefit for example in the form of the establishment of a long-term supplier relationship.
 - Duplication
Tenderers shall avoid duplication of ongoing and intended activities in ESA activities. Such duplication and overlap may lead to rejection of the proposal. Duplication of activities carried out in EU (or public) programmes may also lead to rejection. However, complementarity to these activities is allowed.
 - Infrastructure and tools
The procurement of infrastructure and generic tools (Hardware and Software) is considered out of scope of the CfP.

7) Procedure for the submission, evaluation and selection of proposals

- Please note that proposals are to be submitted by the closing date indicated below. The proposals will be opened and evaluated shortly after the mentioned closing date.
- Please note that a pre-requisite for submitting a proposal is to have completed the on-line dedicated questionnaire for being registered with the Agency as an entity wishing to do business with the Agency. Further information on the subject is provided in this Cover Letter.
- The Member States of the Agency have made it mandatory for the Agency to register economic operators wishing to do business with the Agency. Economic operators not yet registered as potential Tenderers are requested to complete the online questionnaire on the “esa-star registration” website (<https://esastar-emr.sso.esa.int/>).

Any entity, including any subcontractor in the Proposed Team at the time when a tender is submitted, is required to at least have already completed the “Light Registration” as described in the following esa-star Registration User Manual:

<https://esastar-emr.sso.esa.int/Account/DownloadFile>

Please note that only the “Full Registration” allows the Contract to be placed with the selected Tenderer.

The registration as an ESA Entity includes the obligation to subsequently fill in the Agency Questionnaire and to update it yearly at the following link:

<https://esastar-em.sso.esa.int>.



Failure to provide or update the required information will result in the access to the non-public part of esa-star being blocked.

Further information on the registration process can be found on the Industry Portal pages available at:

http://www.esa.int/About_Us/Business_with_ESA/How_to_do/esa-star_Registration_Process.

- Special attention is drawn to the Policy on the Prevention, Detection and Investigation of Fraud ESA/ADMIN/IPOL-LEGI(2021)1. The aim of the Policy is to give a structured framework to the current practice by the Agency of investigating potential cases of Fraud through investigation teams set up on an ad hoc basis. It is required that you read the Policy and that you inform your personnel about the Policy. It is mandatory that you cooperate with the investigation teams, if so required. This obligation shall be flown down by you and fulfilled by your subcontractor(s) too.

The Policy on the Prevention, Detection and Investigation of Fraud is available at: <https://esastar-publication.sso.esa.int/supportingDocumentation>

- The following steps are used to evaluate and select proposals:
 - a) Opening of the Tenders. Non-compliant proposals will be rejected and excluded from evaluation.
 - b) Evaluation of your proposal by the Agency’s Tender Evaluation Board (TEB) according to the Evaluation Criteria and associated Weighting Factors (WF) defined above.
 - c) Submission of a TEB Report Summary to Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta with:
 - i) results of the technical and scientific review of the proposals per activity type.
 - ii) corresponding ranking and recommendations per activity type.

Note:

Type	A	B	C	D	E	F	G1	G2	H
Threshold	50	55	N/A	60	N/A	60	60	N/A	N/A

For the activity types indicated above, only proposals with an overall marking equal to or above the threshold shown will be recommended to Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta for review and approval.

- d) Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta performs the programmatic review and is responsible for the approval or rejection of the proposals taking into account primarily the recommendations of the TEB.

All proposals approved by Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta shall be approved by the Industrial Policy Committee (IPC) and PECS Committee prior to the Agency entering into negotiations.

- e) For approved proposals, the Agency will either:
 - i) start the negotiation process to place a contract with the Tenderer on the basis of the submitted proposal and the comments from the TEB and Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta; or



- ii) issue a request for an updated Full Proposal, especially hardware-related activities, to those Tenderers that submitted the selected proposals; or
- iii) decide to issue a competitive invitation to tender restricted to the Tenderers positively evaluated if two or more proposals on the same subject were positively evaluated.

The contact person of the Prime Contractor mentioned in the proposal (see point 7 in the Cover Letter of the Proposal Template) will be informed in writing of the result of the CfP after a decision has been taken. If the proposal has been unsuccessful, the Tenderer may request the nominated Agency’s Contracts Officer to advise them of the reasons why the proposal has not been retained in an oral debriefing, as prescribed by Article 34 of the ESA Contracting Regulations. By way of derogation from Article 33 of the ESA Contracting Regulations, ESA is not in a position to offer any written excerpt from the ESA Tender Evaluation Board’s findings, in line with the bilateral agreement with Xjenza Malta of the Republic of Malta. Any information will be limited to the Tenderer’s own proposal.

8) The contents of your Full Proposal will be limited to filling in as necessary the Proposal Template, provided in MS Word format and attached hereto as Appendix 3. Please note that the captions in red colour are meant to guide you in correctly filling in the template and that such captions are to be removed from your tender once it is ready for submission.

- Please complete the part of the template labelled “**Cover Letter**” by filling in the blank spaces and deleting any options which are not applicable or not relevant (all such options are identified in red colour);
- As part of the tender submission process in esa-star Tendering, you will be required to make declarations in relation with “**Declaration of Compliances**” (contained in Appendix 3 to this CfP – Full Proposal Template – Cover Letter) and “**Key Acceptance Factors**”. The CfP/TC indicate the consequences in case it would appear during the evaluation that the declarations contain incorrect statements.

When submitting your tender in esa-star Tendering, in the section “Key Acceptance Factors”, you will be prompted to declare that your tender fulfils each of the following Key Acceptance Factors:

1	The Tenderer confirms, on its behalf and on behalf of its Subcontractor(s), to satisfy the “Eligibility Requirements” (see section 1.1 of the CfP/TC)
2	The Tenderer confirms, on its behalf and on behalf of its Subcontractor(s), to fulfil the requirements concerning “Free Competition” (see paragraph 12 of the Cover Letter of the Full Proposal Template)
3	The Tenderer confirms, on its behalf and on behalf of its Subcontractor(s), to accept the conditions established for “Non commitment by the Agency in competitive procurements” (see section 1.7 of the CfP/TC).
4	The Tenderer confirms, on its behalf and on behalf of its Subcontractor(s), to be compliant with the “Non Benefits Requirements” (see section 1.8 of the CfP/TC);
5	The Tenderer confirms that the tender Cover Letter and the Full Proposal contain a binding price;

6	The Tenderer confirms that the tender Cover Letter and the Full Proposal contain a price type compliant with the one requested in the CfP;
7	The Tenderer confirms that the tender is compliant with the budgetary limit applicable to the CfP;
8	The Tenderer confirms that its legal entity is registered in Malta;
9	The Tenderer confirms that it accepts the non-negotiable contract conditions.

- Please complete the part of the template labelled “**Full Proposal**” in all its parts by filling in the information relevant to the various chapters, sections and sub-sections (using exactly the same headings, same subject matters, same order and same numbering);
 - Your Full Proposal is expected to elaborate upon the Agency’s requirements whilst remaining precise and concise. Therefore, mere repetitions of the Agency’s requirements are to be avoided;
 - Your tender and all correspondence relating to it shall be in English.
 - Please ensure that your tender complies with the following essential requirements:
 - As concerns the acceptance of your tender by ESA, please note that full compliance with the contract conditions, as contained in the draft Contract, is expected in order for your tender to be considered for Contract award.
 - a) Your tender is valid during a period of fourteen (14) months from the time limit for tender submission.
 - b) The total number of pages for the proposal **shall not exceed 25**. These 25 pages exclude the Cover Letter, the PSS forms and Annexes (if any). Annexes, if included, shall not be taken into account for the marking but are only used to assess the veracity of the statements in the 25-page limit.
 - c) In “esa-star”, the submission shall contain two separate documents:
 - Document 1: The signed Cover Letter;
 - Document 2: One single file collating the signed Cover Letter, the proposal, the signed PSS forms and Annexes, if any, **in a searchable PDF format**.
 - d) You and your subcontractor(s) completed at least the “Light Registration” in esa-star Registration.
 - e) The “consortium structure” in esa-star mirrors the Proposed Team in your tender.
- 9) Number of proposals for submission per Tenderer

The number of proposals per Tenderer (as prime contractor) **shall be restricted to a maximum of 2 (two)** independent and unrelated proposals.

Note: Regarding the maximum number of proposals to be submitted, only the Prime Contractor of the proposal will be considered as Tenderer. In the case of a university or large government funded research organisation, the faculties’ departments or institutes can be considered as separate tendering entities (Business Unit).

- 10) As concerns the evaluation of your tender by ESA, please note that the quality of your tender will be evaluated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria and associated Weighting Factors (“WFs”) (that are also mirrored in esa-star Tendering):

No.	Criteria	Weighting Factors %
1	Clarity of the technical objectives and definition of the requirements for the proposed work. Quality of engineering approach and discussion of problem areas. Quality and suitability of proposed programme of work. Background and experience of the entity/entities related to the particular field concerned, including adequacy of proposed facilities. Adequacy of the key personnel for the execution of the work.	40%
2	Prospects for use in ESA programmes and long term benefit for Malta. Consistency with programmatic objectives and constraints as described in the Cover Letter. Adequacy of the current and targeted maturity status of the development.	30%
3	Adequacy of management approach. Rationale of the industrial organisation. Credibility of the cost estimation and the proposed planning of the work.	25%
4	Compliance with the administrative tender conditions of the call for proposals and acceptance of the draft contract. Compliance with the IPR requirements of the Call.	5%

Please also note that, in making its recommendation for selection of a Contractor on the basis of the tender evaluation and/or in making a final decision for Contract award, the Agency shall also take into consideration the price quoted (amount).

- 11) In accordance with the Agency’s rules, issuing this CfP does not bind ESA in any way to place a Contract. Should it deem it appropriate, ESA also reserves the right to place a Contract for only a part of the proposed activity. Such decision by the Agency may not give rise to any claims by Tenderers having submitted a tender in response to this CfP.
- 12) Please note that economic operators are required to notify their interest to tender to the Agency. This is to be done via the esa-star Publication Expression of Interest function.

Any questions to the Agency relating to this CfP (clarification requests) shall be made exclusively via the dedicated function in esa-star Tendering, at the latest fourteen (14) calendar days before the closing date stated below.

The Agency will publish an anonymous copy of the question on esa-star Publication together with the Agency’s answer, and the question and answer shall also be available in the dedicated section of esa-star Tendering. Tenderers are asked to note that each response which the Agency makes

goes through an internal review process, and that the response will be published once this internal review process has been completed.

If required, the Agency may request clarifications from any Tenderer; such Agency's requests shall be made exclusively via the dedicated function in esa-star Tendering.

The corresponding clarification from a Tenderer shall be provided exclusively via the dedicated function in esa-star Tendering and must be received within three (3) calendar days of the submission of the request, if no other period is stated. Clarifications shall not be regarded as amendments or modifications of the tender

- 13) Please note the provisions of the Submission Conditions that are contained in the CfP/TC.

In order to ensure the correct and timely submission of your tender, you are strongly invited to test the esa-star system and try out its functionalities and behaviour well in advance during the tendering period (please refer to Annex II of the CfP/TC).

The tender is successfully submitted when the status of the proposal in esa-star Tendering reads "submitted", i.e. when each section in the dashboard (Declaration of Compliance, Key Acceptance Factors and Consortium Structure) reads "completed" and all required proposal documents read "uploaded" and you click on "submit proposal to ESA".

Your tender and all supporting documents must be loaded and submitted in esa-star Tendering not later than the **23 January 2026 at 13:00 hours (Amsterdam time zone)**.

- 14) The submitted tender Cover Letter shall be signed by the authorised representative(s) of the Tenderer.
- 15) Should your tender be approved for placing a Contract, it is envisaged to have the negotiation meeting by teleconference shortly after notification to you of the Agency's intention. Assuming a successful outcome, the Contract will first be signed electronically by the Agency and then sent to you for countersignature within the shortest possible delay.

This Cover Letter has been electronically signed

Yours faithfully,

Marnix Houten,
Head of Support Activities Contract Service,
Contracts Department