

COVID-19 R&D Fund

At the beginning of April 2020, over 1 million active COVID-19 cases with over 59,000 deaths were reported. By early June 2020, cases soared to over 7 million with over 400,000 deaths affecting over 200 countries. Different trends were observed in different regions, with the situation stabilising in some, while still peaking in others. Due to the observed socio-economic impact, the European Commission (EC) adopted the Temporary Framework for State Aid Measures to Support the Economy in the Current COVID-19 Outbreak which enables Member States to administer State Aid funds. Through this framework the Maltese Ministry for Finance and Financial Services and the Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Businesses, took the opportunity to launch a national COVID-19 Research and Development (R&D) Fund.

The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) and Malta Enterprise (ME) came together to administer the COVID-19 R&D Fund. Both governmental entities are well-known key enablers that manage national funds that help support research, innovation and development undertaken by public, private and academic entities. The COVID-19 R&D fund will see **€5.3M** funnelled into developing innovative and improved scientific and technological approaches to the challenges raised by COVID-19 and future pandemics. Interested project ideas must have a clear COVID-19 link and encompass an inherent research uncertainty that is explored through one of the three parameters that define R&D i.e.:

- **Fundamental research:** experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any direct commercial application or use in view;
- **Industrial research:** investigative work aimed at developing new or improving on existing products, processes, and services;

- **Experimental development:** the acquisition and combination on existing scientific knowledge with the aim of prototyping, demonstrating, piloting and validating new or improved products.

Interested applicants must have an operating base in Malta and may apply under one of two routes:

1. State Aid support under the Temporary Framework for applicants that are undertakings and/or where the project proposal is deemed to be of an economic nature;
2. Non-State Aid route which applies to public entities and where the project proposal is deemed to be non-economic in nature.

The aid intensity varies, depending on the route taken. If approved, Non-State Aid applications may receive funding with an aid intensity of up to 100%, while State Aid applications may receive funding with an aid intensity between 80% to 100% depending on the applicable R&D definition chosen. The COVID-19 R&D Fund has no grant size capping, hence interested applicants may apply for as large a sum as necessary to fulfil their project needs.

This is an open call which will run till the 30th of November 2020. Eligible projects must have started not earlier than the 1st of February and not later than the 31st of December 2020. There is no minimum duration, however the maximum duration of the project is 18 months. Interested applicants may find more details related to the Rules for Participation and Application form here: <https://mcst.gov.mt/ri-programmes/covid-19-rd-fund/> or <https://covid19.maltaenterprise.com/covid-19-rd-fund/>. Any specific queries related to the aforementioned documents and Fund can be forwarded to ri.mcst@gov.mt.

COVID-19 R&D FUND **€5.3 Million**

Call for applications is now open. Public, academic and private entities are invited to apply.



The Malta Council for
Science & Technology

