

## FREQUENT ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### CALL 01/C05-I02/2022

**Investment RE-C05-i02: Interface Mission**

**Expression of Interest**

**Invitation to submission**

Version: 2

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## INVESTMENT RE-C05-I02: INTERFACE Mission

### Questions & Answers

#### 1. GENERAL TOPICS

##### 1.1. What does the public support through the Interface Mission consist of?

Public base support through Interface Mission is oriented towards the base funding of two types of Interface institutions, namely the Technology and Innovation Center (CTI) and the Collaborative Laboratories (CoLAB). This public base funding should support general expenditures, the hiring and qualification of human resources, acquisition and modernization of equipment, among other specified in point 4.2.

##### 1.2. CoLABs need to request recognition as a CTI to access this funding?

The recognition of the title of Collaborative Laboratory, “CoLAB” is awarded by the FCT and is a process distinct from the recognition of CTI. Until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2021, FCT awarded this “CoLAB” title to 35 institutions, which can now apply for the Interface Mission. In parallel with this process, the recognition of CTI and its future funding is taking place.

##### 1.3. How is the duration of the contract compatible with the validity of the CoLAB award title?

The title of CoLAB is valid for five years, as stipulated in the terms agreed between CoLAB and the FCT. The revalidation process will be conducted by FCT, as foreseen in the rules and regulations available at:

<https://www.fct.pt/apoios/CoLAB/index.phtml.en>.

Within the scope of this call and the associated evaluation process, the international panel may propose to FCT the extension of the CoLAB title.

## 2. ACCESS CONDITIONS

### 2.1. Which entities may be beneficiaries under this call?

This call is addressed to the 35 CoLABs recognized until December 31, 2021, by FCT. The list of 35 CoLABs is published in the following link:

[https://www.fct.pt/apoios/CoLAB/docs/Documento\\_Sintese\\_35Colabs.pdf](https://www.fct.pt/apoios/CoLAB/docs/Documento_Sintese_35Colabs.pdf)

### 2.2. CoLAB partners and/or associates may have a budget allocated for the development of specific activities within the scope of this call?

No, this call is intended exclusively for CoLABs recognized by FCT.

### 2.3. What does the “Principle of Additionality” consist of?

The “Principle of Additionality” ensures that expenses eligible for funding to be allocated through the Recovery and Resilience Plan cannot include the replacement of expenses normally financed by private or public, national or community funds.

### 2.4. Can CoLABs with ongoing operations to hire highly qualified human resources in Regional Operational Programs be able to apply for this call or can they only apply when the respective operations are finished?

CoLABs with ongoing operations to hire highly qualified human resources can and should apply for this notice, ensuring that resources financed by other sources of funding do not incur double funding.

## 3. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

### 3.1. The expression of interest must be written in Portuguese or English?

The application must be written in English, considering that the evaluation panel is international (PDF document, maximum 30 pages, Arial 11, A4). The page for submitting expressions of interest can be accessed [here](#).

**3.2. The investment plan to be presented must only include the base public funding or must present the overall investment plan, considering the evolution of the funding model based on the 1/3+1/3+1/3 distribution?**

The investment plan to be submitted with the expression of interest must consider the totality of the investments foreseen during the duration of the contract. This plan must be accompanied by a budget associated with the activities provided for in the expression of interest, distributed every six months by investment items.

The evaluation of the plan and the final attribution of the value to be attributed through the Mission Interface to the public base funding will be made based on the credibility and validation of the various sources of funding.

In other words, public investment through the Interface Mission will be oriented towards guaranteeing around 1/3 of the total annual funding of the interface institutions until 2026, with the objective that the institutions guarantee the remaining annual funding through: i) other own revenues for service provision activities with companies and/or the public administration, at a local, regional, national or international level (1/3); and ii) funding from public sources of a competitive nature, national and international (1/3). Therefore, it is intended to adopt the best international practices for interface institutions, ensuring the stability and predictability of the public base funding component, in conjunction with an effort to diversify the institutions' sources of funding.

**3.3. The demonstration of the regularized situation regarding the exercise of activity (certified accounts) must be carried out at the end of phase 1 or 2 of the application?**

The situation must be regularized until the contract is signed.

**3.4. How the allocation of human resources to the activities proposed in the Action Plan is expected to be demonstrated?**

Human resources must be clearly related to the activities described in the action plan in terms of person/month effort.

**3.5. The allocation to the activities proposed in the action plan prevents the allocation of human resources to other projects (e.g., PT2020, H. Europe, among others)?**

If human resources are funded through Interface Mission, they may be involved in activities of other (co)funded projects with an allocation of €0 to these projects. Double funding must be avoided.

**3.6. Should competitive projects (ongoing or future) be expressly included in the Action Plan?**

Specific projects should be identified, if relevant to the action plan.

**3.7. What should be considered the starting year that will serve as a reference for the analysis of impact indicators?**

The reference year shall be the year immediately prior to the start year of the contract.

**3.8. Recommended salary levels will be the same as the Regional Operational Programs calls?**

Under this call, there is no specific recommendation in terms of salary remuneration, except the cases specified in [Decree-Law No. 57/2016](#) amended by [Law No. 57/2017](#). However, it is emphasized that one of the objectives of the Interface Mission is to support the integration of human resources in CoLABs' highly specialized activities, and it is expected that, in this framework, the hiring and remuneration policy are compatible with the profile of the human resources recruited and the complexity of the functions developed.

**3.9. Is it possible to involve in the Interface Mission other entities that are partners of CoLAB, but that are not legally associated with it?**

Paragraph 3 of point 4 of the call includes the possibility for CoLABs to enter into partnership agreements with companies or with the public administration to strengthen their connection with

public or private employers, in addition to the institutional relationship with the associates of each CoLAB.

These agreements are not mandatory but are recommended to validate and confirm the CoLAB funding sources complementary to public base funding.

## 4. FUNDING

### 4.1. What is the eligibility period for expenses?

Expenses associated with expressions of interest selected for funding are considered eligible if incurred by March 31, 2026, and effectively paid by June 30, 2026, without prejudice to other expenditure eligibility rules, namely those contained in legislation applicable European and national legislation and those relating to State aid. The eligibility start date is the one established in the terms of the contract between the European Commission and the Portuguese State, and it is possible to accept expenses actually paid since February 20, 2020.

### 4.2. What are the expenses considered eligible under this call?

The expenses considered eligible are those shown in point 5 of the Call, namely:

- Overheads.
- Expenses with human resources allocated to the proposed activities, under different modalities and under the legal terms in force.
- Expenses associated with the implementation of the activities proposed in the action plan, such as the acquisition of consumables, intangible investments, training of human resources, national and international travel and missions, integration and participation in national and international networks and platforms, among others fundamental to implementation of the proposed action plan.
- Restoration, modernization and adaptation of infrastructure and facilities, as well as the acquisition and modernization of equipment. This item must not exceed 50% of the total eligible expenses.



#### **4.3. Is VAT eligible?**

No. According to point 5.2. of the Call that establishes the typology of ineligible expenses, the Value Added Tax (VAT), recoverable or not by the beneficiary, is not eligible under this support.

#### **4.4. Is it possible to integrate different NUTSII teams with different start date?**

Yes. Each Colab can and must evolve in terms of its territorial expression.

#### **4.5. Regarding the acquisition of tangible and intangible assets and the recovery of facilities, the acquisition amount or amortization costs are eligible?**

Both are eligible, as long as the contributions are duly accounted for under the legal terms in force and included in the official accounts of the CoLAB duly certified by ROC.

#### **4.6. There will be retroactivity of the base funding for CoLABs that have not yet received any funding to hire highly qualified human resources?**

Under the rules set out in the Recovery and Resilience Plan, expenses are eligible, if actually paid, as of February 20, 2020.

#### **4.7. Will 1/3 of the amount presented in the investment plan be financed?**

The funding to be allocated will consider the global investment plan presented and the allocations already allocated. For CoLABs already financed through the measure of hiring highly qualified human resources (PT2020) and FCT between 2018 and 2021, the global investment plan must consider the funding already allocated, as well as the global budget referred to in the proposal that allowed the attribution of the title of CoLAB. In the case of the most recently recognized CoLABs and not yet financed through the hiring of highly qualified human resources (PT2020) and the FCT, the global investment plan must be based on the funding recommendations of the evaluation panel within the scope of the process of recognition and attribution of the title of CoLAB.

It is reinforced and repeated that public investment through the Interface Mission will be oriented to guarantee about 1/3 of the total annual funding of the interface institutions until 2026, with

the objective that the institutions guarantee the remaining annual funding through: i) other own income from service provision activities with companies and/or the public administration, at a local, regional, national or international level (1/3); and ii) funding from public sources of a competitive nature, national and international (1/3). Therefore, it is intended to adopt the best international practices for interface institutions, ensuring the stability and consistency of the public base funding component, in conjunction with an effort to diversify the institutions' sources of funding.

Note that there is no limit in the budget of the application, but the plans must be realistic and made with the necessary credibility and reasonableness and adequate to the described funding model of 1/3+1/3+1/3.

#### **4.8. There will be some additional contribution from the FCT, similar to what happened in the first triennium of CoLAB funding?**

No. FCT support only exists to complement PT2020 support to highly qualified human resources and will only be maintained until the end of current contracts.

The PRR Interface Mission now finances the total base public funding of CoLABs for this new funding period until 2026

#### **4.9. Will eligible expenses be 100% funded?**

The funding rate is 100%. The support to be granted within the scope of this Notice takes the form of a grant (non-refundable), and the rules relating to state aid must be respected.

#### **4.10. How the support received falls under the State Aid rules?**

The support granted under this Notice is part of State aid to support the non-economic activity of the entity, under the terms of the European Commission Communication (2014/C198/01), on the framework of State aid for research, development and innovation.

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**4.11. CoLABs must have a cost separation model between economic and non-economic activities?**

Yes, this model must be based on the adoption of a simplified total costing analytical system for allocating costs to economic and non-economic activities, allowing the identification of annually (during each of the years of carrying out the action and investment plan) the total direct cost incurred with the projects/activities and the identification of the total indirect costs at the entity level, which must be subsequently allocated to the projects/activities/account, according to an allocation criterion based on the relative weight of the costs of each activity.

**4.12. The call mentions the separation of indirect costs into economic and non-economic parts but does not specify them as eligible costs. Indirect costs are eligible?**

Overheads are eligible.

**4.13. What are non-economic activities?**

Non-economic activities can be considered:

- a) Technological anticipation and support for the definition of public policies, such as:
  - i) Definition of strategies for sectors or clusters of competitiveness, including in terms of training human resources, in particular in areas related to digital transformation technologies and sustainability.
  - ii) Preparation of studies and strategic documents.
  - iii) Development of actions to monitor market opportunities, technological marketing and technological and consumer trends.
  - iv) Surveillance of intellectual property rights.
  
- b) Collective actions to implement public policies, such as:
  - i) Promotion of internationalization and international recognition of companies and competitiveness sectors or clusters.
  - ii) Participation in national and international networks.
  - iii) Promotion of intellectual property protection.

- iv) Promotion and support for standardization and attestation of conformity, including certification.
- v) Dissemination of relevant information for companies in the sector or competitiveness cluster.
- vi) Technological demonstration, provision of demonstration infrastructure and pilot installations.

#### **4.14. How will funding be made available?**

The terms of the funding delivery model will be included in the contract, namely about the frequency of payments, reporting requirements and deadlines.

## **5. DIVERSIFICATION OF FUNDING SOURCES**

### **5.1. Is in-kind funding from CoLAB partners no longer mandatory?**

The terms agreed in the process of recognition and attribution of the title of CoLAB by the FCT are maintained.

### **5.2. The calculation of the financing model based on the 1/3+1/3+1/3 distribution accounts for the contribution of associates through contributions, donations and/or others or only the activities of provision of services in the financing component associated with the generation own recipes??**

Yes, as long as the contributions are duly accounted for under the legal terms in force and included in the official accounts of the CoLAB duly certified by ROC.

### **5.3. Contributions from “in-kind” partners, for example the donation or lease of a building, can be counted for the calculation of the funding model based on the 1/3+1/3+1/3 distribution?**

Yes, as long as the contributions are duly accounted under the legal terms in force and included in the official accounts of the CoLAB duly certified by ROC.

**5.4. How is the subsidy calculation made compatible, considering the trend towards 1/3+1/3+1/3 and the 100% financing rate for non-economic activities?**

The Interface Mission finances 100% of the expenses considered eligible and which necessarily correspond to the development of non-economic activities.

**5.5. As VAT is not considered an eligible expense in the base funding or in many other competitive fundings, will it be accounted in the 1/3 market/other sources component?**

No. The diversification of funding sources (1/3 base funding+1/3 competitive funding+1/3 market/own resources) is accounted through the funding inflows and not the expenses incurred by the CoLAB.