



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENTS

GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



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2nd H.F.R.I. Call

for the procurement of high-value research equipment

1st Amendment

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HISTORY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

PUBLICATION DATE		PAGES
17.02.2023	Initial Version	
01.03.2023	1st Amendment	
	Section 3 Update of the table regarding the lower budget limits for each Scientific Area	7-8

The Director of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation**Having regard to:**

1. Law 4429/2016 (OGG A' 199) on the "Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation and other provisions", as in force, and especially articles 2(1), 5(2) to (9), 8(9) and (10) and 9(7) thereof;
2. Decision No. 195245/15.11.2018 issued by the Ministers of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, as well as Finance and Administrative Reconstruction on the "Internal Rules of Operation of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.)" (OGG B' 5252), as in force, and especially articles 33 and 39 thereof;
3. Decision No. 63434 issued by the Deputy Minister of Development and Investments on the "a) Amendment of Ministerial Decision No. 69615-3/5/2018, b) Approval of the annual planning of actions and resource allocation of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) for 2022 (OGG B' 3369),
4. Decision No. 38750/21.04.2022 issued by the Deputy Minister for Development and Investments, whereby Dr. Aikaterini Kouravelou was appointed Director of the H.F.R.I. (Issue for Specially Positioned Employees and Administrative Bodies of Public or Broader Public Sector Entities No. 335),
5. Law 4820/2021 "Institutional Law of the Hellenic Court of Audit and other provisions" (OGG A' 130) and specifically articles 189 to 204 thereof,
6. Law 4310/2014 (OGG A' 258) on "Research, technological development and innovation and other provisions", as in force;
7. Law 4485/2017 on the "Organization and operation of higher education, regulations on research and other provisions" (OGG A' 114), as in force;
8. Law 4957/2022 on "New Horizons in Higher Educational Institutions: Strengthening the quality, functionality and connection of Higher Educational Institutions with society and other provisions" (OGG A' 141), as in force,
9. Law 3187/2003 on "Higher Military Educational Institutions (ASEI)" (OGG A' 233), as in force;
10. article 35(9) of Law 4589/2019 "Synergies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the Agricultural University of Athens, the University of Thessaly with the Technological Educational Institutes of Thessaly and Central Greece, the Panlimniako Fund and other provisions" (OGG A' 13), as in force,
11. the Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2016/C 262/01),
12. the Commission Communication on the "Framework on state aid for research and development and innovation" (C(2022) 7388 final 19-10-2022),

13. the (EU) Regulation No. 651/2014 of the European Commission of June 17th, 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (OJ EU L 187 of 26.6.2014),
14. the (EU) Regulation No. 1407/2013 of the European Commission of December 18th 2013 on the implementation of articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (OJ EU L 352 of 24.12.2013),
15. the opinion No.13954-14-02-2023/14.02.2023 (ΓΝ 183/2023) of the Special State Aid & Funding Tools Service (EYKE-XE) on the Plan of the 2nd H.F.R.I. Call for the procurement of high-value research equipment in response to the relevant e-mail by H.F.R.I. on 07.02.2023,
16. The fact that the Action's budget is funded by H.F.R.I.'s budget and more specifically is covered by resources coming from the Agreement dated 15.07.2016 between the Hellenic Republic and the European Investment Bank;
17. Decision No. 7886/21.12.2018 issued by the 39th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council on the "Approval of the assumption of multi-year obligations" (IUN: 78E046M77Γ-Φ37), as in force and following its 13th amendment by Decision No. 60966/23.01.2023 issued by the 140th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council; (IUN:656A46M77Γ-3ΥΨ),
18. Decision No. 125385-22-12-22/22.12.2022 of the Minister of Development and Investments on approving H.F.R.I.'s budget for the financial year 2023 (IUN:ΨΤΩΞ46ΜΤΑΡ-Z7E),
19. Decision No. 61583/03.02.2023 adopted by the H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council at its 141st meeting on the 2nd Reform of the H.F.R.I.'s detailed budget for the financial year 2023 (IUN: Ψ2Z546M77Γ-Λ89) and
20. Decision No.61655/06.02.2023 of the 140th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council on approving a plan for a 2nd H.F.R.I. Call for the procurement of high-value research equipment.

INVITES

The interested potential beneficiaries to submit proposals under the Call titled "2nd H.F.R.I. Call for the procurement of high-value research equipment", in line with the terms and conditions presented below.

1. OBJECTIVE AND GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE ACTION

The aim of this Call is to support research activity in Greece through the procurement of high-value research equipment, i.e. a total cost of at least 200,000€ (except for the case of equipment in Scientific Areas 6, 7 and 9).

Research equipment means an instrument or a set of instruments, as well as access to resources such as repositories of scientific knowledge that allow the dissemination of information, networks/information systems and software that are necessary for research activity in the respective scientific fields.

Principal Investigators (PI) of the Projects can be Faculty Members (article 140 of Law 4957/2022) of Higher Educational Institutions and Higher Military Educational Institutions in Greece, as well as Researchers of Research Centres - Institutes (RC-I, article 18 of Law 4310/2014) and University Research Institutes (URI) of Greece.

The research equipment should be of strategic importance, and it should strengthen or expand/complement the Host Institution's existing research structures, as well as be connected to the PI's research activities.

A mandatory deliverable of the Projects will be the receipt, installation and proper operation of the equipment.

Host Institutions (HI) of the Projects may be Higher Educational Institutions, Research Centres - Institutes (RC-I), University Research Institutes (U.R.I.), University Research Centres (U.R.C.) and Higher Military Educational Institutions in Greece.

The proposed Projects ("Proposals") will be included in one of the two (2) categories below depending on the time that has passed since the appointment of the Project's PI in the rank they hold.

Category I: Projects of newly appointed Faculty Members or Researchers of any rank in Higher Educational Institutions, Higher Military Educational Institutions, RC-Is and University Research Institutes, respectively, who have been appointed to the corresponding position in the last five (5) years.

Category II: Projects of Faculty Members and Researchers of any rank in Higher Educational Institutions, Higher Military Educational Institutions, RC-Is and University Research Institutes, respectively, that do not fall under Category I.

The action is adapted to the specific characteristics of the research effort in each of the scientific areas covered and no thematic or geographical restrictions of any kind apply.

In particular, the type and value of the equipment that is necessary for the research activity in the respective SAs was taken into account, when determining the minimum and maximum Budget limits in the different Scientific Areas (SAs).

The Projects to be funded will be selected through an evaluation process. The Proposals will be assessed by Evaluation Committees (EC), which will consist of renowned scientists, specialised in the SA of the research covered by the Call, as well as of independent experts, if deemed necessary, and in line with the provisions of article 5 (6) of Law 4429/2016, as amended and in force. The whole process is governed by strict rules of confidentiality, which are binding for all participating parties. According to article 35(9)

of Law 4589/2019, the approval of the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (GSRI) is required for the funding of high-value equipment.

This Call is part of H.F.R.I.'s action programme in line with Decision No. 63434 issued by the Deputy Minister of Development and Investments on the "a) Amendment of Ministerial Decision No. 69615-3/5/2018, b) Approval of the annual planning of actions and resource allocation of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) for 2022" (OGG B' 3369).

2. SCIENTIFIC AREAS (SA)

Each Proposal may be submitted in one (1) of the following broad Scientific Areas:

SA.1. Physical Sciences

SA.2. Engineering Sciences and Technology

SA.3. Life Sciences

SA.4. Agricultural Sciences – Food Science & Technology

SA.5. Mathematics & Information Sciences

SA.6. Social Sciences

SA.7. Humanities & Arts

SA.8. Environment & Energy

SA.9. Management & Economics of Innovation

3. PROJECT FUNDING BUDGET AND LIMITS

The total public expenditure for the Call amounts to **7,560,000.00€**.

The funding limits of each Project are defined according to the Scientific Area in which it is submitted, based on the following *Table 1*:

Table 1. Project funding limits per Scientific Area

Scientific Area (SA)	Funding limits (€)
SA.1 Physical Sciences	210,000€ – 450,000€
SA.2 Engineering Sciences and Technology	210,000€ – 450,000€
SA.3 Life Sciences	210,000€ – 450,000€

SA.4 Agricultural Sciences – Food Science & Technology	210,000€ – 450,000€
SA.5 Mathematics & Information Sciences	210,000€ – 450,000€
SA.6 Social Sciences	31,500€ – 80,000€
SA.7 Humanities & Arts	31,500€ – 80,000€
SA.8 Environment & Energy	210,000€ – 450,000€
SA.9 Management & Economics of Innovation	31,500€ – 80,000€

The allocation of the available budget per Category (I and II) and per Scientific Area will be determined by a relevant decision of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council.

4. DURATION OF PROJECTS

- The proposed Projects may have a duration of up to **24 months**.
- Costs for each Project may be incurred from its start date.

5. PREVENTION OF DOUBLE FUNDING

A necessary condition for a Project to be funded is that it shall not have received or is not currently receiving funding by any means from any other institution for its full scope or part thereof. Synergies with other Projects shall only be permitted on the basis of complementarity and given that there is a clearly defined and separate role with regard to the scope of the respective Projects, in order to fully ensure the prevention of double funding.

6. ENSURING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

In all stages of the evaluation process pertaining to the Proposal as well as during the funding and implementation of the Project, PIs and Research Team members should behave in line with rules of ethics and deontology and with respect for the scientific truth, the academic freedom, the human dignity, the environment, as well as the intellectual and industrial property. Any case of unethical scientific conduct shall be examined and may lead to exclusion from the evaluation process or to the revocation of the Funding Award Decision. In particular, the appropriation, falsification, plagiarism and misleading presentation of third-party scientific data and achievements is prohibited.

7. PUBLIC FUNDING OF NON-FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES OF RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Funding under this Action does not constitute state aid and amounts to a percentage of 100% when the projects' HIs are "Research Organisations" and carry out activities of a non-financial nature as specifically mentioned below:

According to the definition of Article 1.3 of the Communication of the European Commission titled "Framework on state aid for research and development and innovation" (2014/C 198/01), point (ee), a "research and knowledge dissemination organisation" or "research organisation" is an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities) irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development, or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer.

Additionally, according to article 2.1.1 point 19 of the above Communication of the European Commission, a Research Organisation carries out activities of a non-economic character under the following conditions:

Its main activities are one or more of the following:

- education for more and better skilled human resources,
- independent R&D for more knowledge and better understanding,
- wide dissemination of research results on a non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis, for example through teaching, open-access databases, open publications or open software.

and/or

knowledge transfer activities, where they are conducted either by the research organisation or research infra-structure (including their departments or subsidiaries) or jointly with, or on behalf of other such entities, and where all profits from those activities are reinvested in the primary activities of the research organisation or research infrastructure. The non-economic nature of those activities is not prejudiced by contracting the provision of corresponding services to third parties by way of open tenders.

Furthermore, where a research organisation is used for both economic and non-economic activities, public funding falls under State aid rules only insofar as it covers costs linked to the economic activities. In this case, in order for the public funding of non-economic activities not to be considered state aid, both types of activities as well as the costs, the funding and their revenues from the provision of services or the sale of goods must be clearly separated and monitored by an accountant, so that the subsidisation of the economic activity is not covered by the subsidisation of the non-financial activity (cross-subsidisation).

Finally, where the research organisation is used almost exclusively for a non-economic activity, its funding may fall outside State aid rules in its entirety, provided that the economic use remains purely ancillary, that is to say corresponds to an activity which is directly related to and necessary for the operation of the research organisation or research infrastructure or intrinsically linked to its main non-economic use, and which is limited in scope. For the purposes of this framework, the Commission will consider this to be the case where the economic activities consume exactly the same inputs (such as material, equipment, labour and fixed capital) as the non-economic activities and the capacity allocated each year to such economic activities does not exceed 20% of the relevant entity's overall annual capacity (point 20 of the Communication of the European Commission, 2014/C 198/01).

In the event that the research infrastructure receiving funding is used to carry out both non-financial and financial activities, then the potential beneficiaries should provide the aid awarding institution with a business plan. This plan will show the use of the infrastructure after its development/upgrade/extension and mention the use percentages for non-financial and financial activities on an annual basis from the completion of the specific project and onward. In case it is established, based on the business plan's annual forecasts, that at a given time the economic activities may exceed 20% of the total annual capacity, the aid awarding institution must implement a monitoring and recovery mechanism (claw – back mechanism). This mechanism will be able to recover the public funding part that concerns economic activity, since in case the economic activity exceeds 20% it ceases to be considered ancillary and is subject to the state aid rules. In this case it can be supported by article 26 of the EU Reg. 651/2014 “Investment Aid for research infrastructures” in line with the terms and conditions of this article.

8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The terms and conditions of participation in this Call are as follows:

8.1 Principal investigator (PI)

Each Proposal is submitted by one (1) Principal Investigator (PI) of the Project, who belongs to the HI's regular staff.

In particular:

For Category I Proposals, the PI must be a Faculty Member (by virtue of par. 1 of article 140 of Law 4957/2022) or a Researcher (by virtue of article 18 of Law 4310/2014) of any rank, provided that on the Proposal submission start date, no more than (5) years have passed since the publication date of their initial appointment to the HI in the Official Government Gazette.

For Category II Proposals, the PI must be a Faculty Member (by virtue of par. 1 of article 140 of Law 4957/2022) or a Researcher (by virtue of article 18 of Law 4310/2014) of any rank and not fall into Category I.

Those who have been elected to the corresponding position but the decision of their appointment has not been issued do not have the right to participate in this Call as PIs.

Faculty members who carry out a research project in a RC-I as collaborating research staff or in a URI can designate the RC-I or URI, with which they collaborate, respectively, as a HI.

Professors Emeriti or retired professors and Researchers may not participate in this Call.

The PI may submit only one (1) Proposal.

PIs of category IIIa and IIIb projects funded under the “1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty Members & Researchers and Procure High-Value Research Equipment” cannot participate in the present Call.

Failure to meet the above requirements entails the ineligibility for the Proposal's evaluation.

8.2 Host Institution (HI) – Beneficiary of funding

The following institutions are defined as Host Institutions under this Call:

- Higher Educational Institutions (AEI) of Greece as specified under article 3 of Law 4957/2022 (OGG A' 141), as in force.
- Research Centres – Institutes (RC-I) of article 13a of Law 4310/2014 (OGG A' 258), as in force.
- University Research Institutes (URI), i.e. legal persons governed by private law, established by virtue of the provisions of Laws 2083/1992 (OGG A' 159) and 3685/2008 (OGG A' 148).
- Higher Military Educational Institutions (ASEI) of Law 3187/2003 (OGG A' 233).

When submitting the Proposal, the PI must declare the details of the HI.

All potential HIs shall be available for selection on the online submission platform in the form of a drop-down menu allowing only one selection.

In case of funding, the PI must submit a Project acceptance certificate by the HI (Letter of Commitment).

Failure to submit the Project acceptance certificate by the HI renders the Proposal non-eligible for funding.

9. BUDGET AND CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBLE COSTS

The Project budget is broken down into the following direct and indirect costs.

In order to be considered eligible, each cost should fall under the terms described in the present Section and be provisioned in the Proposal. Cost eligibility begins on the Project start date.

The allowed budget limits per cost category for the projects in SAs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 are presented in *Table 2*, while for SAs 6, 7 and 9 in *Table 3*.

Table 2. Funding by cost category for Projects in SAs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

Cost Category	Restrictions
DIRECT COSTS	
Equipment costs	≥ 200,000€
Other costs	≤ 5% of the Equipment Costs
INDIRECT COSTS	= 5% of the direct costs

Table 3. Funding by cost category for Projects in SAs 6, 7, 9

Cost Category	Restrictions
DIRECT COSTS	
Equipment costs	≥ 30,000€
Other costs	≤ 5% of the Equipment Costs
INDIRECT COSTS	= 5% of the direct costs

9.1 Direct costs

The Project's direct costs include the equipment procurement costs and other costs.

9.1.1. Equipment costs

Eligible in this category are costs for the procurement of new or the upgrading of existing equipment as well as maintenance costs and/or costs deemed necessary to ensure the correct and safe operation of the equipment.

High-value research equipment is considered to be either an instrument or an array of instruments and their accessories, which are absolutely necessary for the operation of the instrument(s). It is pointed out that in the case of an array of instruments, the synergy and complementarity of the different instruments

should be demonstrated. Lastly, the said equipment (instrument or array of instruments) must have a total cost of at least 200,000€. Especially in the case of Proposals that will be submitted in the Scientific Areas 6, 7 and 9, the above minimum limit on the equipment's total cost does not apply and the equipment cost may be at least 30,000€.

Furthermore, equipment means access to resources such as repositories of scientific knowledge, networks/information systems and software (and/or licenses to use them) necessary for the research activity in the respective Scientific Areas.

In this category, costs related to the research equipment's maintenance, provided that they do not exceed 10% of the equipment's value, as well as any expenses deemed necessary to ensure the correct and safe operation of the equipment (including the costs of transporting/installing equipment and training staff) may also be eligible.

9.1.2. Other Costs

This category includes expenses for basic modifications (electrical, etc.) of the building infrastructure in which the high value research equipment will be installed, provided that they are necessary for its proper and safe operation and use. This Category also includes costs for certified public accountant services, which are mandatory. The amount in this cost category may be up to 5% of the Equipment Costs.

9.2 Indirect costs

This category includes costs that are not directly connected to the implementation of the Project. These costs are paid to the SARFs or the respective HI's department.

Indirect Costs are eligible without the presentation of the corresponding documents and are equal to 5% of the total remaining (direct) costs.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

When submitting Proposals, the following shall be filled in:

- General information (Section A)
- Research Proposal (Section B1 and Section B2)
- Additional documents (where applicable).

10.1 Section A: General information

Section A includes the PI's details and information about the Proposal, including the title, acronym, duration of the project and the (short) abstract of the Proposal. The abstract should clearly present the

objectives of the Proposal and the way these should be accomplished. In case the Project is funded, this abstract may possibly be published (something that the PI shall explicitly and unreservedly accept by submitting the Proposal) and therefore must be brief and precise, not including confidential information.

In addition, in this section, the PI of the Proposal selects the Scientific Area (SA) that corresponds to the Proposal.

More specifically, in Section A, the following information shall be filled in:

▪ **General information of the Proposal**

- Scientific Area (SA)
- Title (in Greek and English)
- Acronym
- Abstract (up to 2,000 characters, in Greek and English)
- Keywords (up to 10)
- Duration (in months)
- Detailed budget (in €)
- Work Packages
- Deliverables
- Milestones

▪ **PI details** (Full name, contact details, TIN, etc.)

▪ **Host Institution** (School, Department, Institute, etc.)

The PI may also specify up to two (2) names of scientists he/she wishes for them to be excluded from the evaluation of the submitted Proposal.

Information in Section A is submitted in English (apart from the Proposal title and abstract, which are also submitted in Greek).

10.2 Section B: Proposal

Section B consists of two (2) sub-sections, Section B1 and Section B2, which shall be submitted in **English**.

Templates for these two separate Sections with the parts and fields that must be included respectively in Sections B1 and B2 of the Proposal are available on the H.F.R.I. website https://www.elidek.gr/call/2i_prokiriksi_erevnitikou_exoplismou/.

Each Proposal page might include a header presenting the PI's full name, the acronym and the respective Section of the Proposal (Section B1, Section B2), as well as a footer with reference to the respective Scientific Area (SA.1, SA.2, etc.) and to the total number of pages.

Table 4 lists the suggested technical specifications to be followed in all submitted documents. The page limits for each part should be strictly applied. Information and texts outside these limits will not be evaluated.

Table 4. *Technical specifications for texts*

Page Size	Font	Font Size	Line Spacing	Page Margins
A4	Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Cambria or similar	11 pt (at least)	Single (at least)	Top-Bottom: 1.5 cm Left-Right: 2 cm

10.2.1 Section B1: PI's CV and Scientific Achievements (maximum: 5 pages)

Section B1 includes the PI's curriculum vitae, which among other things mentions their scientific achievements that relate to the proposed Project.

Section B1 is submitted in **English** as a PDF ("Portable Document Format") file and can be up to five (5) pages long. Any text outside these limits will not be taken into consideration during evaluation.

10.2.2 Section B2: Extended Proposal presentation (maximum: 10 pages)

Section B2 should describe in detail the equipment and the range of research activities under which it may be used, as well as the potential it may give to them. In addition, the necessity of its procurement as part of a strategic plan in the context of strengthening, upgrading and expanding and/or completing the PI's research activity should be documented. Finally, the overall added value that is estimated to occur should be determined. Especially in the event that the equipment concerns access to resources (repositories of scientific knowledge/databases, networks/information systems, software licenses, etc.), the number of researchers in the HI who will benefit from this equipment should be clearly stated. Furthermore, it should be ensured that access to the above resources will belong to the HI (Institutional licenses).

This section should include a full assessment of the real Project cost.

In detail, Section B2 should describe the following:

- **Objectives and challenges**

This section shall clearly define the Proposal objectives and challenges in relation to the current scientific state of the art.

Indicative units that may be included in this section are:

- Objectives of the project, description of the equipment (as well as any existing equipment) and the necessity of its procurement in relation to the research activities of the PI and the HI.
- Equipment scientific/technological state of the art.
- Scientific impact, added value of the equipment (Expected impact and Added value).

- **Feasibility study, access policy and implementation plan for the operation of the research equipment**

Indicative units:

- Study of sustainability and long-term operation of the equipment even after the end of the project.
- Implementation plan for the availability/accessibility of the equipment after the end of the project.
- Plan for the integration and connection of research equipment with national and international equipment or infrastructure networks.

- **Implementation plan**

Indicative data that may be included in this section are:

- Work plan: Work Packages, Gantt Chart, Deliverables and Milestones Table, Table of Risks and Contingency plan.

- **Budget**

The project's budget includes:

- Direct costs
 - Purchase of equipment
 - Others

- Indirect costs

The initial page (cover page) of the research Proposal (Section B2) might include: i) the PI's full name, ii) the title, iii) the acronym, iv) the Scientific Area, v) the project duration (in months), vi) the budget (in €) and vii) the project's Host Institution.

Section B2 is submitted in **English** and may extend up to ten (10) pages, cover page and bibliographic references included. Any text outside these limits will not be taken into consideration during evaluation. Section B2 is submitted exclusively as a PDF file.

The Proposal is submitted by the PI

exclusively online via the H.F.R.I.'s web portal

(<https://portal.hfri.gr/>)

Submission start date: Wednesday 1st of March 2023, 12:00 (Greece time)

Submission end date: Thursday 6th of April 2023, 13:00 (Greece time)

The PI is exclusively responsible for the accuracy of data submitted on the online submission platform.

11. CHECK AND EVALUATION

The evaluation will be conducted by Evaluation Committees (EC) in line with the provisions of article 5 par. 5 to 8 of Law 4429/2016, as in force.

11.1 Admissibility and eligibility check

Proposals are checked as to the completeness of all necessary data and documents required, the fulfilment of participation terms and limitations as well as other terms of this Call, as described in detail in Section 8 herein.

The admissibility (i.e. completeness) check of the submitted proposals is carried out through the H.F.R.I.'s web portal, based on a standardized completeness check questionnaire, in order to ensure the appropriate filling in, drafting and submission of the proposal in accordance with the terms of the Call. Once the relevant check is completed, potential beneficiaries are informed whose proposals are incomplete and therefore not forwarded for evaluation.

Irrespective of the fact that all Proposals are checked as to their completeness and eligibility prior to the evaluation of their content, if, at any stage of the check and evaluation process, it is ascertained that a Proposal fails to meet any of the relevant criteria, it shall be excluded from the evaluation process.

11.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of the Proposals shall be performed by ECs, consisting of five (5) to twenty (20) members. If deemed necessary due to the specialised scope of the Proposals, a non-binding evaluation of one or more Proposals may be requested from one or more independent experts, at the discretion of each EC. The final decision for the evaluation of each Proposal shall be made by the Committee. Said experts and members of Evaluation Committees are pulled from the Register of Certified Evaluators of paragraph 11, article 5 of Law 4429/2016 or from the Register of Certified Evaluators of article 27 of Law 4310/2014 (A' 258). They shall have the qualifications related to the subject matter of the project to be evaluated. The Evaluation Committees and independent experts are determined by the Scientific Council in line with the provisions of article 5 of Law 4429/2016. If expert scientists required for a specific evaluation are not available or the existing ones do not meet the needs of the evaluation in question, expert scientists, not included in the Register of Certified Evaluators, who are foreign tax residents may be designated as members, pursuant to a decision made by the Scientific Council.

11.3 Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The whole process is governed by rule of confidentiality. The Evaluation Committee members and independent experts sign a declaration of confidentiality and non-conflict of interest. All Evaluation Committee members and independent experts owe full confidentiality before, during and after the evaluation, as to the entire evaluation process.

11.4 Evaluation Process and Criteria

The process of evaluating the Proposals will be completed in one (1) Phase, during which the Proposal will be evaluated for each one of its two main evaluation criteria.

More specifically, the complete Proposal (Section B1 and Section B2) will be evaluated in terms of the scientific profile of the PI and their ability to successfully implement the Project as well as in terms of the necessity and added value of the equipment.

The evaluation criteria and their weighting factors are listed in detail in *Table 5*.

Table 5. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weighting factor
Criterion 1. Principal investigator of the Project	0.3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scientific work (scientific publications, participation in conferences, distinctions, awards, participation in international and national research programs, etc.) ▪ Scientific scope and impact ▪ Distinctions, awards 	
Criterion 2. Necessity and added value of the equipment	0.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which is documented the need for the procurement of the equipment in relation to the research activity of the PI and as part of a strategic plan of the HI ▪ The extent to which the existing equipment (if any) is unsuitable and/or deficient, thereby limiting the utilization of the existing expertise or research produced ▪ The extent to which the procurement of the equipment creates the conditions/possibilities for the implementation of projects at the current scientific state of the art ▪ The extent to which the acquisition of the equipment directly supports, but also expands the current research activities of the PI and the HI ▪ Documenting the suitability of the HI infrastructure and management procedures to support and ensure the installation and full operation of the equipment ▪ The extent to which the budget is realistic and balanced and the cost-benefit analysis for the proposed project is adequately documented ▪ The extent to which the equipment enhances and upgrades/expands the PI's current research activity ▪ The extent to which the procurement of the equipment will have the expected impact as it is stated in the Proposal ▪ Completeness of sustainability study and implementation plan for the availability and continued operation of the equipment also after the end of the project over time ▪ The added value and dynamics that will arise for the PI's research team ▪ Sufficient plan for the integration and inclusion of research equipment in national and international equipment or infrastructure networks (<i>if applicable</i>) 	

The Evaluation Committee initially grades the evaluation criteria on a scale of 0 to 5 (per 0.5 points), as follows:

- **0 – Insufficient:** The proposal either fails to meet the criterion or cannot assess the criterion due to insufficient or incomplete information.
- **(0.5 – 1) – Weak:** The proposal does not sufficiently meet the criterion and/or there are inherent weaknesses.
- **(1.5 – 2) – Moderate:** The proposal meets the criterion in general but there are significant and substantial weaknesses.

- **(2.5 – 3) – Good:** The proposal meets the criterion at a good level but there is a number of shortcomings.
- **(3.5 – 4) – Very Good:** The proposal meets all aspects and dimensions of the criterion at a very good level but there is a small number of shortcomings.
- **(4.5 – 5) – Excellent:** The proposal meets all relevant aspects and dimensions of the criterion. Any shortcomings shall be classified as minor.

In case two or more Proposals receive the same overall grade, priority is given to the Proposal that has received the highest grade in criterion 2 “*Necessity and added value of the equipment*”.

In order for a Proposal to be eligible for funding it should receive a minimum score (threshold) of **3.5** in each of the two Criteria separately but also in total.

Based on the above grading combined with the minimum grade (**3.5**), the proposals are ranked based on an A - B scale, as described in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Grading of Proposals

Grade	Description
A	The Proposal sufficiently meets all evaluation criteria and is recommended for funding if there is sufficient budget.
B	The Proposal does not sufficiently meet the evaluation criteria and is not recommended for funding.

11.5 Possibility of partial budget approval

The Evaluation Committee, upon justified decision, may partially approve or amend the proposed Project budget, taking into account the terms and restrictions of the Call.

11.6 Verification of copies

In order to verify the accuracy of data and supporting documents submitted online through the Web Portal (either at the submission stage or at the implementation stage), H.F.R.I. conducts a sample check on at least five percent (5%) of the copies submitted by the beneficiaries during the immediately following quarter, requesting the assistance of the agencies or bodies that issued the original documents in line with paragraph 2 of article 11 of Law 2690/1999, as in force.

12. EVALUATION RESULTS

After the evaluation of the Proposal is completed, the results are communicated to the PI along with a personalised report, which includes the Proposal's evaluation (A or B) and the evaluation report of the Evaluation Committee.

PIs are entitled to submit a **substantiated objection solely on decision legality grounds** within a deadline of ten (10) days from the communication of the evaluation results. Objections are judged by three-member Objection Committees, which shall decide within an exclusive deadline of ten (10) days (article 5, par. 8 of Law 4429/2016). The Objection Committee's decision is announced to the H.F.R.I. Director and communicated to the person who lodged the objection.

Following the evaluation of the Proposals and the formulation of an assent by the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation, in accordance with article 35 par. 9 of Law 4589/2019 (in case of high-value equipment), the Funding Decision (List of Projects to be funded) is issued, in line with the available budget, by the H.F.R.I. Director. This decision is an enforceable administrative act and is subject to petition for annulment before the Administrative Court of Appeal.

Following the publication of the Projects to be funded, the potential beneficiary PIs receive a letter via email, whereby they are invited to submit the necessary supporting documents to H.F.R.I., so that the Funding Award Decision may be issued.

The project's PI accepts that messages sent via email, and especially those sent to the email address they declared during the online submission of the Proposal, are considered notifications and signal the commencement of all legal processes and deadlines.

13. COMMUNICATION - INFORMATION

Detailed information and briefing on this Call will be provided by H.F.R.I.'s Department of Research Projects via email: researchdepartment@elidek.gr and by calling +30 210-6412410, +30 210-6412420.

The Call and its Management-Implementation Guide will be posted on H.F.R.I.'s website www.elidek.gr as well as on GSRI's website <https://gsri.gov.gr/>.

The Director of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation

Dr. Aikaterini Kouravelou