# Invitation to Apply to ESA Phi-Lab Austria

Thank you for your interest in ESA Phi-Lab Austria.

Space-based research and technological developments bring significant benefits to Earth—ranging from advanced services to cutting-edge science. As such, the space industry holds high strategic and economic value. At the same time, New Space activities and leading-edge research drive disruptive innovation, delivering progress not only in space but also for Earth and society as a whole.

As part of the Phi-Lab NET, one of the Components of the Innovate Element in the ScaleUp Programme, ESA is rolling out several different Phi-Labs in ESA Member States.

The objective is to create a dynamic network of Phi-Labs across Europe focusing on delivering innovation, reducing the time-to-market and with potential to disrupt and transform markets.

In Austria, accent Inkubator GmbH is responsible for managing ESA Phi-Lab Austria.

ESA Phi-Lab Austria is a center of excellence dedicated to accelerating the industrialization of innovative upstream hardware and software through purposeful design and development support.

ESA Phi-Lab Austria hereby invites you to submit your application to enter the PHI-Lab Austria programme. This document provides an introduction to the application and evaluation process and contains references to the templates that should be used when applying.

Please contact ESA Phi-Lab Austria for any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Moll

Head of ESA Phi-Lab Austria

## Introduction

The purpose of this Open Call for ESA Phi-Lab Austria is to inform about the opportunity for research projects to become supported by ESA Phi-Lab Austria and to provide the material and guidance needed to apply for support.

Selection and evaluation of applications are scheduled periodically, see esaphilab.at for details. To benefit from our **preproposal support** contact us via preproposal application document (esaphilab.at) latest 6 weeks before submission deadline of selection .

The Call is permanently open, has no closing date for the submission of applications unless the ESA Phi-Lab Austria has indicated otherwise.

## Focus at ESA Phi-Lab Austria: “Industrialisation by Design”

ESA Phi-Lab Austria invites all interested parties to submit their ideas that align with the following focus areas:

• Industrialization by design of innovative upstream space-hardware and space-software

• Clear commercial orientation and well-defined market potential

• Demonstrated customer interest

• A defined network of partners both within and beyond the space sector (with support from ESA Phi-Lab Austria)

The ultimate goal is to help participants achieve or sustain a strong competitive edge in their respective markets.

## Who can apply?

The research project proposal must be submitted by a legal entity or a consortium of legal entities.

Some further criteria apply:

* the project shall be relevant for the specific focus of competence of the Phi-Lab and the specific topics as defined in the previous section;
* the applicants must fulfil all the requirements below:
  + To be a legal entity (a public law company / a private law company / an association / a foundation, etc.) registered under the laws of an ESA Member State (in the case this legal entity is not registered in Austria the research activity shall deliver **a clear benefit to Austria**).
  + To observe the remaining requirements stated in this document;
  + When acting in collaboration with other national or foreign entities, the applicant will be the sole contractor and will be fully responsible for managing the funding.
  + To declare that the activities proposed under the submitted ESA Phi-Lab project are not being funded through other means (e.g. ESA Business Incubation, ESA Business Applications, European Commission, national or regional funding agencies etc).

## How to apply

Please make sure you have received the following documents, which are part of the Open Call documentation:

* ESA Phi-Lab Research Proposal with
  + Cover Letter including Requirement Checklists (in the template)
  + Executive Summary
  + R&D and Potential Impact Proposal
  + Activity and Management Proposal
* Draft Research Contract including Draft Service Agreement

Make sure to fill in all required sections in the application templates and pay particular attention to the following:

* Instructions inside the documents (highlighted in blue in each template) shall be followed in order to fulfil all pre-conditions of the Open Call and for the application to be accepted.
* Please read the Draft Contract carefully. The Cover Letter must include a clear, explicit and unambiguous statement declaring that the applicant has read, understood and accepted the terms and conditions contained in the contractual documentation (this is part of the Cover Letter template). Modifications or amendments to the Contract may only be done in exceptional cases. Please contact the local ESA Phi-Lab Austria Manager for guidance.
* Make sure the Cover Letter and the Requirement Checklists are signed by the legal representative of the Legal Entity.
* Support of ESA Phi-Lab Austria may be requested for a maximum of 24 months.

To increase the quality of the proposal we recommend to use our preproposal support. Send us the Preproposal Document on website philabaustria.at arranging a first meeting and get pre proposal support from our Partner Brimatech, tecnet and Enspace.

Please submit the application documents, in electronic form (pdf, maximum two files, one for each required document) to the following e-mail address: philabaustria@accent.at with subject “ESA Phi-Lab Austria Open Call”.

Any questions related to submission of proposals should be sent to esaphilab@accent.at

## Budget

The available Innovation Seed Funding per selected project ranges from a **minimum of €200,000** to a **maximum of €300,000**.

This funding is intended to cover **50% to 100%** of the total eligible costs of the activity, subject to the following conditions:

* **Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)** may receive funding of up to **80%** of the total eligible cost.
* **Universities and research institutions**, when involved **as subcontractors within a consortium** and demonstrating **no commercial interest** in the resulting product or service, may be funded with **up to 100%**, provided that:
  + Their funding **does not exceed 30%** of the total eligible cost. (If subcontracted work exceeds 30% of total eligible costs, the **excess portion** will be **co-funded up to a maximum of 50%**.)
  + If the university or research institution has a **commercial interest** in the future exploitation of the outcome, the **funding level applicable to SMEs or non-SMEs** will apply.
* **Large enterprises and other non-SME economic operators** may be funded up to a **maximum of 50%** of the total eligible cost.

**Rental costs** for office space at the **Vienna Space Hub**, for the project duration, may also be covered by ESA seed funds, according to the applicable funding levels outlined above.

## Eligible costs

In order to be eligible, all project costs must be:

* Necessary to the execution of the project;
* Incurred by the beneficiary and recorded in its accounts;
* Incurred during the contract term;
* Indicated in the cost planning in the proposal;
* Without VAT, interest owned, or duties.

Expenses incurred in the preparation and dispatch of the proposal will not be reimbursed.

The project may consider the following direct costs:

1. Staff costs (calculated according to FFG cost guideline: https://www.ffg.at/recht-finanzen/kostenleitfaden);
2. Subcontracting costs;
3. Access to data sources or intellectual property;
4. Materials, equipment, and facilities;
5. Travelling, subsistence, and accommodation costs
6. Office rental costs in the event of relocation to the Vienna Space Hub

The following costs incurred are eligible:

* Train and plane costs in Economy Class, up to 700 Euro travelling in Europe and up to 1.600 Euro travelling outside Europe;
* Taxi costs;
* Car rental and/or car mileage;
* Accommodation up to 250 Euro per person per night;
* Subsistence costs up to 100 Euro per person per day.

Information regarding all Travelling, Subsistence and Accommodation costs must be provided in the Mid- Term (where applicable) and Final Reports, and shall include the objectives of the occasion (event, meeting, etc.), contacts made and results.

* Business development and promotion (data sheets, flyers, trade shows etc.). Attendance to trade shows (or similar) should be agreed in advance with the local ESA PHI-Lab Manager.
* Other – costs not included in the above categories but deemed critical to the execution of the project should be agreed in advance with the local ESA PHI-Lab Manager.

## The evaluation procedure

The evaluation of all received applications is managed locally by ESA Phi-Lab Austria and follows common ESA Phi-Lab procedures.

Once a published submission deadline has passed, ESA Phi-Lab Austria first assesses the formal aspects of applications received before the submission deadline. If a formal non-compliance of formal nature is found, the applicant may be asked to address this in an updated proposal within 48 hours. If the proposal is found non-admissible, the applicant will be informed, and the reason will be explained. In such a case an applicant is eligible to submit a revised proposal at a later date.

If the application is compliant with the formal requirements, applicants will be invited to hold a presentation to the ESA Phi-Lab Austria evaluation board. The evaluation will typically take place a few weeks after the submission deadline. The evaluation board consists of representatives of ESA Phi-Lab Austria, ESA, Country of lower Austria, FFG and other experts. There will also be an opportunity for the evaluation board to ask questions to the applicant.

The application and the presentation will be marked against the criteria in Table 1, taking weighting factors into account.

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| **Criteria** | **Weighting factor** |
| Background and Experience   * Experience and team composition * Partnerships and Support entities * Vision | 20% |
| Research and Technology developments   * Relevance to the Call * Assessment of the State of the Art, maturity of the idea, and feasibility of the proposed developments * Development strategy * Relevance of the proposed experimental analysis / validation * Intellectual Property strategy [if any, positive factor] | 35% |
| Commercial Opportunities and Potential Socio Economic Impact   * Potential Market Segment * Potential Product/Service * Potential Customers/Users * Value Proposition * Potential Socio Economic Impact (including sustainability) | 25% |
| Activity and Management proposal   * Overall quality of the application * Milestones/Cost-planning * Work break-down * Management of the research project | 20% |

Table 1: ESA Phi-Lab evaluation criteria and weighting factors.

All applicants will be notified in writing about the outcome of the evaluation. The applicant may require, within 10 calendar days from the receipt of the notification, an oral debriefing explaining the reason why the application was successful or not.

ESA PHI-Lab Austria will enter into contract negotiations with successful applicants, taking the comments of the evaluation board into account. ESA Phi-Lab Austria has the right *not* to place a contract if, after three months after the notification to a successful applicant, no contract still has been signed, and this is because of a reason for which the applicant can be held accountable.

Additionally, ESA Phi-Lab Austria has the right not to place a contract in case the (intended) legal entity presented in the application is different from the actual established and registered legal entity.

Furthermore, we kindly ask you to pay attention to the following:

* Please note that applications will be treated as confidential. However, the applicant’s idea may through this application fall into the public domain (e.g. if local laws require so). Therefore, we strongly recommend that the applicant discusses the protection of his/her idea with a dedicated expert in this field prior to application, and – if relevant – takes appropriate steps to protect the idea (e.g. by applying for a patent).
* As far as allowed by law, any title held by the applicant to his/her idea shall remain vested in him/her. An application to ESA Phi-Lab Austria will not result in the acquisition of any title whatsoever to the idea. *However, ESA retains a right to use the Intellectual Property in specific cases. Please read the detailed conditions described under the section “Use of Intellectual Property Rights” in the Draft Contract.*
* No expenses incurred in either stage of the application procedure will be reimbursed to the applicant by ESA Phi-Lab Austria, ESA and/or any third party.
* This Open Call does not impose any obligation upon ESA Phi-Lab Austria to enter into negotiations with any applicant.