

Invitation to Apply to ESA Phi-Lab Austria

Reference: ESA Phi-Lab Austria Open Call

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

Space-based studies and technology developments bring benefits to Earth in the form of services and top-class science. This makes the space industrial sector of high strategic and economic value. At the same time leading edge research brings benefit to space, and indeed to Earth and society with disruptive innovation.

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 offers a comprehensive package of support to projects, including access to and use of Phi-Lab laboratories, equipment, facilities, co-workspace at Airport Vienna, innovation seed funding, technical support, business coaching and legal/IPR support. The focus of ESA Phi-Lab Austria is to combine results and needs of recent and future industrialization efforts in the upstream space industry with terrestrial research in the domain of industrial innovation. This will support technology development efforts, ensuring that the developed products can be industrialized and brought to market as competitively as possible.

ESA Phi-Lab Austria hereby invites you to submit your application to enter the Phi-Lab Austria programme. All research activity proposals shall be in view of and shaped for potential commercial applications.

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,

Carlos Fernández de Retana
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 www.esaphilab.at for details.

Research Focus at ESA Phi-Lab Austria

The ESA Phi-Lab Austria invites all interested parties to submit their ideas related to the competitive industrialization of innovative upstream hardware and software development activities. Proposed activities should have a commercial market potential. To support their ideas, the applicant can identify knowledgeable entities in the domain of industrial innovations (see also www.esaphilab.at) or suggest a domain of expertise for which the Phi-Lab Team will try to find a matching partner.

Who can apply?

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

The proposed idea shall be disruptive, of potential high socio-economic impact, based on solid research-driven evidence. There shall be evidence of any market pull or research push that would facilitate the future market adoption of the envisaged solution.

The idea shall have a valid space connection. This is:

- The exploitation of space technology, use of knowledge from the space domain, or utilisation of space systems and space-based services in non-space domains (spin-off),
- Or the provision of products or services for the space sector, addressing any part of the space value chain (from components to entirely new space systems or related facilities and services) and any related activity (from concept definition to operation), possibly using non-space technology (spin-in).

Some further criteria apply:

- the project shall be relevant for the specific focus of competence of the ESA Phi-Lab Austria and the specific topics as defined in the previous Section;
- the applicants must fulfil all the requirements below:
 - To be part of a legal entity established in an ESA Member State, and can demonstrate that the research activity can deliver a benefit to the Phi-Lab, which is of particular importance for applicants that are part of a legal entity established in an ESA Member State different from the one of the Phi-Lab.
 - 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 work proposed under the submitted ESA Phi-Lab project is not being funded through other means (e.g. ESA R&D activities, ESA Business Incubation, ESA Business Applications, European Commission etc).

How to apply

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

- Research Proposal Application:
 - Cover Letter including Requirement Checklists
 - Executive Summary
 - R&D and Potential Impact Proposal
 - Activity and Management Proposal
- Draft Research Contract including 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 in ESA Phi-Lab Austria may be requested for a maximum of 24 months.

To increase the quality of the Research Proposal Application we recommend to use our pre-proposal support. Fill in the Pre-Proposal Application and send it to esaphilab@accent.at to arrange a first meeting and get further support from our Partner Brimatech, tecnet and Enspace.

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

Any questions related to submission of proposals should be sent to the same e-mail address: esaphilab@accent.at

Budget

The available Innovation Seed Funds per winning project is from a minimum of 200.000 Euro to a maximum of 500.000 Euro, in exceptional cases even more.

This amount shall represent a percentage ranging from 50% to 100% of the total allowable cost of the activity, subject to compliance with the following provisions:

- Work carried out by SMEs may be funded up to a maximum level of up to 80% of the total allowable cost of the activity.
- Work carried out by universities and research institutions involved as subcontractors in a consortium and justifying no further commercial interest in the product or service may be funded to a maximum level of 100% if this funding does not exceed 30% of the total allowable

cost of the activity; Should work need to be (sub)contracted for more than 30% of the total eligible costs, such additional share shall be co-funded up to a maximum of 50% of the total eligible costs; Universities and research institutions claiming to have any commercial interest in the future exploitation of the final product or service shall be required to demonstrate this interest. In such a case, the funding level for SME or non-SME shall apply.

- Work carried out by economic operators that are not SMEs nor universities and research institutions may be funded up to a maximum level of 50% of the total allowable cost of the activity.

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:

- Staff costs;
- Subcontracting costs;
- Access to data sources or intellectual property;
- Materials, equipment, and facilities;
- Travelling, subsistence, and accommodation costs

The following costs incurred are eligible:

- Train and plane costs in Economy Class, up to 700 Euro travelling in Europe and up to 1600 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:

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Sub Criteria	Weighting Factor
Background and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience Team composition • Partnerships and Support Entities • Vision 	25%
Research and Technology developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance for the Call • Understanding of and leveraging on the State of the Art, novelty of the proposed research • Maturity of the technology, relevance and feasibility of the proposed developments to achieve objectives • Relevance of the proposed validation approach 	30%
Commercial Opportunities and Potential Socio Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Market Segment • Potential Product/Service • Potential Customers/Users • Value Proposition • Potential Socio Economic Impact (including sustainability) • IPR strategy 	25%
Activity and Management proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestones/Cost-planning • Work break-down structure • Management of the research project 	20%

Table 1: ESA Phi-Lab Austria 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.

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.