

**Maritime Seed Fund Award  
PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES**

**Introduction**

The Maritime Seed Award (MarSA) is a joint initiative between the Malta Marittima Agency (MMA) and the University of Malta supported by the TAKEOFF Business Incubator, Knowledge Transfer Office and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation (CEBI) at the University of Malta.

The fifth call of this programme aims to help move promising ideas from the Maritime Field forward toward commercialization. Award funding totalling to €100,000 will help to bring the innovative early-stage idea/technology from lab to life and provides support to researchers and entrepreneurs when they need it most to increase the likelihood of success.

The TAKEOFF Business Incubator and the Knowledge Transfer Office at the University of Malta support entrepreneurs and academics to convert good ideas into successful commercial ventures, based around innovative products and services. Through the MarSA, the most promising applicants will receive funding to enable a step-change along their development path towards the first investor or commercial partner.

**Eligibility**

The MarSA will support applications in the Maritime Field. The term shall be interpreted in a broad sense to include, amongst others:

- Maritime Commercial – Legal, Financial, Insurance, Broking, Chartering, Ship Ownership, Surveying, Adjusting, Crew Management;
- Logistics – Freight Forwarding, Terminal Operation, Ship agency, Warehouse Operations, Bunkering;
- Marine Engineering – Marine Engineering, ICT, Ship Repair, Mechanical and Electrical Technical Services;
- Products and services related to Sailing and Motorboat clubs, Marinas, Boat Sales/Chartering;
- Fisheries and Aquaculture – Fishing and Fish farming, Aquaculture, Fish Processing, Fisheries Management;
- Blue Bio-economy and Blue Biotechnology; Energy and Desalination – Oil & Gas exploitation and servicing, Offshore renewable, Emissions, Desalination.

Beneficiaries of the TAKEOFF Seed Fund Award are not eligible for the Maritime Seed Award unless they can clearly show a step-change in their proposal. It is not possible to apply for numerous funding programmes for the same proposal simultaneously. Applicants who had previously applied for MarSA or any other fund but were unsuccessful in obtaining a grant are eligible to apply for MarSA.

The Award will fund two types of initiatives:

- University of Malta academic staff may apply for **Proof of Concept** funds, which will enable a step-change in taking an innovation developed through research at the University closer to being commercialised. If students have generated work in the course of their studies which would benefit from Proof of Concept Funds, they may apply through their supervisor;
- Entrepreneurs from within or outside the University, as well as students currently enrolled in the Master in Knowledge Based Entrepreneurship course offered by the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation (CEBI)<sup>1</sup>, may apply for **Seed** funds, which will enable a step-change in taking their independent technology or knowledge-based start-up closer to the first customer or investment. In order to receive their award, Maritime Seed Fund beneficiaries shall be required to be or to become TAKEOFF members.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Contact Prof. Russell Smith, CEBI Director, on 2340 3249 or [russell.smith@um.edu.mt](mailto:russell.smith@um.edu.mt)

<sup>2</sup> To apply for TAKEOFF membership please contact TAKEOFF Manager, Joseph Bartolo, on [Joseph.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt](mailto:Joseph.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt)

New applicants shall be given preference over previous beneficiaries of the MarSA. However previous beneficiaries are not excluded from reapplying, as long as they demonstrate that they have met the goals for their previous award, and the additional funding requested will enable them to make significant further progress beyond this point. Potential applicants who may have a potential conflict of interest<sup>3</sup> or any relation<sup>4</sup> with members of the Adjudication Team must bring this up with the Management Committee and may be excluded from participating.

### Value of the Fund

The fourth cycle of Maritime Seed Award has an allocation of €100,000 to be awarded. Grants between €2,500 and €20,000 will be awarded to the selected projects. 30% of the funds have been allocated to Proof of Concept type applications and the remaining 70% have been allocated to Seed Fund type applications, although the Management Committee may alter this ratio depending on the demand and quality of the applications.

### Application Process

Applicants for Proof of Concept funds may get assistance in preparing their application form by contacting the Knowledge Transfer Office on [knowledgetransfer@um.edu.mt](mailto:knowledgetransfer@um.edu.mt), whereas applicants for the Seed funds may contact TAKEOFF Manager, Joseph Bartolo, on [joseph.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt](mailto:joseph.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt). The completed application form should be submitted by email as an attachment in PDF format to [maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt](mailto:maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt) by **Wednesday 30 September at noon**. The application form file should be named 'MarSA\_POC\_Project Title.pdf' in the case of the applications for the Proof of Concept fund, or 'MarSA\_SF\_Project Title.pdf' in the case of the applications for the Seed Fund.

Potential applicants for the Seed Fund must attend the scheduled workshop session hosted by TAKEOFF, which will provide skills and tools for creating a competitive proposal. The final application form will only be accepted if applicants or their representatives register and attend the TAKEOFF workshop. This will only be waived in extenuating circumstances. All potential applicants for the Proof of Concept Fund must attend the workshop being organised by the Knowledge Transfer Office. Should applicants be unable to attend alternative meetings must be held directly with the Knowledge Transfer Office for POC or TAKEOFF for SF. For more information and to register for the event visit <https://takeoff.org.mt/seedfundawards/marsa-2020/>

The initial written applications will be evaluated and scored by an Adjudication Team that may include successful entrepreneurs, technical experts, technology commercialization professionals and investors. The panel will evaluate the written proposals in line with the Judging Scorecard and will consider:

- The understanding of the problem/solution/benefits being addressed and the market opportunity of the proposed solution/technology;
- How well the target customers/users/technology beneficiaries have been identified, how they will benefit, and how they will be acquired;
- Whether the competition and the competitive advantages have been adequately identified;
- Whether the necessary resources have been identified, and plans to obtain these resources and the required revenues are in place;
- The capability of the team to articulate and execute the proposed plan;
- Whether issues related to intellectual property have been given due consideration;
- The likelihood of success, including risk identification and mitigation;
- The extent of the step-change that will be achieved through the funding, the clarity and credibility of the proposed plan, and how effectively of the requested budget is being used to achieve this;
- The quality of the written application and the oral presentation.

The Adjudication Team will rank all written applications, and shortlist proposals to progress to the second stage. Applications scoring lower than 60% will not be considered for shortlisting. The Adjudication Committee

<sup>3</sup> Conflict of interest shall be defined as: "Any event that may influence the capacity of a person in the Adjudication Team to give an objective and impartial professional opinion, or preventing him, at any moment, from giving priority to the interests of the University and/or Malta Marittima Agency and/or the Programme."

<sup>4</sup> This shall include relations by consanguinity or by affinity to the third degree (please contact the University Knowledge Transfer Office on [maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt](mailto:maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt) if in doubt).

reserves the right to increase or decrease the threshold by 10%. Shortlisted applicants may work with coaches and mentors to prepare a more detailed proposal which will be presented through a live pitch to the Adjudication Team in the final competition.

The presentations will be strictly limited to 10 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of questions and answers. Shortlisted applicants will be given a time slot for their presentation and will need to arrive 30 minutes before their allotted time. Any slides that will be used for the presentations must be sent to maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt as an attachment in PowerPoint (Version 2013) the day before the presentation, using the same file name as the written application (i.e. MarSA\_PoC\_Project Title.pptx or MarSA\_SF\_Project Title.pptx).

After the presentations, the Adjudication Team will reach a consensus on the score of each application and the applications will be ranked. Applications scoring lower than 60% will not be considered for funding. The Adjudication Committee reserves the right to increase or decrease the threshold by 10%. In the event that two or more proposals have the same score, they will be ranked according to commercial potential, then capability of the researcher/entrepreneur/team. In certain cases the Adjudication Team may decide to make an award conditional on the applicant making specific adjustments to their proposed plan. The Adjudication Team shall then submit their proposals to the Management Committee with whom the final decision stands.

The best ranked proposals shall be selected for an award and applicants will be required to sign the Grant Agreement and a State Aid Declaration Form. Maritime Seed Fund beneficiaries who are not TAKEOFF members shall be required to become members.

The Management Committee shall take reasonable precautions to treat written submissions and presentations as confidential, with the exception of the non-confidential Executive Summary provided in the written application. However, it is the duty of the applicant to ensure that the intellectual property being presented is sufficiently protected and/or not prejudiced by entry into this competition<sup>5</sup>.

#### 2020 Timeline\*

Call for Applications	Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020
Orientation / Proposal Workshop for Applications	Proof of Concept: Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 10:00 Seed Fund: Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 14:00
Written Applications Submission Deadline	Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 12:00 noon
Announcement of Shortlisted Applications	Week of 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Coaching for Shortlisted Applicants	26 <sup>th</sup> October – 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Live Pitches to Judges	10 <sup>th</sup> November and 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Announcement to applicants	Week of 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Signing of Grant Agreement & Disbursement of Funds	By December 2020
Progress Report	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2021 Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Deadline for Spending Funds	Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
Final Expenditure Report	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2022

\* Subject to change for whatever reason/cause.

#### Award

<sup>5</sup> Each applicant shall hold harmless the Malta Marittima Agency and University of Malta from any claims relating to the applicant's participation in this competition.

Successful applicants must complete the necessary paperwork prior to receiving the awarded funds. In the case for Seed Funds, 90% of the funds will be transferred once all the required documentation has been submitted and approved by the Management Committee. The final 10% of the awarded value will only be disbursed once the final report and supporting documentation are submitted and approved. All expenses pertaining to the beneficiaries TAKEOFF membership must also be settled. Proof of Concept beneficiaries will receive the awarded value following submission and approval of all documentation. Beneficiaries will be expected to abide by their stated milestones and move forward with their proposed plan during the grant period, over a six to twelve month period running between December 2020 and December 2021. Seed Fund recipients are expected to work closely with the TAKEOFF Manager, whereas Proof of Concept fund recipients are expected to work closely with the Knowledge Transfer Office. Beneficiaries are not permitted to emigrate out of Malta during the duration of the fund.

Beneficiaries will be required to submit an interim report every 4 months and a final report, detailing their progress against the proposed milestones, at the end of their grant period. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances following strong justification for the request. This must be sent in writing to the Management Committee in a timely manner (at least one week prior to the respective deadline. It shall be up to the Management Committee to accept or decline such a request.

The Management Committee maintains the right to request a refund, in full or in part, of the funds awarded if the beneficiaries fail to submit the reports, if they fail to show adequate commitment to the implementation of the proposed plan, or if they use the funds for purposes that are clearly outside the scope of the proposed plans without justification and without prior consent obtained in writing from the Management Committee.

In the event that not all the funds are disbursed following the first call, a second call may be issued later in 2020.

### State Aid

The Maritime Seed Award operates under the *de minimis* State Aid regime, which allows a single undertaking<sup>6</sup> to receive an aggregate maximum amount of *de minimis* aid of €200,000 under all *de minimis* aid measures, over a period of three fiscal years.

A 'single undertaking' active in the fishery and aquaculture sector is permitted to receive an aggregate maximum amount of *de minimis* aid of €30,000 under all *de minimis* aid measures, over a period of three fiscal years.

All applicants are required to ensure they are eligible for the requested grant under State Aid rules before submitting an application.

### News and information

All news and information about the fund will be posted <https://takeoff.org.mt/seedfundawards/marsa-2020/>

### Contact Details

Seed Fund  
TAKEOFF Manager – Joseph Bartolo  
[joseph.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt](mailto:joseph.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt)

Proof of Concept Fund  
Knowledge Transfer Office  
[knowledgetransfer@um.edu.mt](mailto:knowledgetransfer@um.edu.mt)

### Management Committee

Ing. Elisa Vella or Ms. Nicola Camilleri  
[maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt](mailto:maritimeseedaward@um.edu.mt)  
Maritime Seed Award  
Knowledge Transfer Office  
Dar Ġużeppi Żahra  
University of Malta  
Msida MSD 2080  
Malta

### Events Location

TAKEOFF Business Incubator  
Dar Ġużeppi Żahra  
University of Malta  
Msida MSD 2080  
Malta  
  
(Point 28 on the [campus map](#))

<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of this declaration the term 'single undertaking' shall have the meaning as established in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1407/2013.