CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

(AE2026-0204)

INESC TEC is now accepting grant applications to award 1 Research Grant (BI) within the scope of the Multiannual Funding of R&D Units 2025-2029, with the reference UID/50014/2025, Funded by national funds through the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), I.P.

1. GRANT DESCRIPTION

Type of grant: Research Grant (BI)

General scientific area: COMPUTER SCIENCE

Scientific subarea: Programming,Informatics,Database management

Area of Work: Network and Securit

Grant duration: 3 months, starting on 2026-10-01, with the possibility of being renewed for a maximum term of one year, in cases where the grant has been awarded to students who are enrolled in non-award courses, or up to two years, in the cases of students enrolled in a master's degree.

Scientific advisor: João Soares Resende

Workplace: INESC TEC, Porto, Portugal

Maintenance stipend: € 1090.98, **according to the table of monthly maintenance stipend for FCT grants**, paid via bank transfer. Grant holders may be awarded potential supplements, according to a quarterly evaluation process (Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the **Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC** and Annex II), up to a maximum limit of 50% of the monthly maintenance stipend.

INESC TEC supports costs with registration, enrolment or tuition fees, during the grant duration, under the terms established in the internal document: **Payment of Tuition fees to grant holders**.

The grant holder will benefit from health insurance, supported by INESC TEC.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this research fellowship is to strengthen research activities in cybersecurity for next-generation 6G communication networks and autonomous distributed systems through a comprehensive and systematic study of the state of the art in emerging security mechanisms.

The fellowship aims to support the development of an integrated understanding of the technologies and methodologies required to ensure secure, trustworthy, and resilient operation of future autonomous systems, with particular emphasis on hardware-rooted identity, decentralized authentication, trust management, secure communications, Artificial Intelligence-based intrusion detection, and adversarially robust machine learning techniques.

Furthermore, the fellowship seeks to identify current scientific and technological gaps, establish a unified taxonomy of existing approaches, and contribute to the definition of future research directions in the field of cybersecurity for 6G-enabled autonomous systems.

3. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND TRAINING:

The work plan will begin with a systematic review of the scientific literature, drawing upon the major international bibliographic databases to identify and characterize the most recent approaches to cybersecurity for autonomous systems supported by 6G communication networks.

Subsequently, a critical analysis of the identified solutions will be conducted, focusing on hardware-rooted identity, decentralized authentication, trust management models, secure communications, Artificial Intelligence-based intrusion detection systems, adversarially robust machine learning techniques, and the challenges associated with their deployment in distributed environments. Particular attention will be given to operational requirements such as latency, scalability, energy efficiency, and edge computing.

Based on the collected evidence, a unified taxonomy will be developed to organize and relate the different approaches reported in the literature, highlighting their strengths, limitations, scientific challenges, and research opportunities. Emerging trends and future research directions in cybersecurity for autonomous systems operating over 6G communication infrastructures will also be identified and discussed.

Throughout the fellowship, the research fellow will develop advanced competencies in scientific literature review methodologies, critical analysis, scientific writing, and knowledge organization. The work is expected to culminate in the preparation of a high-quality survey paper for submission to a leading international peer-reviewed scientific journal.

4. REQUIRED PROFILE:

Admission requirements:

Bachelor's or Master's degree in Computer Science
The awarding of the fellowship is dependent on the applicants' enrolment in study cycle or non-award courses of Higher Education Institutions.

Preference factors:
Previous professional experience in Computer Science or Cybersecurity, participation in Capture-the-Flag (CTF) competitions, and experience in preparing and submitting scientific papers to international conferences

Minimum requirements:
Bachelor's degree in Computer Science with a final grade of at least 15/20

5. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS AND SELECTION PROCESS:

Selection criteria and corresponding valuation: the first phase comprises the Academic Evaluation (AC), based on the criteria referred to in Article 12 of the **Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC**, while the second phase comprehends the Individual Interview (EI). All factors are evaluated on a scale of 0 to 100, taking into account the applicants' merit, suitability and conformity with the preference factors.
The weight of the AC factors are as follows: Academic Qualifications (FA, 40%), Scientific Publications (PC, 10%), Experience (EX, 20%) and Motivation Letter (CM, 30%).
Candidates who score less than 50 points in the AC average will be considered excluded on absolute merit. The top five candidates approved on absolute merit will be qualified for the individual interview. The Final Grade (CF) is obtained by the weighted average of AC (60%) and EI (40%).

DISABILITY INCENTIVE

Candidates who present a degree of disability equal to or greater than 90% will benefit from an incentive (20) in the score of the CV Assessment.
Candidates who present a degree of disability equal to or greater than 60% and less than 90% will also benefit from an incentive (10) in the score of the CV Assessment.
Said score may, in these cases, exceed 100 points.
Candidates must demonstrate the degree of disability during the application, namely through the submission of the Multi-Purpose Medical Certificate of Disability, issued in accordance with Decree-Law no. 202/96, of October 23 currently in effect.
Candidates must declare, in the application form, the type of disability used throughout the selection process, in order to proceed with the required adaptations.

The Selection Jury is composed of the following members:

President of the Jury: João Soares Resende
Full member: João Paulo Vilela
Full member: Vanessa Freitas Silva
Substitute member: António Pinto

Release of results and prior hearing: the results of the selection process, as well as the terms and procedures for prior hearing, will be released to the applicants by email, under the terms referred to in Article 13 of the Regulations for Studentships and Fellowships of INESC TEC.

6. FORMALISATION OF APPLICATIONS:

Application Documents:

1. Motivation letter;
2. Curriculum Vitae (must include the list of previous fellowships, their type, beginning and end dates, funding entities and host institutions);
3. Certificate or diploma degree;
4. Proof of enrollment in a degree awarding study cycle or in a non degree awarding Higher Education program.
    - The proof of enrollment may be presented just during the grant hiring stage.
5. Signed declaration stating the infringement of the grant holder's duties (article 14, no. 4)
6. Documental evidence to support the country of residence, residence permit or other legally equivalent document, in cases where the applicant is a foreigner or non-resident in Portugal - valid until the beginning of the grant.
7. Other supporting documents relevant to the final assessment.

Failure to deliver the required documents within the 90-day period after the date of the notice of the conditional awarding of the grant implies its cancellation.

Application period: From 2026-08-03 to 2026-08-14

Submission of applications: the application will be formalised by submitting the form available in the *Work With Us* section of INESC TEC website.

7. BINDING LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The hiring process shall comply with the current legislation regarding the Research Grant Holder Statute, approved by Law no. 40/2004 of August 18, in its current wording, as well as by the **Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC** and for **FCT Grants Regulation in force**.

For more information, please check the **Regulations for Grants of INESC TEC** and relevant annexes at www.inesctec.pt/bolsas

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

fct Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia

INESCTEC

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