CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

(AE2026-0343)

INESC TEC is now accepting grant applications to award 1 Research Grant (BI) within the scope of the project RAICC, with reference 25476 (COMPETE2030-FEDER-03033600) Co-funded by ERDF - European Regional Development Fund through the Innovation and Digital Transition Thematic Programme (COMPETE 2030) within the scope of Portugal 2030.

1. GRANT DESCRIPTION

Type of grant: Research Grant (BI)

General scientific area: COMPUTER SCIENCE

Scientific subarea: Programming,Informatics

Area of Work: Artificial Intelligence

Grant duration: 6 months, starting on 2026-12-15, with the possibility of being renewed until the end of the project.

Scientific advisor: Evelin Freire Amorim

Workplace: INESC TEC, Porto, Portugal

Maintenance stipend: € 1359.64, **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:

This scholarship is part of a responsible AI project for customer service, which involves developing a generative AI operating system (Gen OS) to interact with users of a telecommunications company. To ensure the system is reliable and transparent, two requirements must be met: protecting customers' personal information and ensuring that AI agents are tested and monitored both before and during operation. The fellow will focus on two key areas: fine-tuning anonymization models and building a staging platform to test the agent's operating system. Specifically, the fellow will:

- Fine-tune anonymization models—designed to detect and mask personal information—using a manually annotated dataset of call transcripts;

- Evaluate these models and analyze their errors, including their robustness against errors originating from automatic speech recognition (ASR) systems;

- Design and implement the testing architecture for the staging platform, where agents are validated before being deployed into production;

- Define test scenarios for the agents, including functional, regression, and robustness tests;

- Integrate telemetry into the platform—using OpenTelemetry or another suitable existing solution—to enable observability and the auditing of agent behavior;

- Implement automated calculation of agent performance metrics;

- Document the code, ensure its reproducibility, and contribute to technical reports and project publications.

3. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND TRAINING:

The work plan is organized into the following items, with a strong focus on implementation:

- State of the art and requirements: A survey of text anonymization approaches, methods for testing and evaluating LLM-based agents, and observability for multi-agent systems. This includes analyzing the agent system architecture and the annotated dataset, as well as defining requirements in collaboration with the post-doctoral researcher.

- Anonymization models: Fine-tuning models using the manually annotated dataset and comparing them against existing baselines.

- Evaluation of anonymization models: Entity-level evaluation and error analysis, with particular attention to the impact of ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition) errors. Selection of models to be integrated into the system.

- Staging platform: Design and implementation of the testing architecture for the agent operating system. Definition of test scenarios and the criteria that agents must meet before moving to production.

- Telemetry and automated metrics: Implementation of telemetry within the platform (using OpenTelemetry or another suitable existing solution), defining what data is recorded during each agent interaction. Development of automated metric calculations based on test results and telemetry data.

- Integration, documentation, and dissemination: Integration of the anonymization models and the testing platform into the system. This includes documentation, ensuring code reproducibility, and contributing to technical reports and publications.

4. REQUIRED PROFILE:

Admission requirements:

MSc degree in Data Science, Artificial Intelligence or related areas.
The awarding of the fellowship is dependent on the applicants' enrolment in study cycle or non-award courses of Higher Education Institutions.

Preference factors:
- Fluency in Portuguese.

- Previous research publications in relevant conferences or journals.

- Experience with Python and the libraries of PyTorch, Hugging Face, Transformers, and LangChain or Pydantic.

Minimum requirements:
- Prior experience with NLP and LLMs in industrial or academic settings. Knowledge of multi-agent applications.
- Advanced knowledge of English (particularly reading and writing).

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, 50%), Scientific Publications (PC, 10%), Experience (EX, 20%) and Motivation Letter (CM, 20%).
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 (70%) and EI (30%).

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: Evelin Freire Amorim
Full member: Nuno Ricardo Guimarães
Full member: Ricardo Campos
Substitute member: Alípio Jorge

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 2026-11-05 to 2026-11-18

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







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