

Call for the Program “POC by Trentino – Test Your Idea”

Introduction

Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK) and **Università degli Studi di Trento (UniTrento)**, as part of their respective initiatives aimed at enhancing research, jointly promote the “**POC by Trentino - Test Your Idea**” Call (hereinafter “**Call**”). The Call is structured into funding lines dedicated to applicants from each institution, with uniform procedures for project submission, deadlines, evaluation, and award of funding.

The Call is issued within the framework of the UniTrento–FBK Framework Agreement currently in effect and the Program Agreements of both entities with the Autonomous Province of Trento. It is consistent with:

- the FBK 2024–2027 Strategic Plan;
- the UniTrento 2022-2027 Strategic Plan;
- the technology transfer, academic entrepreneurship, and research valorization strategies of both entities;
- the Trentino Startup Valley ecosystem promoted by Trentino Sviluppo.

The Call is supported by **funding from the Autonomous Province of Trento** and by contributions from key **institutions within the local system**, including **Camera di Commercio di Trento, Federazione Trentina della Cooperazione, Fondazione Caritro e Dolomiti Energia**.

Art. 1 – Purpose and Objectives of the Program

The Call was established to support and valorize **ideas with high innovation potential** arising from research conducted at **Fondazione Bruno Kessler** and the **University of Trento**, encouraging **researchers and PhD candidates** to adopt an **entrepreneurial** approach and to pursue projects involving higher technological risk.

The **primary objective** of the Call is to select and support research initiatives with **concrete prospects for direct market exploitation**, offering practical tools to transform scientific results into applied solutions and sustainable business models, in particular through:

- the creation of startups/spin-offs;
- access to the Trentino Startup Valley program;
- industrial collaboration agreements;
- intellectual property licensing agreements.

Patent development, increased Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), and other technological maturation KPIs are considered complementary objectives serving direct valorization.

To this end, the Call supports the development of Proofs of Concept aimed at reducing technological and market risk, validating industrial or commercial applications, building or strengthening the entrepreneurial team, and defining a solid path to market entry.

Art. 2 – Financial Allocation and Duration

The financial allocation that FBK and UniTrento will provide, respectively, for each funded project under their jurisdiction ranges from €30,000 to €80,000.

The amount of such funding must be requested based on the detailed Activity Plan, which forms part of the Valorization project. The Selection Committee will evaluate and approve the appropriateness of the requested amount. Additional funding may be allocated beyond the amounts indicated above, taking into account: (a) the maturity level of the idea/technology; (b) the field of application; and (c) the complexity of the technology. The Activity Plan must provide for a maximum duration of eight (8) months.

For administrative and reporting requirements, reference is made to the internal regulations of the two entities, each with respect to the beneficiaries under its authority.

Art. 3 – Applicants

The following individuals may apply, either individually or as part of a team:

For FBK

- Researchers and technologists and technical laboratory staff;
- Post-doc;
- PhD students.

For UniTrento

- Researchers and professors;
- Technical staff with an active role in technology development;
- Research Contractor(s);
- PhD students.

Each team must designate a Project Leader at the time of application submission.

The Project Leader may submit only one application, while individuals may participate in multiple teams as Members.

- for UniTrento, the Project Leader must be a member of the University staff who is a Full Professor, Associate Professor, Permanent Researcher, or Fixed-term Researcher;

- for FBK, the Project Leader must be a FBK staff member who is a Researcher, Technologist, Laboratory Technician or Postdoctoral Fellow.

The participation of parties external to FBK and UniTrento as part of the team is permitted only during the support program (Art. 9), it being understood that such parties do not qualify as beneficiaries of the funding and do not hold rights to the results of the Project, unless otherwise formally approved.

Art. 4 – FBK-UniTrento joint projects

Joint teams are those composed of at least one person with the role of Research Contractor, Researcher, or Professor, or Technical Staff with an active role in the technological development at UniTrento, and at least one person with the role of Post-doc, Researcher, or Technologist, or Technical Laboratory Staff at FBK.

When submitting the application, joint teams composed of Fondazione Bruno Kessler and Università degli Studi di Trento are required to submit two separate budgets, respectively intended to cover the activities of FBK and UniTrento. The total amount of the requested grant, resulting from the sum of the two budgets, must be between 30,000 euros and 80,000 euros.

Art. 5 – Scouting and outreach activities

Before and during the opening of the Call, FBK and UniTrento will activate proactive scouting activities, which may include:

- local presentations at departments, centers, and offices of the two institutions;
- informational meetings;
- invitations aimed at the presentation of valorization projects;
- preliminary support for the definition of project ideas.

The scouting activities, carried out in collaboration with HIT, may be implemented differently by the two institutions, while maintaining common selection criteria.

Art. 6 – Project submission procedures

Applications shall be submitted by presenting a **Valorization** Project prepared using the template available at the following links: for FBK (<https://howto.fbk.eu/documenti/testyour-idea-il-programma-poc-by-trentino-2026/>) and for UniTrento



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(<https://www.unitn.it/it/terzamissione/valorizzazione-ricerca/unitrento-linnovazione/PoC-by-Trentino-2026>)

Applications must be submitted, under penalty of inadmissibility, starting from **9:00 a.m. on March 5, 2026, and no later than 11:00 p.m. on May 5, 2026.**

Applications submitted by teams composed exclusively of FBK personnel must be sent by completing the form available at the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd0eSFQyukBwtSR2tWZqILImHUr6TMkWJ1tlf gntYppOpv1A/viewform?usp=dialog>

Applications submitted by teams composed exclusively of UniTrento personnel must be sent by completing the form available at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnBbYkh7iUSfYI_n6GVr0qTdfSbPsQIXhtI4Wo KN2eJPXA/viewform?usp=header

Applications submitted by joint teams must be sent by completing the form of the institution with which the Project Leader is affiliated.

Applications may be submitted in Italian or English.

Art. 7 – Evaluation Committee

The selection of Projects is entrusted to a multidisciplinary Evaluation Committee composed of representatives from academia, innovation, and local area development. The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the governing bodies of the two institutions upon the joint proposal of the Rector of UniTrento and the President of FBK.

The Evaluation Committee is composed as follows:

- 3 independent external experts (industry, venture capital, technology transfer), jointly designated by FBK and UniTrento, among whom the Chair is appointed;
- at least 1 representative designated by FBK;
- at least 1 representative designated by UniTrento.

In evaluating the applications, the Committee will be supported by personnel from the Technology Transfer Offices of FBK and UniTrento, who will provide administrative support to the Evaluation Committee.

During the selection of commercialization projects and the Pitch Day, the Evaluation Committee may rely on the support of Hub Innovazione Trentino.

Art. 8 - Assessment Criteria

Commercialization Projects will be evaluated by the Selection Committee, which will proceed with the opening, examination, and selection of applications, assigning the corresponding scores according to the criteria set out below:

Criteria and weights for a maximum of 60 points

Quality and maturity of the solution (21 points)

- State of the art and competitive advantage
- Maturity level of the proposed solution
- Protectability (IP)

Impact and Market (21 points)

- Clarity of the issue and identification of beneficiaries
- Knowledge of the application context (market, stakeholders)
- Coherence with S3

Quality and Consistency of the Business Plan (18 points)

- Technical feasibility and development roadmap
- Consistency of the activities plan
- Budget appropriateness

A specific award of +5 points is assigned to FBK–UniTrento joint projects.

The Evaluation Committee will select, from among the Valorization Projects that have obtained a score of at least 35 points, up to 30 Valorization Projects to be admitted to the Support Program. The final ranking of funded projects will be defined after the Pitch Day (Art. 8).

Art. 9 - Support program

The support program is divided into two successive phases aimed at supporting teams in business development and in the valorization of project results.

Entrepreneurial training, specialized training, and mentoring services will be provided by Hub Innovazione Trentino in collaboration with external experts. Coaching services will be provided by Hub Innovazione Trentino in collaboration with UniTrento and FBK.

Phase 1 - (2 months)

- entrepreneurial training provided through weekly workshops;
- coaching with Technology Transfer experts;
- preparation for the Pitch Day.

Participation in at least 70% of the workshops in Phase 1 by at least one team member (including on a rotating basis) is a necessary requirement for access to the Pitch Day.

Phase 2 – (8 months)

- specialized training provided through monthly workshops;
- coaching with Technology Transfer experts;
- mentoring with field experts;
- connections with actors in the industrial and financial ecosystem.

The support program may be adapted and revised, after coordination with the participating teams, in order to ensure consistency with the progress of the projects and their development needs, without prejudice to the achievement of the general objectives of the Call.

Art. 10 – Pitch Day and ranking

Participation in the Pitch Day is an essential requirement for access to funding; therefore, failure to participate will result in ineligibility for funding.

The Selection Committee will evaluate the teams' pitches and the work carried out during the first phase of coaching, assigning the corresponding scores according to the criteria indicated below:

Criteria and weights for a maximum of 40 points

Team, skills and engagement (10 points)

- Technical skills and team complementarity
- Team commitment and motivation
- Past experience in technology transfer activities

Quality and Consistency of the Business Plan (10 points)

- Technology Development Roadmap
- Clarity and consistency of the valorization plan
- Consistent activities plan and budget adequacy

Quality and clarity of the presentation (10 points)

- Slide quality
- Clarity and consistency of the oral presentation
- Ability to answer probing questions

Evolution in the Understanding of Technology–Market Fit (10 points)

- Value Proposition
- Competitor benchmark
- TAM, SAM

A specific award of +5 points is assigned to Valorization Projects that include a consistent start-up/spin-off development plan at the end of the PoC program.

The Selection Committee will draw up a ranking based on the sum of the scores obtained for the Pitch presented and those already obtained in the evaluation of the quality of the Valorization Projects, for a maximum score of 100 points (excluding awards). All Valorization Projects that have obtained a score of at least 65 points will be eligible for funding.

The Selection Committee shall then draw up a ranking of Fundable Valorization Projects in descending order of overall score and shall determine the amount of funding for each project deemed fundable, until the available financial resources are exhausted. The Selection Committee reserves the right to modify the requested amount, either increasing or decreasing it, subject to adequate justification, which will be shared with the applicant.

Art. 11 – Funding Promoted by the Supporting Partners of the Program

The following organizations and companies participate as supporting partners in the program: **Camera di Commercio di Trento, Federazione Trentina della Cooperazione, Fondazione Caritro e Dolomiti Energia.**

Teams deemed eligible for funding may be financed or co-financed by the partners of the program on issues of interest to the partners, all or part of the budget required in the Commercialization Project. The allocation of funding from the supporting partners shall be carried out by the Committee, supported by a representative of the partner, who will assess the consistency with the proposed topic of interest and the affinity with the relevant market sectors.

If the team's budget approved by the Committee exceeds the budget made available by the partner, the difference may be supplemented with resources from the applicant's institution, provided that the team is ranked in a position that guarantees access to funding.

During the second phase of the support program, partners will be facilitated in interacting with the teams awarded partner funding in order to evaluate possible collaborations and joint technological or business development activities.

Acceptance of partner funding does not constitute an obligation for Applicants teams and remains at their discretion.

Art. 12 – Financing and disbursement methods

- The funds are managed separately by FBK and UniTrento.
- Each entity finances the beneficiaries under its authority.

For each selected project, funding of up to €80,000 is available, together with an intensive eight-month training and coaching program, as well as access to FBK and UniTrento laboratories, services, and infrastructure.

The funding is disbursed in installments linked to the achievement of financial and project milestones agreed upon and defined in the Valorization Project: 40% at the start of the funded project, 30% following the evaluation at the end of month 3 (Evaluation Step 1), and 30% following the evaluation at the end of month 6 (Evaluation Step 2) of Phase 2 – PoC Development, based on the criteria set out above.

Art. 13 – Fundable Activities and Eligible Expenses

The *Activity Plan* of the *Funded Projects* may include a range of eligible activities which, by way of example and without limitation, include:

- activities aimed at testing, experimenting, demonstrating and validating innovative ideas and solutions, supporting the development of further research for commercial or social application and addressing any critical issues that could emerge during reviews;
- verification of the technical and operational feasibility of innovative ideas and solutions, with attention to technical issues and the definition of the strategic direction of the *funded Project*;
- development of prototypes to test the suitability of the innovative idea or solution with respect to market needs;
- definition and consolidation of the intellectual property rights associated with the funded Project, and definition of strategies for enhancing the funded Project, the Background, and the Foreground, through, for example, licensing strategies or assignment of IP rights;
- support in budget planning and in the management of commercial or other discussions with potential investors and strategic partners;
- financing of expenses relating to the drafting and formalization of contracts and legal agreements aimed at enhancing and marketing the project idea;
- comprehensive analysis of collected data on market potential, identification of target customer segments, and assessment of competition and industry trends;

The following types of expenses are eligible for the implementation of the *Activity Plan*:

- Costs for the engagement of suppliers or external consultants, where necessary. This category includes costs incurred for specialist and/or technological activities related to increasing the technological and/or commercial maturity of the project in order to promote its technology transfer to companies (e.g., business plan development, consultancy services, promotion of the initiative, re-engineering and software development, etc.), as well as expenses related to the protection of intellectual property.
- Costs for the purchase of goods and materials, such as machinery, equipment, consumables, and software licenses. This category includes expenses for goods

necessary for the implementation of demonstration and prototype activities or other expenses strictly related to activities attributable to the *funded Project*.

- Any other eligible expenses, directly related to the implementation of the activities of the *Funded Project*;
- Personnel costs: this item includes expenses for researchers, technicians and other support personnel. In the case of UniTrento, personnel costs are eligible provided that the personnel are engaged in activities attributable to the Project and are not permanently employed as part of the workforce.
- Mobility costs: this category includes costs incurred for business travel and participation in national and international events and fairs, strictly related to activities attributable to the Project.

Art. 14 – Ownership of Results

Ownership of the results, including all related Intellectual Property rights, generated under the Project by teams composed exclusively of members of Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK) shall belong exclusively to FBK.

Ownership of the results, including all related Intellectual Property rights, generated under the Project by teams composed exclusively of members of the University of Trento (UniTrento) shall belong exclusively to UniTrento.

For joint teams composed of members of FBK and UniTrento, ownership of the results, including related Intellectual Property rights, shall be jointly held by FBK and UniTrento and attributed in proportion to the inventive contribution provided by each research institution under the Project, unless otherwise agreed in writing between the two institutions.

If the results of a joint project between FBK and UniTrento are subject to the protection or commercialization of Intellectual Property, the methods for the protection, management, exploitation, and valorization of the related Intellectual Property shall be governed by specific management agreements.

For teams financed, in whole or in part, by external partners, ownership of the Intellectual Property rights in the results generated shall belong to FBK and/or UniTrento, in accordance with the inventive contribution of each institution to the performance of the project activities.

The IP Background used within the Project remains the exclusive property of the entity that owns it, namely FBK or UniTrento, and shall not be transferred or granted in any manner, except within the limits that may be provided for under specific licensing agreements.

If the IP Background used in the Project is shared among several entities, including FBK, UniTrento, and/or third parties, funding of the Project is subject to the prior acquisition of the right to use the IP Background from all entities holding the relevant rights. During the first phase

of the support program, teams will be supported by personnel from the FBK and UniTrento Technology Transfer Offices in verifying the ownership of the IP Background.

Licenses to startups established following the successful completion of the project for the purpose of enhancing the Intellectual Property associated with the project shall be governed by the regulations in force of the institution that owns the relevant Intellectual Property.

Art. 15 – Obligations of recipients

All participants admitted to the coaching program are required to:

- actively participate in the training and coaching activities provided for in both phases of the coaching program, attending at least 70% of the workshops with at least one team member (including on a rotating basis);
- comply with the timelines and operational procedures established for the implementation of the support program;
- actively participate in the Pitch Day event;
- collaborate with the Technology Transfer / Research Valorization Offices in all activities necessary for the protection and valorization of Intellectual Property;
- make themselves available, if requested, to participate in events presenting the program and to contribute to the preparation of communication materials;

In addition, only participants admitted to funding are required to:

- strictly comply with the deadlines and operational procedures agreed for the implementation of the project;
- report on the activities carried out and the progress achieved, in accordance with the timelines and procedures established by Fondazione Bruno Kessler and the University of Trento, actively collaborating in the continuous monitoring of the funded Project;
- comply with the administrative and reporting requirements set out in the internal regulations of the two entities, each with respect to its own institution.

In the event of failure to comply with the obligations set out above, Fondazione Bruno Kessler and the University of Trento reserve the right to suspend or revoke the funding granted.

If, at the end of the program or within the following three years, the recipients intend to establish a new company aimed at commercializing the results, technologies, or Intellectual Property developed within the funded project, they undertake to request the formal recognition of the new company as an academic spin-off/startup of the promoting institution, in accordance with the procedures and regulations in force at the time of establishment.

Art. 16 – Processing of personal data

Pursuant to Article 13 of EU Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) – Information on the Processing of Personal Data: UniTrento, FBK, and Hub Innovazione Trentino act as Joint Controllers of the processing of personal data, as governed by a specific joint controllership agreement, which defines their respective responsibilities for compliance with the obligations referred to in Article 26 of the GDPR. The content of the agreement is summarized in this notice. A copy of the joint controllership agreement may be provided upon request.

The data will be processed for the purposes of managing applications for admission to the Call and the related evaluation process, as well as—in subsequent phases—for the performance of training and mentoring activities and project quality assessment. Extended information on data processing will be made available before access to the respective platforms of UniTrento, FBK, and Hub Innovazione Trentino. The Joint Controllers will provide data subjects with a joint privacy notice regarding the processing of personal data in relation to their respective processing activities.

UniTrento, FBK, and Hub Innovazione Trentino will access the data relating to the management of the procedure, as necessary to perform their institutional functions and to comply with regulatory and contractual obligations related to the implementation of this Call.

Pursuant to Article 13 of the GDPR, participants are informed that the processing of personal data transmitted with applications for participation in the Call will take place in compliance with the principles set out in Article 5 of the GDPR, and in particular with the principles of lawfulness, fairness, and confidentiality provided for under applicable legislation. Such processing will be carried out exclusively for the purposes of conducting the evaluation procedure for the Development Projects and managing this Call, by the persons responsible for the selection procedure within each Entity, using appropriate procedures, including computerized systems, in the manner and within the limits necessary to pursue the aforementioned purposes.

Submission of the data is mandatory for the evaluation of the eligibility requirements for participation; failure to provide such data will result in exclusion from the selection process.

Data subjects are entitled to the rights provided for in Articles 15 et seq. of Regulation (EU) 2016/679, including, in particular, the right of access to their personal data, the right to request rectification or erasure (where such erasure does not conflict with applicable data retention obligations or the need to protect the University, the Foundation, and the professionals who processed the data in the event of legal disputes), the right to restriction of processing, and the right to object to processing.

Data subjects who believe that the processing of their personal data is carried out in violation of the provisions of the European Regulation have the right to lodge a complaint with the Italian Data Protection Authority (Garante per la protezione dei dati personali) or to seek judicial remedies, in accordance with applicable legislation.



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The data will be stored, in paper and digital format, for as long as necessary to achieve the aforementioned purposes, in accordance with applicable national and European legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU)

The Data Protection Officers (DPOs) may be contacted at the following addresses:

- University of Trento, Via Calepina 14, 38122 Trento (TN), Italy – email: dpo@unitn.it
- Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Via Sommarive 18, 38123 Trento (TN), Italy – email: privacy@fbk.eu
- Hub Innovazione Trentino Fondazione (HIT), Piazza Mancini 17, 38123 Povo (TN), Italy – email: privacy@trentinoinnovation.eu

Art. 17 – Final provisions

For any matters not expressly governed by this Call, reference shall be made to the FBK and UniTrento internal regulations.

Should one or more provisions contained in this call be found to be null, invalid, or unenforceable, in whole or in part, such circumstance shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions. Any invalid or unenforceable provision shall be interpreted or replaced so as to give effect, as far as possible, to the original intent of the Organizers and to the objectives of the Initiative as described in this Call .