European Digital UniverCity — WIDE

Call for Seed Projects

(11 November 2024)

Call for projects

The EDUC-WIDE program is focused on research and innovation collaboration. The Seed Projects are Research and Innovation small scale collaborative projects that will enhance the possibility to upscale collaboration between the EDUC Universities and develop large-scale projects. Each project should have a duration of 12-18 months, with a starting date from their approval and final date before 31 December 2026.

Aim of the call

The aim of this call for seed projects is to select small-scale collaborative R&I projects that will:

- upscale collaboration between EDUC Universities and their local and regional ecosystems

Co-funded by the European Union

- initiate and/or strengthen collaboration on R&I topics of joint interest
- create preliminary data supporting feasibility of ambitious scientific and technological endeavours
- translate and deploy academic knowledge into a non-academic environment
- contribute to the general sustainability of cooperation within the EDUC Alliance.

Applicants

Applicants are at least 2 EDUC Universities, one of them based in a Widening Country (Czech Republic, Hungary, Ukraine).

Proposals with more than 2 EDUC Universities involved are strongly encouraged, as well as those with the direct involvement of the local and regional ecosystems as associated partners (e.g. companies, local administrations, research institutes, associations, NGOs, etc.).

Associated partners can participate at no cost. The EDUC universities of Rennes and Paris Nanterre can participate without direct funding in Seed Projects, as they are associated partners in EDUC-WIDE and not beneficiaries. The associated partners will be beneficiaries of knowledge transfer, can co-create projects and R&I targets, host pilot/deployment sites and/or research fellows, etc.

EDUC offers the possibility to establish a connection with other members of the Alliance and related ecosystems within the research area of interest through the OpenUp platform (https://educ.openup.education/welcome) where the researchers can register and indicate their project ideas (Seed projects in the main menu, then "+ Project Ideas").

List of eligible EDUC-WIDE member institutions (as project applicants):

UNIVERSITY	COUNTRY	Type of Participation
Masaryk University	Czech Republic (Widening)	Beneficiary
University of Pécs	Hungary (Widening)	Beneficiary
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University	Ukraine (Widening)	Beneficiary
University of Cagliari	Italy	Beneficiary
University of Potsdam	Germany	Beneficiary
University of South-Eastern Norway	Norway	Beneficiary
University Jaume I	Spain	Beneficiary
University of Rennes	France	Associated (without direct funding)
University Paris Nanterre	France	Associated (without direct funding)

Each proposal must include:

• one designated Principal Investigator (PI) at one of the EDUC Universities;
• one local project coordinator in charge at each of the participating member institutions.

The PI is responsible for the project coordination and for monitoring the overall implementation of the project with support of the local coordinators. The PI and the local coordinators must hold an employment contract at one of the EDUC member universities covering the entire duration of the envisioned project as a minimum.
In case of changes in the PI (both internally or in case he/she leaves the University) during the project, the University proposes a replacement that needs to be approved and documented internally by the institutions and the EDUC-WIDE SPEP (Seed Project Evaluation Panel).

The participation of early-stage researchers in the research group is strongly encouraged.

Strategic areas for this call

Researchers must focus their Seed Project proposal on topics that have the potential to generate significant impact in Green Transition, Digital Transformation, EU Missions –mainly cancer mission –, and UN SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Specifically, you can find the areas that better address the above points highlighted below in the strategic research areas of the EDUC long-term R&I agenda:

- **Life Long Health and Wellbeing**
- Culture and Heritage
- **Justice, inequality and inclusion**
- **Mobility/Smart Cities**
- European Union Studies
- **Sustainable Changes: Climate and resources**
- **Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence**
- Economics and Business
- **Material Science**
- Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- Behavioural/Neuroscience studies

Application process

To apply for the call, please visit the Seed Project Landing Page (https://www.educalliance.eu/calls/call-for-seed-projects), log in or register on OpenUP (https://educ.openup.education/welcome), and complete the application form on OpenUP by the deadline (27/01/2025 h. 12.00).
Prior to their application, researchers can also post their project idea on OpenUP to gather interest from partners and local ecosystems. Together with the online application form, the applicants are requested to upload the following annexes:

- letters of endorsement from the involved universities, signed by the person responsible for resources (e.g. Head of Departments) (according to the provided template)
- a budget form according to the provided template.

All proposals must include expected results (scientific publications, knowledge transfer, etc.) and a realistic sustainability plan addressing the perspectives for continuous collaboration of the project members beyond the project duration. Projects foreseeing the preparation of joint proposals for external funding are strongly encouraged.

Seed Projects should support intersectoral collaboration – co-design of R&I targets with ecosystem actors, deployment of research results to ecosystems, etc.

Deadlines
- The call is open from 11 November 2024 till 27 January 2025, h. 12.00
- Applicants will be informed about the outcome of the call by April/May 2025
- All projects must be implemented between 01 June 2025 and 31 December 2026. The expected starting date is therefore between June 2025 to January 2026, depending on the project duration.

Funding and eligible expenses
The total allocation of funding of this call is 500,000 € (400,000 €, as direct costs, plus an additional 25% for indirect costs).
The fixed cap for Advanced Partners (UNICA, USN, UJI, UP) of the total allocation of funding is 187,500 € (150,000 € plus 25% for indirect costs).

The expected contribution per Seed Project is between 25,000 and 75,000 € (20,000 - 60,000 € of direct costs).
A minimum of 10 proposals will be funded according to the EDUC-WIDE Grant Agreement.

Eligible costs (Lump sum): consumables, services, travel, personnel, as detailed below. These costs must be specified in the project proposal.

List of eligible costs:
- Travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses: airfare (economy class), train, bus, lodging, meals, visas, etc.
- Costs of hosting seminars/conferences or workshops (e.g., venue rental, catering, lodging, etc.)
- Consumables and supplies
- Publications (related to collaborative research) costs, including Open Access fees (only if published by February 2027 in Gold Open Access -NO hybrid journals-)
- Personnel costs (scientific, administrative)

➢ Internal invoicing for access to research infrastructures.

Project proposals that have successfully passed through the selection process will be supported by the EDUC-WIDE project funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Widening participation and spreading excellence programme under grant agreement No. 101136533.

The funded projects will receive a prefinancing of 75% of the budget, each partner from its own university, according to the internal university rules. The final payment is subject to the approval of the final report.

Selection Criteria

The proposals will be evaluated according to the following selection criteria (maximum 100 points):

1. Quality and innovativeness of the research project, including interdisciplinarity (max 30 points)

2. Impact in defined priority areas as mentioned above (max 20 points)

3. Ecosystem involvement and intersectoral collaboration (max 20 points)

4. Feasibility, included time management, budget, skills of the research team, etc. (max 20 points)

5. Vision of sustainability and further potentials and plan to attract follow-up funding (max 10 points).

Selection Process

The selection process is composed of the following three steps:

1) Administrative check – formal check of the application; relevant EDUC-WIDE member institution confirms the employment status of the applicant.

2) Peer review – each proposal for seed projects will be individually reviewed and scored by at least 3 Seed Project Evaluation Panel (SPEP) members. Afterwards, a ranking list will be compiled through discussion of the full panel starting with the individual scores but with panel consensus as the main guiding principle. At the end of the peer review, SPEP can 1) recommend the project for funding, 2) recommend the project only partially (with proposed changes), or 3) reject the project from funding.

3) Final list of projects to be funded (in line with the available budget) will be discussed and approved by the EDUC-WIDE SPEP.

For equal points, preference will be given to institutions that have no other funded projects within the same call.

Projects will be awarded funding starting from the top of the ranking list until financial allocation is reached.

In case the budget cap for Advanced partners is reached before the total allocations, proposers of the following Seed Project(s) will be invited to negotiate about re-structuring of their project(s) to make them feasible without financial contribution to Advanced partners. EDUC-WIDE Ethics Advisor will review the list of projects recommended for funding and resolve with applicants the eventual ethical issues.

Contacts

For general enquiries, please contact your local EDUC-WIDE contact listed below.

University	Name	Email
Masaryk University	Iva Sedláková, EDUC-WIDE Project Manager	sedlakova@rect.muni.cz
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General Conditions

Nature of research and publication of results

This call intends to support research projects conducted in academic institutions. All research results achieved under this call shall be published. User shall follow the best practice by publishing in Open Access journals and provide their data in a FAIR manner.

Acknowledgements

Publications resulting from work undertaken within the EDUC-WIDE seed projects must contain an acknowledgement according to the following pattern:

> *The authors acknowledge financial support of the "EDUC WIDE project funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe under Grant Agreement No. 101136533. This manuscript reflects only the authors' views and opinions, neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be considered responsible for them.*

Similar acknowledgements should be included during conference presentations, including the proceedings, and at other public presentations.

Researchers shall notify the organisers of this call of all publications that resulted from the EDUC-WIDE funded seed projects. Please send the PDF file and reference details of the publication as soon as it has been published to educ-wide@unica.it Please indicate the type of publication: Scientific Journal, Book, Patent, Proceedings, article on the web, other. These publications should also carry the acknowledgement given above.

Ethics

For Proposals implying ethical issues of diverse kinds, we will use the Ethics Issues Table format from Horizon Europe to identify such issues. EDUC-WIDE includes a dedicated task (T10.5) to monitor the ethical issues through the appointment of a dedicated Ethics Advisor (expert from Research Ethics Committee) for EDUC-WIDE. The Ethics Advisor will step into the evaluation process of all open calls to check the Ethics Issues Table and point out potential risks. If there are ethical issues identified, the Ethics Advisor will request documentation compliant with Horizon Europe guidelines from the applicants, before the implementation of the Seed Project is authorised. The Ethics Advisor will review the list of projects recommended for funding and resolve with applicants the eventual ethical issues. If the identified ethical issues require authorisation of an Ethics Committee, the involved participants will consult their institutional committees.

Data management plan

Recipients of Seed Projects will be obliged to deliver a Data Management Plan covering (the results of) their research (with support from their respective Open Science Expert Group members).

www.educalliance.eu

Final report

Seed project Coordinators have to submit a final report, comprising a description of the work undertaken and a vision of future collaboration among the investigators.

About points not specifically stated in this call, EDUC-WIDE general conditions and rules will apply.