

CIVICA

Work Package 9:

CIVICA Student Community and Identity

Student Engagement Fund –

Project selection and implementation rules

I. General rules and key principles of the Student Engagement Fund

1. The Student Engagement Fund (SEF) is a mini-grant funding scheme aimed at supporting student- or early-stage researchers (ESR)-led joint initiatives within the CIVICA alliance. It aims to foster cross-campus collaboration among students, student associations and ESR from different disciplines and backgrounds in tackling the important issues facing Europe today, and to further enhance the students' experience within the alliance.
2. The SEF initiative may include a wide range of joint projects/initiatives, such as events (in-person or online), student competitions, conferences, workshops, hackathons, digital activities, and others, engaging CIVICA student and early-stage researchers associations and the CIVICA student and ESR community. The above list of possible project types is not exhaustive – other forms of cooperation are acceptable subject to fulfilment of general rules and eligibility criteria set forth in this document.
3. The SEF supports projects that involve students and early-stage researchers from at least two CIVICA partner institutions. Projects foreseeing the participation of more than two CIVICA institutions are highly encouraged.
4. The SEF is managed locally by each partner university, according to standard practices, local rules and regulations, as well as the Erasmus+ grant rules.
5. The SEF supports up to 10 projects/initiatives per academic year, for a total of 20 projects by the end of the academic year 25/26.
6. Each university can assign or allocate a maximum of 3,000 EUR to a single project/initiative in which its students, student associations or ESR host or take part within the SEF framework and a maximum of 10,000 EUR per Academic Year.
7. The total cumulated budget per single project/initiative shall not exceed 10,000 EUR.
8. Exact deadlines for the submission of proposals, the start and completion of projects and their clearing and reporting will be set out in subsequent calls for proposals.
9. The exact allocation of funds by each university shall be indicated in each call for proposals open within the Student Engagement Fund.

II. Eligibility of projects/initiatives

Eligible joint projects/ initiatives shall among others:

1. promote and foster European collaboration and intercultural understanding by involving students and early-stage researchers of at least two CIVICA partner universities;
2. serve the purpose of building a community of students and early-stage researchers through extracurricular activities and initiatives and benefit from the diversity and complementarity of the CIVICA network;
3. be implemented either by registered student associations from at least two CIVICA partner universities or by an ad-hoc project team formed by students and early-stage researchers representing a minimum of two CIVICA partner universities;
4. be fully compliant with local rules and policies governing student-led initiatives at each partner university involved;

5. bring added value to students and early-stage researchers from the CIVICA alliance as well as create a positive impact for the respective students' communities;
6. be preferably aligned with the 4 thematic priorities of CIVICA: Societies in transition, Crises of Earth; Democracy in the 21st century; Europe Revisited; Data-Driven Technologies for the Social Sciences

or

with other EU priorities such as sustainability, multilingualism, diversity and inclusion, solidarity, promoting European culture and cultural interactions

or

addressing global/societal challenges

or

having a core emphasis on Social Sciences (e.g. Economics, Law, International Relations, History, European Studies).

III. Modalities of financing

1. Funding of joint initiatives will be shared equally (or as evenly as possible) between the partner universities involved. Each student association/dedicated project team will thus be funded by their respective home university for the respective portion of the joint initiative they will implement, keeping in mind that - as specified in I. 6 and 7:
 - a) each university can allocate a maximum of 3,000 EUR per single initiative in which its students associations, students or ESR take part within the SEF framework and a maximum of 10,000 EUR per Academic Year.
 - b) The total cumulated funding request per single project/initiative cannot exceed 10,000 EUR.
2. Due to the rule set forth in III. 1, applications for SEF funding require a separate (partial) budget per institution (max 3,000 EUR) and a cumulated budget for the whole initiative (*max total value 10,000 EUR*), the latter consisting of the sum of the partial budgets per institution.
3. Each participating student or ESR applicant team will be responsible for preparing the budget for the part of the activities that will be covered by its home university. Each university will oversee the preparation of the partial budget, which will be put together into the main budget of the project.
4. The project cumulated and partial budgets should be drawn up in accordance with the template annexed to these Rules.
5. It shall not be possible to co-finance SEF projects with external resources. All expenditure necessary to implement the project must be indicated in the project budget and covered by respective CIVICA universities.

IV. SEF cost eligibility

1. The SEF covers expenses that are directly related to the initiative, provided they are realistic, in line with the expected results, compliant with partners' administrative rules and eligible according to Erasmus+ grant funding rules. The eligible expenses include:

- a) travel and accommodation expenses for students and ESRs of the CIVICA alliance (sustainable modes of travel preferred). Travel reimbursements for third parties are not allowed,
- b) costs of accommodation and travel of faculty and staff of the CIVICA alliance if included as participants (e.g. keynote speakers, moderators, etc.) in the projects,
- c) catering for in-person events or meetings (excluding alcoholic beverages),
- d) material resources and consumables for on-site or blended initiatives (including promotional materials),
- e) copyright expenses, e.g. in case of film screenings or initiatives that require music or videos to be played or used,
- f) services for events organisation (e.g. space rental, set up, cleaning, security, IT/audio or video support),
- g) other cost categories provided that they are justified in the context of the goals of the project and are eligible from the point of view of the requirements of the respective home institution.

2. Following expenses are not eligible:

- a) salaries of any kind,
- b) fees or travel expenses for external non-CIVICA guests and third parties,
- c) overheads,
- d) alcohol, entertainment or gifts,
- e) expenses representing an indirect transfer to external organisations,
- f) purchasing of equipment.

3. The SEF expects that the applicants will use the funds in a responsible and transparent manner and will report on the use of the funds at the end of the initiative/project (final report).

V. Calls for applications

1. The Student Engagement Fund (SEF) invites applications from students and early-stage researchers who want to initiate or participate in projects/initiative that foster cross-campus collaboration, civic engagement, and social innovation within the CIVICA alliance of universities.
2. The Student Engagement Fund (SEF) will foresee one centralised call per Academic Year (2024/2025 & 2025/2026) to support the implementation of joint student and ESR projects/initiatives.
Implementation of the accepted projects shall take place from January to June of the respective academic year.
3. The calls for applications will be promoted both centrally and individually by each university, CIVICA communication team, as well as the CIVICA Ambassadors, and the Student and ESR Board. Each university will have to locally provide detailed instructions concerning project application and implementation to their students.

VI. Student and Early-Stage Researchers project teams

1. Joint projects/initiatives to be financed through SEF can be proposed by:
 - a) a project team formed by at least two student associations from at least two CIVICA partner universities which are registered at their home university. In this case, members from all the student associations are expected to work on implementing and organising the joint project/initiative, or
 - b) an ad-hoc project team formed by students and/or early-stage researchers representing a minimum of two CIVICA partner universities declaring to work on the project/initiative. In this case, team members can include both student association members and unaffiliated students willing to work on the project/initiative.

Proposals of projects/initiatives foreseeing the participation of students and early-stage researchers representing more than two CIVICA partner universities are highly encouraged.

2. For each joint initiative the following must be identified:
 - a) each project team should have a project leader (student or early-stage researcher) and contact person(s) representing students/student associations from CIVICA partner universities participating in the project. The project leader will be the main contact point and spokesperson for all next steps concerning the project/initiative.
 - b) each project should also have a project advisor(s) representing the faculty or staff of at least one CIVICA university involved in the joint proposal to serve as an advisor throughout the planning and implementation of the project.

VII. Preparation of joint project proposals

Students/student associations or early-stage researchers interested in delivering a project/initiative proposal will have to take following steps:

1. **Step 1:** team up with other CIVICA students/student associations or ESRs (form a project team)
2. **Step 2:** prepare a detailed concept of a joint project/initiative, clearly specifying how:
 - it will involve students/early-stage researchers from at least two CIVICA partner universities,
 - the initiative will benefit from the diversity and complementarity of the CIVICA alliance,
 - the initiative fits into the thematic areas set forth in II.6,
 - a plan for the execution of the project as well as its implementation timeline during the academic year.
3. **Step 3:** prepare a **cumulated budget** for the joint project/initiative (max total value 10,000 EUR) which will include a **partial budget per institution** (max 3,000 EUR) detailing the expenses to be covered by each institution involved in the joint proposal .
4. **Step 4:** obtain pre-approval of the proposal and the partial budgets by relevant bodies (or grant manager, or WP9 coordinator) at each CIVICA partner university involved in the project/initiative (*following the home university's rules and regulations and with regard to the eligibility of expenses to ensure compliance with Erasmus+ funding rules*).

VIII. Submission of a joint proposal

1. Applications shall be submitted via my.civica.eu platform according to the procedure set forth in the call for proposals.
2. The application that includes contacts of all students involved in the preparation of the proposal shall be sent by the team leader.
3. Applications must include the following elements:
 - detailed concept of the joint initiative, clearly specifying its goals and possible deliverables and explaining how it will involve students or early-stage researchers from at least two CIVICA partner universities and how the initiative will benefit from the diversity and complementarity of the CIVICA alliance.
 - explanation how the project relates to the thematic areas set forth in II.6.
 - cumulated budget of the initiative and separate partial budgets per institution, designed in accordance with the cost eligibility criteria.
 - justification of all expenditures included in the budget from the point of view of the goals of the project.
 - project implementation schedule, including its starting and closing date as well as main stages of implementation.
 - a list of students and/or early-stage researchers declaring to work on the implementation of the initiative, clearly specifying the project leader, and main contact points and project advisor.
 - proof of pre-approval of the project/initiative and partial budget by relevant bodies at each university involved in the proposal. The pre-approval proof may take the form of an e-mail confirmation or other separate document, if required by the partner university concerned.

A standard form to follow when submitting applications will accompany the opening of the call for applications.

IX. Selection and approval process

1. The CIVICA centralised SEF Committee will carry out the final selection of the joint projects/initiatives to be funded through the SEF. The Committee can only approve project proposals which are pre-approved at each CIVICA partner university involved in the project/initiative.
2. The centralised CIVICA SEF Committee convenes once per Academic Year in early December, is co-chaired by the CIVICA Secretariat and the WP9 leader and is composed of:
 - One faculty/staff member per CIVICA institution, appointed by the respective CIVICA Steering Committee Member/the WP9 project manager at each Partner University;
 - All the members of the CIVICA Student and ESR Board (one per institution).
3. In order to avoid conflict of interest and ensure full impartiality of the CIVICA SEF Committee's work, members of the Student and ESR Board participating in the project teams taking part in the SEF application process, shall not participate in evaluation of the projects. In this case, the respective universities will identify another person (not taking part in any of the projects

submitted within the call for proposals) representing the student community to take part in the evaluation of the projects,

4. The centralised CIVICA SEF Committee will evaluate applications inter alia on the following criteria:
 - quality and value added of the project (0-20 points)
 - impact on the respective students' communities, also in terms of number of students to be involved/reached, as well as the number of CIVICA Universities involved in the proposal (0-10 points)
 - thematic relevance of the project - adherence of the initiative to CIVICA thematic areas/EU strategic priorities/focus areas (0-10 points)
 - project feasibility and adequacy of the budget (this criterion includes eligibility of the planned budget and spending efficiency, defined as consistency of the requested financing with the planned activities and results of the project) (0-10 points).
5. Based on the substantive assessment, ranking list of all projects will be drawn up. The acceptance of a project for implementation is determined not only by its place on the ranking list, but also by the availability of funds in the pool of all the universities involved. If the SEF financial resources of any of the participating institution are exhausted, the next project on the ranking list will be selected for which all the involved institutions still have funds available.
6. The calculation of the results of the expert appraisal of the projects, drawing up the ranking list as well as and the establishment of the final list of projects selected for implementation shall be made by the WP9 coordinator and submitted to the CIVICA SEF Committee for approval.

X. Project implementation, reporting and dissemination

1. After receiving a positive decision on the application, the project team shall implement the project in accordance with a plan for the execution of the project as well as a timeline outlined in the approved project proposal. The funds shall be spent in close cooperation with the CIVICA partner universities responsible for the partial budgets within the project and according to the internal rules and regulations.
2. Upon completion of the project, the project team shall prepare a final report describing and documenting execution of the project and its results. A template for the final report will be made available before the project starts, together with all related operational instructions.
3. Information about all the projects implemented within the SEF will be published at the CIVICA website.
4. All projects' tangible deliverables (including publications, social media feeds) and other communication materials must display relevant information on funding of the project by the SEF within the CIVICA – the European University of Social Sciences and the European Union.