2nd CIVICA Call for Research Hubs

Faculty and (post-doctoral) researchers in CIVICA universities (Bocconi, CEU, Hertie School, IE, LSE, Sciences Po, SGH, SNSPA, SSE) are invited to submit proposals for collaborative, multidisciplinary research with the goal to apply for **larger grants** (Horizon, ERC, national funding, etc.) and **longer-term cooperation**. EUI researchers can join as self-funded.

Only plans for innovative, transformative, and impactful research will be considered. Proposals should envisage working together for a longer period (4-7 years) as a **CIVICA Research Hub** and spell out three phases of their cooperation:

1. seed-funded exploratory research proposal (building a team, doing a pilot study, creating a network, etc.) for the CIVICA-funded period of the first 18 months;

2. steps to secure a larger, external grant;

3. steps for the functioning of the externally funded CIVICA Research Hub.

All fields in the Social Sciences and Humanities are eligible. CIVICA encourages submissions with the following broad, encompassing themes:

Democracy in the 21st Century,
Europe Revisited,
Societies in Transition-Crises of Earth,
AI & Data-Driven Technologies for Social Sciences,
and Security & Resilience.

The application deadline is:
17 May 2027, 23:59 pm (CET)

WHAT IS A CIVICA RESEARCH HUB?

A CIVICA Research Hub is based on longer-term research projects and research-related activities. Led by permanent faculty members from CIVICA universities, involving faculty (or equivalent with long-term contracts, including post-doctoral and/or doctoral researchers), who build a team, carry out research, and organise various related events (series of talks, workshops, conferences, etc.) to engage the wider CIVICA community on their subject matter. They become nodes of a network.

To kick-start the establishing of CIVICA Research Hubs, the current call finances selected project teams for **18 months** to be able to:

1. Build a team

2. Conduct pre-studies/seed research

3. Secure larger grant(s) that finances the longer-term work of the Hub, centred around the research topic, covering:

- longer-term research
- workshops/conferences and engagement with the CIVICA community
- hiring of RAs, etc.
- overhead costs

WHO CAN APPLY?

Each proposal should be developed and submitted by a research team consisting of members from a minimum of **four (4)** CIVICA universities. (In case of a tie, projects involving more CIVICA partners are given preference.) EUI researchers can join teams as self-funded.

Principal Investigators (PIs) are senior or permanent faculty (or the functional equivalent at the home institution) at one or more of the CIVICA universities at the time of submitting the application and the duration of the project. Team members can include postdocs, PhD students, and non-permanent faculty as long as they have contractual relationship with a CIVICA university until the end of the seed-funded phase.

Team members may change after securing an external grant but the involvement of a minimum of 4 CIVICA institutions must be maintained throughout the externally funded

phase, too. Research teams can include non-CIVICA members but only CIVICA faculty/researchers are financed in the seed-funded phase.

WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

We welcome collaborative research projects that are related to one or more of the **five core themes of CIVICA:**

- Democracy in the 21st Century;
- Europe Revisited;
- Societies in Transition-Crises of Earth;
- AI & Data-Driven Technologies for the Social Sciences
- Security & Resilience

with the explicit goal of securing larger grants and function as a CIVICA Research Hub. Only **innovative, transformative**, and **impactful research** ideas will be considered.

Proposals should be clear about:

- the planned research (and any related activity) of the seed-funded phase (18 months);
- the plan to secure external funds (how and when they will submit to whom to a fully-fledged research project to a large grant provider);
- and the preliminary plan/work programme and vision to function as a CIVICA Research Hub, once the external fund is secured.

Previous CIVICA project teams can also apply with new projects, building on their previous projects/findings. Their previous CIVICA-funded project must be successfully finished by the time of the application.

HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE EVALUATED?

Submitted applications will be evaluated by the CIVICA Scientific Committee (SC). The SC consists of vice-presidents for research and/or senior faculty of the ten (10) CIVICA universities. Formal grant decisions are made by each CIVICA partner following the decision of the SC. Rejected applications may receive informal feedback.

The selection committee evaluates proposals on various dimensions:

- scientific quality (innovative, impactful, transformative, scientific soundness, interdisciplinarity)
- feasibility (realistic timeline, work programme)
- budget (realistic items, commensurate with stated goals)
- team diversity (number of CIVICA partners, academic rank, gender)
- specific steps to secure external funding (specific calls identified, steps from seed-funded research to larger project)
- vision and plans for the Research Hub (planned activities, plans to create a network, contribution to the CIVICA research community, specify at which CIVICA institution the grant would be hosted)

HOW MUCH MONEY IS AVAILABLE?

This call is financed from the own resources of CIVICA universities. Each CIVICA partner has up to 50,000 euros for this call and may be able to finance its own faculty to a different extent. Budget plans should detail costs per institutions participating in a project for the seed-funded phase (18 months). The call aims to finance up to **3 hubs**. To find out more on available funding and eligibility, contact your local CIVICA team (the list of contact persons at each CIVICA partner is attached).

WHAT EXPENSES ARE ELIGIBLE?

In the first, seed-funded phase (18 months), all expenses directly related to research projects are eligible, provided they are realistic and in line with the expected results; primarily personnel specifically hired for the project, travel, and individual cost items. Recurring institutional costs, including personnel costs (overhead, faculty/base salaries) are not eligible. You are kindly required to **contact your grant coordinators/research managers** at your respective universities **before submitting** the application to check whether specific cost items/**expenses are eligible**. Adequate supporting documents to prove costs may be requested. Local terms and conditions may apply, including the possible submission of initial drafts of deliverables. Please contact your local coordinator to find out about any local requirements.

HOW LONG SHOULD PROJECTS LAST?

Projects can officially start on **30 June 2027**
The spending deadline is **31 December 2028**

WHAT ARE THE DELIVERABLES FOR WINNING PROJECTS?

- The main deliverable is a **draft project that is ready to be submitted** in a short time to a grant agency (concretely identifying possible calls with their codes) by 31 December 2028. Support will be provided for applying for external grants.
- A **2-page progress report** for **a midterm review** carried out by the Scientific Committee.
- An account of activities that resulted from the project (e.g. joint publication, joint presentation, etc.)
- Close cooperation with CIVICA research managers and the CIVICA communications team.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND MORE INFORMATION

All applicants should use the application form, which is available at https://civica.eu Applications need to be submitted electronically to research@civica.eu by the deadline:

23:59 pm (CET) – 17 May 2027

For more information on the substantive aspects of the call, please write to your grant coordinator or to: research@civica.eu

TIMELINE:

23 November 2026 – Call for Research Hubs announced
17 May 2027 – Application deadline
17 June 2027 – Announcement of winners on the CIVICA website
30 June 2027 – Projects officially start
1 March 2028 – Midterm Report due
31 December 2028 – Projects officially end

CONTACT PERSONS:

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