

CIVICA Student Engagement Fund (SEF) – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Section 1 – General Rules and Key Principles of the SEF

Q: What is the Student Engagement Fund (SEF)?

A: The SEF is a mini-grant (seed funding) initiative that supports collaborative projects led by students and early-stage researchers (ESRs) from CIVICA universities. Its main goal is to encourage cross-campus cooperation among students, student associations, and ESRs, enhancing student engagement and experience within the CIVICA alliance.

Q: Who can apply for SEF funding?

A: Applications are open to:

- Officially registered student associations, or
- Informal teams of students and/or ESRs

To be eligible, the team must represent **at least two CIVICA universities**. Projects that involve three or more CIVICA institutions are strongly encouraged.

Q: Can SEF projects include participants from universities outside the CIVICA alliance?

A: No. SEF funding is **exclusively for participants from CIVICA partner universities**. Since the initiative is funded under the Erasmus+ programme, costs involving external (non-CIVICA) individuals or institutions are not eligible. SEF is designed as an internal CIVICA collaboration tool.

Q: What types of projects are eligible for funding?

A: SEF can support a wide range of joint activities, including but not limited to:

- In-person or virtual events
- Competitions
- Conferences and workshops
- Hackathons
- Digital or collaborative online initiatives

Other creative formats are also welcome, as long as they meet the SEF selection and implementation criteria (see full guidelines [insert link]). **The SEF projects should not be solely dedicated to research.**

Section 2 – General SEF Project Eligibility Rules

Q: What are the general eligibility criteria of the Student Engagement Fund?

A: SEF supports a wide variety of student- and researcher-led activities that promote **European collaboration** and **intercultural exchange**. To be eligible:

- The project must involve **students and/or early-stage researchers (ESRs)** from **at least two CIVICA partner universities**. (ESRs include PhD and postdoctoral researchers. If you have any doubts regarding your eligibility, please contact your university CIVICA WP9 coordinator).
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- Proposals should clearly explain how the activity will help build a strong, engaged CIVICA student community through **extracurricular collaboration**.
- Projects should take advantage of the **diversity and complementary strengths** of the CIVICA network.

Q: What are the general thematic areas preferred by the SEF?

A: SEF projects are encouraged to align with key societal and academic challenges, particularly within the **social sciences**. Preferred themes include:

CIVICA's four core priorities:

1. Societies in Transition, Crises of Earth
2. Democracy in the 21st Century
3. Europe Revisited
4. Data-Driven Technologies for the Social Sciences

Other relevant topics may include:

- Sustainability and climate action
- Multilingualism and cultural exchange
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Solidarity and civic engagement

- European identity and culture
- Global and societal challenges with a social science focus (e.g., economics, law, international relations, history, or European studies)

Q: How should a project team be built?

A: A project team can be formed in one of the following ways:

- By **registered student associations** from at least two CIVICA partner universities
- By an **ad hoc team** of students and/or ESRs representing at least two CIVICA universities
- Or a **hybrid team**, where some members come from formal student associations and others from informal student teams

To find partners, you can use the links to **student organisations databases at respective CIVICA institutions**: [insert link].

Q: Can I or my student association apply as participant in different project proposals?

A: In order to assure effective project implementation, it is not possible for a student association or a student/ESR to participate in more than one project.

Q: Do the local rules and policies governing student-led initiatives at each CIVICA university apply to SEF projects?

A: Yes. All SEF projects must **fully comply** with the **local rules, policies, and procedures** for student-led initiatives at each participating university.

Section 3 – Financing of SEF Projects

Q: How are SEF projects managed and financed?

A: SEF projects are funded **locally** by each CIVICA partner university. This means:

- **Each CIVICA university allocates a set amount of funds to support SEF initiatives** in which its students, student associations or ESR host or take part within the SEF framework. There is **no central funding body**; instead, each university manages the portion of the project budget that it is responsible for.

- All financial rules, procedures, and expense reporting must follow the **local policies** of the institution providing the funds.
- **Local SEF coordinators** are available to guide students and early-stage researchers (ESRs) through the funding and implementation process.

Q: What are the funding limits?

A:

- Each university can allocate a **maximum of 3,000 EUR per single initiative** in which its students, student associations or ESR host or take part within the SEF framework and **the maximum funding per SEF project is €10,000**.
- The **maximum amount available per AY 2025/26** will be determined by **each home institution** and it will be clearly indicated in the Call for Proposals.
- **Each student association/dedicated project team will thus be funded by their respective home university for the respective portion**

1. **Q: Does a SEF project require one combined budget or separate budgets for each participating CIVICA institution?**

A: Each project team must 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. Please refer to the **SEF Regulations** for further details.

Q: Is it possible to co-finance a SEF project using external funds?

A: No. SEF projects **cannot be co-financed with external resources**.

Q: What are the general rules for eligible costs under SEF?

A: For all eligibility criteria, please refer to the **SEF Regulations** and the **Call for proposals**.

Q: Can visa costs be included in the SEF project budget?

A: In principle, **visa costs may eligible**. However, due to differences in procedures across CIVICA institutions, students should **consult their local SEF coordinator** to confirm eligibility before including visa-related expenses in the budget.

Section 4 – SEF Project Application and Assessment Process

Q: How do I prepare a SEF project application?

To apply for SEF funding, follow these steps:

1. **Form a Team:** Partner with students/student associations or early-stage researchers (ESRs) from at least two CIVICA universities.
2. **Prepare a detailed concept of a joint project/initiative:**
3. **Prepare the Budget:** submit a consolidated budget (maximum €10,000 total), including partial budgets per institution (no more than €3,000 per university).
4. **Obtain Pre-Approvals: Secure proposal and budget pre-approvals** by relevant bodies at each CIVICA partner university involved in the project. Please check and respect each institution's internal deadlines and processes and refer to the SEF Regulations.

Q: Which documents are required for a complete application?

A complete SEF application must include:

- The project application form
- The budget file
- Proposal and budget pre-approvals from all involved CIVICA institutions

Templates for both the project and budget files are available at my.civica.eu. Read instructions carefully and complete all sections. Attach confirmations of proposal and budget pre-approval (email confirmations or formal documents are accepted).

Incomplete applications (i.a. not including budget pre-approvals from all CIVICA institutions involved) **will not be evaluated**.

Q: When can I apply?

There is one call for applications each academic year.

The schedule of the 2025/2026 SEF call for proposals can be found [here](#).

Q: Who coordinates my SEF project proposal?

- 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.
- 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.

Q: How should I estimate project costs in the budget?

Provide **realistic cost estimates** for the application. If unsure about travel or standard university-related expenses, ask your local SEF coordinator for guidance. Once approved, the funding cannot be increased.

Q: Why is budget pre-approval required?

Each institution must confirm the eligibility of its portion of the budget based on local rules. Pre-approval helps identify ineligible or problematic expenses early, improving your application's chances. Submit your proposal well in advance of the deadline to allow time for feedback and revisions.

Q: How do I obtain budget pre-approval from my institution?

Each university has its own internal deadline and procedures on how to obtain pre-approvals, please check these carefully.

Q: How do I submit a SEF project proposal?

Submit your application through [by the deadline specified in the call for proposals](#). Follow the official submission guidelines provided in the Call for proposals.

Q: Can I apply more than once during the academic year?

Each team can submit **one application per call**. In order to avoid excessive workload and ensure effective implementation of the projects, one student or ESR may only be involved in one project team.

Q: How do we ensure fair involvement of all participating universities?

Maintain a **balanced distribution of responsibilities, visibility, and benefits** among all partner institutions.

Q: Do applications need to be in English?

Yes.

Q: Are templates or resources available to assist in applying?-

Yes, application templates and guidelines are available. on the CIVICA website.

Q: Can we include prizes or awards for participants (e.g., in a competition)?

Only **non-monetary symbolic prizes** (e.g., books, CIVICA merchandise) are allowed but please note that it is up to each home institution to advise its own students according to the local rules and the Erasmus+ rules.

Q: Who evaluates SEF project applications?

The centralized **CIVICA SEF Committee** makes the final funding decisions. Only projects that receive budget pre-approval from all involved institutions will be considered.

The SEF Committee is co-chaired by the **CIVICA Secretariat** and **WP9 leader**, and includes:

- One faculty/staff member from each CIVICA university (appointed by the Steering Committee or WP9 manager)
- All members of the CIVICA Student and ESR Board (one per institution)

Q: Can CIVICA Student and ESR Board members or Ambassadors participate in SEF projects?

Yes, they can! 😊 However:

- **Student/ESR Board members** who join a project cannot participate in evaluating SEF proposals. Their university will appoint a replacement evaluator.
- **CIVICA Ambassadors** may participate in projects as they are not involved in the evaluation process, so there is no conflict of interest.

Q: What are the SEF project evaluation criteria?

Applications are evaluated based on:

- **Quality and value added** of the project (0–20 points)
- **impact** on the respective students' communities and on the CIVICA community as a whole, 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** to CIVICA or EU strategic priorities (0–10 points)
- **Feasibility of the project (the possibility to achieve the goals of the project within the requested time-frame and planned activities) and budget adequacy**, including cost efficiency and eligibility (0–10 points)

Q: How will I be informed if my project is selected?

All applicants will be notified by the **WP9 Coordinator (SGH Warsaw School of Economics)** by the deadline stated in the call. Ensure all team members' email addresses in your application are correct.

Section 5: Project Implementation, Reporting, and Dissemination

Q: Is reporting required?

A: Yes, a final report is mandatory. It must document both the outcomes of your project and how the funds were spent. You will receive reporting templates the **WP9 Coordinator (SGH Warsaw School of Economics)** to complete and submit.

In addition to the descriptive and financial reports, all lead institutions must also report:

- The number of SEF project participants, disaggregated by gender, for each supported event.
- A list of all dissemination activities conducted.
- The number of mobilities by study level (Bachelor, Master, PhD, or Staff) and mobility type (physical, blended, or virtual).

Q: Do we need to submit invoices or receipts after an SEF event?

A: It depends on the specific rules of the participating CIVICA institution.

Q: What happens if we need to change the project plan or budget during implementation?

A: Any changes to the original project plan **must be notified at each local SEF coordinator**

Q: Are there any branding or visibility requirements for SEF-funded projects?

A: Yes, all communications and materials related to the project must acknowledge CIVICA support.

Deliverables (e.g., publications, websites, social media posts) must display the CIVICA logo and the co-funded by the EU logo.

Please refer to the CIVICA Communication Toolkit for brand guidelines, logos, and templates.

Q: What if it turns out the project cannot be implemented?

A: Should anything happen during the implementation of the SEF project, please contact your local SEF coordinator immediately.