

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 [regulations](#) and [proposal](#). **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**: [Student associations](#) | [Civica](#)

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

A: In order to ensure 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 2026/27** 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 therefore be funded by its respective home university for its share of the project budget.**

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 **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 be 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

Application forms and templates for the [project](#) and [budget](#) are available on the CIVICA [site](#). 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.e. 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 2026/2027 SEF call for proposals can be found here: [CIVICA Student Engagement Fund | Support for Student Projects | Civica](#)

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 from 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 to 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.