

CIRCLE U. SEED FUNDING

2023 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Publication date: 15 June 2023

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The objective of the Circle U. seed funding scheme is **to foster new collaborations across institutions in the Circle U. alliance**. It is a mechanism that provides academic and research staff and students with opportunities to develop projects across the alliance, to strengthen the alliance and to drive bottom-up initiatives. By funding **smaller scale, limited in time, bottom-up projects**, the ultimate goal is to facilitate the initiation of potential long-term collaborative activities within the alliance which are contributing to the fulfilment of [Circle U.'s vision and mission](#). These projects go thus beyond the deliverables defined in the current EU-funded projects and will anchor Circle U. sustainably in all institutions.

For the **2023 call for applications**, both educational and research projects as well as student-led projects will be supported as explained below.

1 SCOPE

The seed funding scheme **seeks to achieve the following goals**:

- 1 Drive **bottom-up initiatives to embed the alliance** within our universities' communities
- 2 Contribute to **increased mobility and international exposure** among our universities' communities
- 3 Address Circle U.'s **strategic research and teaching themes** – Climate, Democracy and Global Health
- 4 Develop **high quality and impactful educational and research activities**
- 5 Consolidate **our joint ecosystem and its various platforms** – the Open Campus, the Knowledge Hubs, the Teaching Innovation Lab (CU.til), the Multilingualism, Interculturality and Language Lab (CU.mil), the InCU.bator and the Community of practice for early-career researchers (CU.ecr)
- 6 Engage with **our associated partners and other stakeholders** to ensure that Circle U. activities have societal impact

2 EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE FUNDED

The Circle U. seed funding scheme aims to support the **developmental stages of a project or projects at an early stage**. Therefore, seed-funded projects fit under a **wide variety of definitions**. Examples of what could constitute a seed funding project within the context of the Alliance are:

For educational and research projects:

- developing joint courses or programmes
- organizing challenge-based learning activities
- organizing winter or summer schools
- organizing short-term physical or blended mobility opportunities
- organizing workshops or seminars or any other teaching/learning activity
- developing innovative teaching models
- organizing public lectures
- organizing language workshops or seminars
- organizing seminars, workshops and conferences targeting early-career researchers
- conducting (preliminary) research activities
- conducting surveys, creating a database, developing research materials
- producing awareness-raising material for the alliance (e.g. digital brochures or videos, etc.)
- preparing joint large-scale project proposals to be submitted at European (or other) calls

For student-led projects:

- supporting student-driven learning activities
- supporting student democracy and student engagement in partner universities
- facilitating the dissemination of Circle U. towards students
- supporting learning and training activities
- organizing cultural activities across Circle U.

The list above is non-exhaustive, the Selection Committee will consider applications suggesting other activities too, provided they clearly state how they match the scope of the seed funding scheme.

3 ELIGIBILITY

The 2023 call for applications is **open to all academic and research staff from all disciplines and levels**, including Circle U. Academic Chairs, as well as **students working or being enrolled** at any of the Circle U. member universities.

Lead applicants shall be employed as full-time or part-time academic and research staff with any of the CU member universities, with the employment contract lasting for the full length of the proposed project. Applications may include administrative/professional service staff, as we expect them to support lead applicants in the development and implementation of the proposed projects.

Projects should involve staff or students **from at least 3 partner universities**.

4 SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

A **Seed Funding Selection Committee (SFSC)** consisting of 10 to 15 academics from the nine partner universities will be in charge of:

- Evaluating proposals
- Informing the Circle U. Management Board of the selection of proposals to be funded. The Management Board is the ultimate decision-making body for alliance operations.
- Assessing post-implementation reports from projects which have been funded

Applications need to clearly outline how they fit into the scope of the Circle U. seed funding scheme and how they match the objectives, vision and mission of Circle U. The selection panel will give particular attention to the **following criteria**:

- Academic quality
- Stating a clear pathway for impact and for further supporting long-term collaborations within the alliance
- Trans- and interdisciplinary collaborations
- Proposals focusing on diversity and inclusion as a whole
- Involvement and benefits for students
- Supporting mobility and international exposure of staff and students
- Engagement of associated partners and other stakeholders

Once established, the SFSC reserves the right to add selection criteria according to the quality of the applications received. In addition to the members of the SFSC, student-led projects will also be assessed by a student committee consisting of 3 student representatives as proposed by CUSU.

With the results communicated, all applications will receive a score and succinct comments that will be communicated to the project lead.

Please note that, following the publication of 2022 call, 85 applications were submitted – 78 educational or research projects and 7 student-led projects. 16 projects were selected – 11 educational or research projects and 5 student-led projects.

5 BUDGET

The **total budget** available for the 2023 call for applications is **EUR 110.000**. The budget is assigned in the following way:

Budget allocated to academic and research projects	EUR 100.000	Up to EUR 10.000 can be awarded per project
Budget allocated to student-led projects	EUR 10.000	Up to EUR 5.000 can be awarded per project

Funding will be transferred **as a lump sum by the Circle U. Office to the lead applicant or a nominated person** who will have the responsibility to manage the project and the budget. Double funding is not allowed.

Eligible costs:

- temporary staff or consultant recruitment to support the project's activities (creation of a database, benchmarking specific to the entity, conducting surveys, etc.);
- preliminary research activities;
- material promoting the project and its activities (e.g. digital brochures, videos, etc.);
- awareness-raising material for the alliance
- travel expenses and/or costs of living for teaching or research activities

Non-eligible costs:

- overhead costs
- hiring of contractual administrative, research or academic staff
- equipment costs
- conference fees

6 TIMELINE

CALL OPENS	CALL CLOSES	RESULTS ANNOUNCED	FUNDING PERIOD	IMPACT REPORT SUBMITTED
15 June 2023	15 October 2023	15 November 2023	1 December 2023 – 30 September 2024	31 October 2024

The timeline might be subject to changes, considering the administrative and financial processes.

7 APPLICATION

Please submit the online application form via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/seed-funding-call-2023>. For additional questions, please contact our team coordinating the seed funding call at: seedfunding@circle-u.eu.

8 REPORTING

Lead applicants are requested to submit a report on implemented activities and a financial report after the end of the funding period. Reports will be submitted via email to seedfunding@circle-u.eu by 31 October 2024. A template will be sent in advance to the lead applicants by the team coordinating the seed funding call.

9 ANNEXES

9.1 ABOUT CIRCLE U.

Aarhus Universitet (Denmark), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany), King's College London (United Kingdom), Università di Pisa (Italy), Universität Wien (Austria), Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium), Université Paris Cité (France), Universitetet i Oslo (Norway) and Univerzitet u Beogradu (Serbia) are Circle U.: an inclusive, research-intensive, and interdisciplinary European University alliance working to provide outstanding education, research, and innovation to contribute to more sustainable, democratic, and healthier societies. In 2020, we have joined forces to develop a new model of cooperation where education, research, innovation and service to society are better connected. During the pilot project (from November 2020 to October 2023) funded through Erasmus+ programme, we have worked closely with students, academics, researchers, staff and external stakeholders to test and identify new challenge-based educational formats and ways of working together to make Circle U. an international, inclusive, innovative and agile joint ecosystem.

In the next phase and through a new EU funded project in the coming four years, whilst continuously testing out new concepts in higher education and research cooperation, we will also scale up and offer a range of flexible learning opportunities, intensify our collaborations in all three missions and maximize our impacts through our joint ecosystem.

To fulfil our vision and mission, we have been developing a joint ecosystem offering a shared infrastructure as foundation for sustainable, impactful and ambitious collaborations across our universities. In the next phase, with the support of the academic chairs, we will consolidate and further develop this joint ecosystem and its core platforms to drive our vision towards a truly European University:

- The **Open Campus** will serve as the entry point for all educational opportunities in Circle U. This integrated digital learning platform will be at the heart of Circle U., linking together the various other platforms, including services to support mobility and facilitate the administrative and technical implementation.
- Launched in the pilot phase, the **Knowledge Hubs** are shared physical and virtual spaces where academics, researchers, students, staff and partners are developing research-based, trans- and interdisciplinary educational and research activities to tackle big societal challenges linked to our three priority themes: climate, democracy and global health.
- Building on the results of the Think and Do Tank, the **Circle U. Teaching Innovation Lab (CU.til)** will support the development of innovative and creative teaching and learning formats that focus on research-based, trans- and interdisciplinary knowledge and societal engagement. The CU.til will connect teaching and learning support units across our universities and encourages research in education.
- The **Circle U. Multilingualism, Interculturality and Language Lab (CU.mil)** will support the development of a multilingual, plurilingual and intercultural environment within the alliance and beyond, by sharing experiences and existing offers, developing joint courses and other language and intercultural learning experiences (including for less frequently used languages) and developing a language policy for the alliance.
- Building on the results of the Student-led sustainable innovation initiatives, the **InCU.bator** will offer a structured space and concrete support opportunities for students in developing innovative projects with a societal impact. It will thus put students at the centre of societal innovation and, with the support of external partners, foster an entrepreneurial mindset in the broad sense.
- Built on the results of the early-career researchers' forum, the **Community of Practice for Early-Career Researchers (CU.ecr)** will provide early-career researchers with opportunities for networking, exchanges, competence building, mobility as well as developing and maturing their research interests in close collaboration with colleagues from Circle U. The activities will be characterised by co-creative modes of cooperation.

9.2 APPLICATION FORM

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Please read this information carefully before completing up the application form.

The application form should be completed by the lead applicant in English and should be agreed by all project partners. The application can only be submitted online.

The 2023 call for applications, including the application link and form, can be found on the Circle U. website: <https://www.circle-u.eu/opportunities/seedfunding>. In the call, you will find a paper version of this form to help you prepare the application with your partners.

The call will close on **15 October 2023, 20:00 CET**. You may still edit your submission until this deadline. To do so, just return to the survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/seed-funding-call-2023>. However, you must then use the same device and web browser you used to start the application on because a cookie is stored in your browser that remembers your responses.

Once you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation. If you want a copy of your application, please contact the coordinating team at seedfunding@circle-u.eu.

If you experience any problem with this form or have any additional questions, please contact the coordinating team at seedfunding@circle-u.eu.

* PRIVACY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Circle U. AISBL is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy by maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of your personal data, in accordance with the GDPR and other applicable legislation. We collect, process and store your data for the sole purpose of evaluating your application. If your project is selected, we will use the identification data of your project for communication and dissemination purposes.

☐ I agree with those terms and conditions

*** If your project is not selected, do you consent to sharing your application with the Circle U. coordination team of your university? The purpose of sharing is to ensure support for re-submission or to explore other opportunities for support.**

☐ Yes

☐ No

LEAD APPLICANT DETAILS

*** Project lead**

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

*** Number of Circle U. member universities that will participate in the project apart from your university**

- ☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ 6
☐ 7
☐ 8

CIRCLE U. PROJECT PARTNERS DETAILS

*** Project partner 1**

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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*** Project partner 2**

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 3 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 4 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 5 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 6 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 7 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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Project partner 8 (if any)

First name	
Last name	
Home university	
Faculty/department/institute	
Position	
E-mail	

Enter details of all other project participants from this university (first name, last name, position)

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INVOLVEMENT OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS IN YOUR PROJECT

* **Are there any external partners involved in the project** (by “external partners”, we mean [associated partners](#) that have been formally identified by the member universities, and other stakeholders that are committed to playing an active role in various Circle U. activities, thus contributing to the vision and mission of the alliance)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please indicate the details of the external partners involved:

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

* **01. Title of your project:**

02. Acronym of your project (this is meant to facilitate the communication of your project if it was selected):

*** 03. What type of project are you proposing?**

- ☐ Academic and/or research project
- ☐ Student-led project

*** 04. What are the main goals of your project? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Drive bottom-up initiatives to anchor the alliance in its partner universities
- ☐ Contribute to increased mobility and international exposure among our universities' communities
- ☐ Address Circle U.'s strategic research and teaching themes (Climate, Democracy and Global Health)
- ☐ Develop high-quality research and teaching activities
- ☐ Consolidate our joint ecosystem and its various platforms (Open Campus, Knowledge Hubs, Teaching Innovation Lab, Multilingualism, Interculturality and Language Lab, InCU.bator and Community of practice for early-career researchers)
- ☐ Engage with other associate partners and stakeholders to ensure that Circle U. activities have societal impact

Other (please specify):

*** 05. If your project addresses one of the strategic themes of Circle U., indicate which theme:**

- ☐ Climate
- ☐ Democracy
- ☐ Global Health
- ☐ The project addresses a different theme (please specify):

*** 06. Describe your project and elaborate more specifically on the objectives, the planned activities, the timeline, the contribution and share of responsibilities between project partners, the expected outputs and outcomes (max. 500 words):**

*** 07. Building on the objectives selected above, explain the expected impacts of your project on Circle U. development (max. 250 words):**

*** 08. Explain in which way your project has an interdisciplinary approach (max. 250 words):**

*** 09. Explain how inclusion and diversity are taken into account in your project (max. 250 words):**

10. If students are involved in the project, what are their expected contributions (max. 250 words)?

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11. If external partners are involved in the project, what are their expected contributions (max. 250 words)?

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PROJECT BUDGET

* Please provide a provisional budget of your project, based on the template that you will find below. The budget should clearly indicate the type of costs, the corresponding amounts, the source of funding, the distribution among project partners.

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* Please indicate the total seed funding budget you are applying for. As indicated in the call for applications the budget allocated to academic and research projects is up to EUR 10 000 per project, and the budget allocated to student-led project is up to 5 000 EUR per project.

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* CERTIFICATION

☐ I hereby certify that the information provided in this application is correct and complete. I confirm that I, as lead applicant, and my project partners have read the call for applications and will abide by the terms and conditions specified in the call if they are selected. Any provision of inaccurate or false information or omission of information will render this application invalid and, if an application is selected on the basis of such information, the applicants can be required to withdraw from the award.

☐ I hereby confirm that the authorities of my department/faculty/institute are informed about this application.

* Identification of my department/faculty/institute authorities:

First name	
Last name	
Position	

9.3 PROJECT BUDGET TEMPLATE

Title of your project:

Project lead info:

First name	
Last name	
Home university	

Provisional project budget:

Cost description	Amount (in EUR)	Source of funding	Comment
See eligible costs in the application form	If cost is not in EUR, please use the reference rate published by the European Central Bank website: https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/index.en.html	Please indicate the actual or expected source of funding (the "home" university of the project lead or partners, external funders, associate partners, Circle U. seed funding scheme, etc.	
Total costs of your project	- €		
Total amount you are requesting through Circle U. seed funding scheme			