

## UNIC SEED RESEARCH FUND FOR ENGAGED RESEARCHERS

### What is UNIC?

The European University of Post-Industrial cities (UNIC) is an alliance of ten universities impacting education, research, and community engagement to develop post-industrial cities (<https://www.unic.eu/en>). The UNIC Alliance is located in transitory economies and places that constitute a shared socio-economic environment of post-industrial transformations. Our universities are expected to play a key role in the transition of their cities to become centres of knowledge concerning transformations by engaging with research into the very processes and learning on resilience, adaptation, co-creation, etc.

UNIC researchers tackle societal challenges by involving and engaging citizens, civil society, public/city authorities, and private businesses in research and innovation activities. Engaged Research offers an interdisciplinary approach and method for systematic knowledge production not only for society but also together with society.

### The seed fund mechanism

In order to increase the amount of collaborative engaged research initiatives within the UNIC consortium and provide support to researchers to coordinate those initiatives, seed funds are allocated to the members of the Alliance.

### What is a collaborative UNIC Engaged Research initiative?

The collaborative UNIC engaged research initiative relates to the societal challenges of the post-industrial cities in transition. The initiative is recommended to touch upon a challenge defined by our UNIC Cities. These challenges are outlined in the Local Engaged Research Roadmaps<sup>1</sup> and are related to e.g., Diversity & Inclusion, Green Cities & Sustainability, Urban Resilience & Transformation, Health & Well-being, Aging Population, Digital Transition through engaged research and aims to co-create knowledge through engaged research. The initiative includes **at least two UNIC universities<sup>2</sup> and can include one or more institutions outside of UNIC consortium.**

### Sample collaborative engaged research initiatives are as below:

---

<sup>1</sup> Please find the Local Engaged Research Roadmaps attached as an Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Since Malmö University and the University of Lodz have joined the consortium in later stages, at least two other UNIC universities are needed to apply for seed funds.

Joint project proposals for external funding; Horizon Europe, AMIF, INTERREG, JPI Urban Europe  
Other external funding sources enabling international partnerships  
Summer Schools or similar formats  
Joint publications

For potentially interesting external funding calls:

[Horizon Europe Draft Work Programmes 2023-2024, Science Business \(sciencebusiness.net\)](#)

[Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(2021-2027\) \(europa.eu\)](#)

[Interreg - The portal to all Interreg programmes, financed by the EU](#)

[JPI Urban Europe | Joint Programming Initiative \(jpi-urbaneurope.eu\)](#)

### **CALL FOR COLLABORATIVE UNIC ENGAGED RESEARCH INITIATIVES**

- “UNIC4ER Seed Fund” offers small-scale support for engaged research collaboration and project development<sup>3</sup> across all disciplines.
- This support should be considered as:
  - Complementary resource to co-ordinate a collaborative project/initiative (such as an application for external funding for Research, development, or innovation project)
  - Initial resource to implement an activity aimed at establishing a new collaborative initiative among UNIC partner universities that will help to develop a novel and solid research path, which could also be supported by an external grant afterward.
- The seed fund program is open to all UNIC faculty and research faculty members (professors (of all levels), postdoctoral researchers, and Ph.D. candidates).
- One of the aims of this fund is to enhance inclusivity and diversity within the UNIC consortium. Accordingly, a particular share of the fund is explicitly allocated to non-traditional scholars including junior researchers, first-generation academics, scholars with a migrant background, etc. Therefore, they are encouraged to apply.
- Approved proposals will be supported for at most 12 months with a budget according to the additional information provided by your university.

---

<sup>3</sup> For more information about engaged research, please refer to; <https://www.campusengage.ie/what-we-do/publications/>.

For information about **non-financial support mechanisms** like mentoring, trainings, workshops provided under UNIC, please contact **your local UNIC Engaged Research Officer** and **Research Support Offices**.

#### **Timeline and Deadlines:**

- Call opens: November 24, 2022
- **Submission deadline: January 31, 2023 (23:59 local time)**
- Evaluations and notification: February 28, 2023
- Start of financing: March 14, 2023

#### **How to Apply:**

Documents to be submitted:

- A one-page summary (about 500 words) of the Collaborative UNIC Engaged Research Proposal)
- Clearly categorise which one of the following three criteria the UNIC4ER seed fund will be used:  
**Engaged Research, Research Collaboration or Non-Traditional Scholars**
- The available budget for each of the criteria mentioned above is EUR 10,000.
- Collaborative Initiative Proposal Form is written in English (template is provided in Appendix 1, including preliminary information of the partners (universities, cities, governments, NGOs, and private businesses)
- Budget Table (template is provided in Appendix 2)
- CVs of the PIs: 2 pages per person plus selected project/publication list (max. 15 most important titles related to the topic).
- Gender Equality in the composition of the research team with references to the institutional Gender Equality Plan (GEP), if applicable. Social equity in the composition of the research team and selection of stakeholders
- Local Ethics Committee Approval Letter will be required only for approved proposals / according to the specifications of the external funding call.
- Application packages will be submitted as one PDF file to [unic4er@eur.nl](mailto:unic4er@eur.nl)
- Late submissions will not be accepted.

#### **Technical and Financial Rules and Reminders:**

- If approved, your grant will be treated according to the additional local instructions.

- We recommend that you request feedback about your budget plan before submission. Please contact your local UNIC Engaged Research Officer for any communication about your proposal.
- PIs are required to submit a collaborative engaged research initiative, such as an external research funding application, a joint publication manuscript, or a plan for a summer/winter school, etc. as one of the final deliverables of their UNIC4ER Seed Research Fund action. Please detail your plan for seeking funding for your seed idea in the proposal.
- PIs can declare a person month up to a maximum of Euro 10,000.
- Seed funding can be used for the following cost categories (**Eligible Costs**):
  - **Category 1:** Initiative Coordinator (lead PI's) salary, hiring a grant writer or an assistant, arranging a consortium meeting, and language/editing services for a grant/funding application or a joint publication. (**Applicable when a city, government, NGO or private business partner(s) is included besides ensuring the participation of two UNIC universities in the initiative.**)
  - **Category 2:** Travelling to attend a training/workshop/meeting in relation to a collaborative engaged research initiative. Travelling to participate in a consortium building meeting organized by the lead PI.
  - **Category 3:** Enhancing the engagement of non-traditional researchers, such as junior researchers, first-generation academics, scholars with a migrant background, etc., through collaborative UNIC Engaged Research projects, conferences/training/workshops/meetings/mentorship activities.
- **Ineligible costs:** Research costs (equipment, consumables, staff hiring costs), publication costs or costs associated with involving the stakeholders as study participants rather than as contributors to Engaged Research projects. Material costs will not be covered.
- Please complete the provided excel budget table for your cost breakdown.
- Please calculate the costs, including respective taxation costs.
- Please refer to your local instructions for financial issues.
- Please list each individual item under budget categories do not write a lump sum.
- Justification of each budget item is required.
- During the implementation of your funded action, all purchases will be processed through the Procurement Directory in accordance with your University's Tender Regulation.
- You are not allowed to use an unspent budget after the termination date of your project.

For reasons of transparency and fairness to all applicants, UNIC will provide answers to technical grant application questions but will not engage in discussions about research proposal content etc. Technical questions should be addressed [unic4er@eur.nl](mailto:unic4er@eur.nl)

### **Evaluation Process:**

#### **1. Eligibility Check**

- The administrative eligibility of proposals is controlled following the submission deadline.
- Submissions received after the announced deadline will be rejected.
- Incomplete submissions will be rejected.
- Proposals should conform to the format outlined in the provided main proposal and budget forms.
- Proposals **without concrete project deliverables** will be rejected.

#### **2. Evaluation Committee Review:**

- Eligible proposals are evaluated by the “Local Evaluation Committees” established at each University in line with the suggestions provided in the D3.3 Support scheme for joint research acquisition around Engaged Research.
- Eligible proposals are discussed within the UNIC4ER committee, and synergies will be sought among the initiatives. Recommendations will be given to the Local Evaluation Committees.
- Each proposal will be assigned a peer reviewer by the Local Evaluation Committee. The committee will prepare a written evaluation report, including the justification for funding.
- Based on the peer reviewer report and the Committee’s final assessment, proposals will be ranked and retained for funding subject to budget availability.

#### **3. Implementation:**

- A contract for each awarded proposal will be co-signed by the grantee and the legal signatory at each UNIC partner university before the expected start date.
- An assigned research support officer will help with your administrative operations for the duration of your action.
- A Technical and Financial Progress Report (in the middle of the project duration / month 6) and Technical and Financial Final Report (end of the project duration / month 12) will be required (templates will be sent to PIs), which include the details of project activities, outcomes, future plans (including the progress in the preparation for an external funding application) and the summary of the expenditures. A public abstract of the initiative/project

will be requested within 15 months of granting or June 2024 at the latest. The reports will be evaluated by the “Monitoring Committee”.

- Budget and duration extension requests will be evaluated separately upon the condition that an extension is necessary for the success of the project.
- PIs who terminate their project proposal early without delivering outputs may not be eligible for future support.
- PIs who fail to complete an external funding application or establish a joint collaborative initiative within 12 months following the end of their contract will not be eligible for future calls.

**Contact:**

Questions related to the collaborative engaged research initiative preparing: [your local UNIC4ER Engaged Research Officer](#)