

EUNICE SEED FUNDING PROGRAMME 2026–2027

PILOT INITIATIVE

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Opening date: 14 September 2026

Deadline for applications: 10 October 2026

Publication of evaluation results: 31 October 2026

Maximum funding: €10,000 per project

Maximum project duration: 9 months

Implementation period: November 2026 – September 2027

1. Background and objectives

The **EUNICE European University Alliance** is launching the first **Pilot Seed Funding Programme**, developed within **Work Package 4 – Research Collaboration Support**, coordinated by the University of Catania (UNICT), through the EUNICE Task Force Research (TF-R).

The programme is designed to stimulate new research collaborations across the EUNICE Alliance by supporting the **early stages of consortium development, networking and strategic research planning**.

The Seed Funding Programme does **not** finance research activities as such. Rather, it provides financial support for preparatory activities aimed at strengthening interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation and increasing the competitiveness of EUNICE researchers in future European and international funding programmes.

The programme aims to:

- stimulate new research collaborations among EUNICE partner universities;
- strengthen interdisciplinary and international research networks;
- support consortium building and strategic partnership development;
- facilitate knowledge exchange and researcher mobility;
- foster long-term collaborative research agendas;
- enhance the capacity of EUNICE researchers to participate in competitive European and international funding programmes.

2. Funding available

Each selected project will receive a **lump-sum contribution of up to €10,000**.

Funding shall be used exclusively for **preparatory collaborative activities**, including networking, consortium building, strategic planning and partnership development leading to future joint research proposals.

Projects must demonstrate:

- clear added value for the EUNICE Alliance;
- a credible potential to establish or strengthen sustainable research collaboration;
- a clear link between the proposed activities and future collaborative research or funding opportunities.

The maximum duration of each funded project is **9 months**, with implementation planned from **November 2026 to September 2027**.

Funding is **not intended for**:

- research costs;
- purchase of equipment;
- salaries.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Principal Investigator

- The **Principal Investigator (PI)** must be affiliated with an **EUNICE partner university participating in this Pilot Call**.
- Researchers at all career stages are eligible. Applications led by **early-career and consolidating researchers** are particularly encouraged.

3.2 Consortium

- Each proposal must include **at least three researchers from three different EUNICE universities**.
- One institution shall act as **Coordinating Beneficiary** and shall receive the entire grant.
- Additional universities not participating in the funding scheme may participate in the consortium without receiving funding.
- The participation of **EUNICE Associated Partners, external academic institutions, industry, public authorities and societal stakeholders** is strongly encouraged whenever relevant to the proposed project.

The list of EUNICE Associated Partners and their scope of activities is available through the relevant EUNICE resources.¹

*The list of External Partners is available on the **EUNICE Internships and Research Portal, EIR**.²*

4. Eligible activities

The Seed Funding may support activities designed to strengthen collaborative capacity and prepare future joint research initiatives. Examples of eligible activities include:

- consortium-building meetings;
- networking workshops;
- researcher mobility and short scientific visits;
- travel and subsistence for partnership development;
- matchmaking events;
- stakeholder engagement activities;
- training in proposal development, networking and collaboration;
- feasibility studies and strategic planning;
- development of joint research roadmaps;
- activities addressing Open Science, impact, gender equality, diversity and inclusion, where relevant.

The proposed activities must be clearly connected to the development of a future collaborative research agenda and/or joint funding proposal.

5. Application documents

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- **Annex 1 – Project Description.**

Maximum **1 page**, including:

- project title and acronym;
- Principal Investigator;
- consortium composition;
- objectives;
- planned preparatory activities;
- expected outcomes;
- added value for EUNICE.

¹ <https://eunice-university.eu/home/our-partners/>

² <https://internships.eunice-university.eu/>

- **Annex 2 – Budget and Implementation Plan**

Maximum **1 page**, including:

- budget table;
- budget justification;
- implementation timeline/Gantt chart.

- **Annex 3 – Narrative CVs**

Maximum **½ page per consortium member**.

- **Annex 4 – Europass CVs**

Maximum **4 pages per participant**.

Applications should be submitted using the templates provided with this Call.

6. Submission procedure

Applications must be submitted by **10 October 2026, [17:00] CET**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Submission channel (by email): eunice@unict.it

Subject line: **EUNICE Seed Funding Programme 2026–2027 – Application – [Acronym]**

7. Evaluation procedure

Applications will undergo a competitive evaluation by an **Alliance-wide Review Committee**, composed of experts nominated by participating EUNICE universities. Review Committee members will declare any conflicts of interest and will not evaluate proposals involving Col.

Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria.

A. Quality of the proposal – maximum 25 points

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<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Contribution to the EUNICE Mission</i>	15
• Alignment with SDGs and Horizon Europe priorities	5
• European added value and international dimension	5
• Involvement of Associated/External Partners	5
<i>Feasibility of the work plan and budget</i>	10
• Budget coherence	5
• Work plan and timeline/Gantt chart	5
Total A	25

B. Quality of the consortium – maximum 15 points

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
• PI profile	5
• Complementarity of expertise	5
• Previous collaboration or demonstrated collaboration potential	5
Total B	15

Maximum total score: 40 points.

The evaluation framework follows the criteria established in the pre-call.

8. Institutional balance

In order to maximise participation across the Alliance, the Review Committee may consider **institutional balance** when recommending projects for funding. Where several proposals of comparable quality are coordinated by researchers from the same university, preference may be given to proposals led by different EUNICE institutions, while preserving the **merit-based nature of the evaluation**.

9. Evaluation results

The evaluation process will be completed following the assessment of all eligible applications.

Results of the evaluation are expected to be published by 31 October 2026.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome through the communication channel specified in the application/submission procedure.

10. Implementation of funded projects

Selected projects are expected to start in **November 2026** and must be completed by **September 2027**, within the maximum duration of 9 months.

The awarded funding will be provided as a **lump-sum contribution of up to €10,000 per selected project**.

The Coordinating Beneficiary will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the project and for the submission of the final report.

11. Final reporting

At project completion, beneficiaries shall submit a concise final report covering:

- activities implemented;
- outcomes achieved;
- added value for the EUNICE Alliance;
- future collaborative funding opportunities identified;
- follow-up activities and sustainability plan.

These reporting requirements are consistent with the framework established in the pre-call.

12. Contact and Info

For information concerning the Call and the preparation of applications:

Contact email: [eunice@unict.it] / **Subject line:** EUNICE Seed Funding Programme 2026–2027 – Application – [Acronym]

EUNICE Research Portal: [<https://internships.eunice-university.eu/en/research-radar>]