D3.2: Seed Programme guidelines

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Partners

- University of Twente (UT)
- Aalborg University (AAU)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)
- Linköping University (LIU)
- Tampere University (TAU)
- Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH)
- Universidade de Aveiro (UAVR)
- Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (UAB)
- University of Stavanger (UiS)
- Università degli Studi di Trento (UNITN)
- Institut National des Sciences Appliquées (INSA)
SMART-ER

Abstract

SMART-ER consortium is a research-intensive network with nearly 500 research groups. The SMART-ER Seed Programme will be an important tool to leverage collaborations among such a large scientific community focusing research activities on a joint and shared research and innovation agenda.

This document intends to present the strategic pilot actions designed to contribute to the above-mentioned objective, as well as the operational management and implementation procedures and guidelines to implement the SMART-ER Seed Programme.

\(^1\) Deliverable 1.2 – Co-Created R&I Agenda
# SMART-ER

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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>ECIU</td>
<td>European Consortium of Innovative Universities</td>
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<td>EU-funded initiative of the alliance of 12 universities in the ECIU</td>
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1 Introduction

ECIU University Research Institute for Smart European Regions (SMART-ER) aims at implementing strategies for capacity building among the 12 ECIU University member institutions (University of Twente; Aalborg University, Dublin City University, Kaunas University of Technology, Linköping University, Tampere University, Hamburg University of Technology, Universidade de Aveiro, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, University of Stavanger, Università degli Studi di Trento, Institut National des Sciences Appliquées).

Highly qualified human resources with a large professional network are fundamental to the development of a knowledge-based society and of an innovative Europe. Meeting grand societal challenges requires creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative researchers able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit. Emphasizing mobility, blended mobility and training is one of the crucial strategies of the Virtual Research Institute (VRI) SMART-ER to this end.

A programme aimed at promoting international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration combined with training programmes for upskilling doctoral students and researchers, including options for the involvement with the society or further development in non-academic settings, will be fundamental to strengthen human capital within ECIU.

The SMART-ER Seed Programme, combined with the SMART-ER Academy and other SMART-ER initiatives promoting Citizen Science and Public Engagement, will be an important contribution to implement the Challenge Based Research Strategy and the Vision 2030 of the ECIU University2, which intends to be “a flexible and agile testing ground for novel education outside national boundaries” and “the breeding ground for new educational and research models, a space for conducting open research and innovation and connecting with multiple stakeholders at different levels throughout Europe”, removing “obstacles related to funding, encouraging European flexible learning paths with micro-credentials, new mobility and quality control, and reducing of the overlap of educational offerings and support costs”.

Together, those initiatives will ensure “a solid basis for addressing societal challenges at the European level”, by developing “open research and innovation and develop a career by moving between the ECIU University stakeholder organisations in an intersectoral way”.

This document intends to present the strategic pilot actions designed to contribute to the above-mentioned objectives, as well as the operational management and implementation procedures, guidelines and templates necessary to implement the SMART-ER Seed Programme, complying with the objectives established for the task 3.2 “Defining the SMART-ER Seed Programme”, led by the University of Aveiro (UAVR).

The Annex I of the Grant Agreement indicates the University of Aalborg (AAU) as leader of the task 3.2., due to a minor mistake occurred during the proposal writing process. AAU is leader of task 3.1 and UAVR is the leader of task 3.2 as agreed since the beginning and the roles of each institution are completely clear among the whole consortium.

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2 Objectives

The Seed Programme guidelines intend to provide operational guidelines on:

- How and when applicants should submit proposals to the SMART-ER Seed Programme;
- The type of actions that are available for funding;
- Which contents and outputs are expected per type of action;
- How to manage the evaluation process;
- How to distribute the approved funds.

3 SMART-ER Seed Programme

ECIU University Research Institute for Smart European Regions (SMART-ER) aims at implementing strategies for capacity building among the 12 ECIU University member institutions (University of Twente, Aalborg University, Dublin City University, Kaunas University of Technology, Linköping University, Tampere University, Hamburg University of Technology, Universidade de Aveiro, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, University of Stavanger, Università degli Studi di Trento, Institut National des Sciences Appliquées).

Highly qualified human resources are fundamental to the development of a knowledge-based society and of an innovative Europe. Emphasizing mobility, blended mobility and training is one of the crucial strategies of the Virtual Research Institute (VRI) SMART-ER. Meeting grand societal challenges requires creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative researchers able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit. An innovative programme aimed at promoting international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration combined with training programmes for upskilling doctoral students and researchers including options for further development in non-academic settings will be fundamental to strengthen human capital.

The SMART-ER Seed Programme, in conjunction with the SMART-ER Academy and several other initiatives developed within ECIU promoting Citizen Science and Public Engagement, supports research career development and the implementation of a shared research and innovation (R&I) agenda through the training, mobility and engagement in international, cross-disciplinary and intersectoral collaboration of ECIU University doctoral students and researchers focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG) - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

In the scope of the SDG 11, the SMART-ER Co-Created R&I Agenda identifies four research areas of particular importance - resilient communities, mobility and transportation, circular economy and energy and sustainability, following the ECIU aims for a joint long-term research strategy on smart regions.

By implementing this programme the SMART-ER expects to:

- Contribute to UN SDG11 through the implementation of research and innovation projects, focusing on four research areas: resilient communities, mobility and transportation, circular economy and energy and sustainability
- Increase a set of skills, both research-related and transferable ones, leading to improved employability and career prospects both in and outside ECIU University

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3 Deliberable 1.2 – SMART-ER Co-Created R&I Agenda
4 Deliberable 1.2 – SMART-ER Co-Created R&I Agenda
5 ECIU long term joint research strategy - https://media.dcu.ie/media/ECIUsummary/
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- Boost R&I capacity among participating organisations and increase higher impact R&I output contributing to Europe’s competitiveness and growth
- Enhance cooperation and transfer of knowledge within members of the ECIU University and its stakeholders
- Improve the quality and the internationalisation of training programmes and supervision arrangements through the implementation of new joint supervision agreements and involvement in the challenges defined under the ECIU University
- Create new networks, international research groups and enhance the quality of existing ones, strengthening international and intersectoral collaboration
- Increase internationalisation of participating organisations
- Increase international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of ECIU University doctoral students and researchers
- Increase societal and economic relevance of ECIU.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives three different type of Strategic Pilot Actions (SPA) with specific objectives shall be implemented as described within the following sub-topics.

3.1 SPA1 - Promote joint supervision: co-tutelle of doctoral students and industrial doctorates

Objective: This action aims to promote an increasing new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative ECIU early-stage researchers, able to face current and future societal challenges.

Scope: The SMART-ER supports the initiation, preparation and establishment of joint supervision agreements, namely co-tutelle of doctoral students and joint supervision under industrial doctorates involving different ECIU institutions and aiming to contribute to UN SDG11, within the research areas of resilient communities, mobility and transportation, circular economy and energy and sustainability.

The research gaps identified in the scope of the SMART-ER co-created R&I agenda for each of the four research areas may be consulted by the applicants as inspirational research topics for the proposals to be submitted (appendix 1). Nevertheless, there is no impediment to address any other topic(s) within the above mentioned four research areas.

Each action will have a clearly identified work plan to undertake all the necessary measures to establish a co-tutelle agreement or an industrial doctorate agreement with the objective of promoting future international and intersectoral collaboration, sharing of knowledge and networking activities.

Whenever possible, the agreements to be established under this call should improve future training of doctoral students on transferable skills available under SMART-ER Academy programme (https://www.eciu.org/smart-er-for-researchers#smart-er-academy).

The SMART-ER will support either the strengthening of existing collaborations or the establishment of new contacts and collaborations, by means of short visits, in loco or virtual meetings or any other relevant activities until the establishment of the agreements.

The agreement resulting from the action must include the work plan for the entire duration or the remaining part of doctoral studies to be carry out after the signature of the agreement.

6 Deliverable 1.2 – SMART-ER Co-Created R&I Agenda
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The joint supervision of the doctoral student enrolled or to be enrolled in an industrial doctorate must be ensured by at least two supervisors from different institutions of the ECIU University and one supervisor from the non-academic sector.

To facilitate the partner’s search between institutions, a list of potential supervisors per research area, interested in engaging in co-tutelle or industrial doctorate agreements, is available at appendix 2. The collaborations are not limited to this list, by any means, which may be updated during the call.

Conditions of the calls

Opening date(s), deadline(s) (appendix 3):

Call 1
Opening: 15/01/2022
Closure: 18/03/2022; 11:59 p.m. (CET)

Call 2
Opening: 01/05/2022
Closure: 01/07/2022; 11:59 p.m. (CET)

Indicative timetable for completion of the evaluation process and communication of final results:
Maximum 2 months from the final date for submission

Eligibility and admissibility conditions:
Co-tutelle agreements for joint supervision of doctoral students: at least two academic institutions of the ECIU University.

Industrial doctorates agreements: at least two academic institutions of the ECIU University and one non-academic institution located in one of the countries of the academic institutions.

Only SMART-ER institutions are eligible to coordinate a proposal and eligible for funding.

Academic institutions outside ECIU consortium are not eligible.

The home institution of the doctoral student has the role of coordinator of the action.

The Main Supervisor must be affiliated to the coordinator institution and have a doctoral degree.

Applications are made jointly by the doctoral student and the supervisors and are submitted by the doctoral student or the supervisor from the home institution.

A doctoral student cannot be involved in more than one proposal in the same call and in more than one agreement.

Doctoral students in the last year of the doctoral studies are not eligible to submit a proposal.
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Duration and start date of the action
The duration of the action is expected to be between 8 and 12 months and will start in the first working day immediately after the communication of the funding decision to the applicants.

Eligible costs:
The following type of costs is eligible under this type of action:

- Travel & subsistence costs of doctoral students and supervisors from the involved institutions

Non-eligible costs:
All type of costs that are not identified as eligible costs.

Maximum grant per action:
The maximum grant per action is 5,000€.

Funding scheme:
The funding scheme applicable to the action is the lump sum.
Additional information regarding funding procedures is available in section 9.

Proposal submission:
Proposals must be submitted by the doctoral student or by the supervisor of the coordinator institution, using the application form available at [https://www.eciu.org/for-researchers/funds/co-tutelle-of-phd-students-and-industrial-doctorates](https://www.eciu.org/for-researchers/funds/co-tutelle-of-phd-students-and-industrial-doctorates) before the call deadline.

The proposal, in pdf format, must be sent by e-mail to smarter_seed@ua.pt.

3.2 SPA2 - Blended mobility to create networks

Objective: This call promotes inter-institutional collaboration through blended exchanging of research and innovation SMART-ER staff to create new networks or leverage existing networks aimed at contributing to UN SDG 11.

Scope: The network involves researchers from the different SMART-ER academic institutions.

Support is provided for the development of networks on the basis of a joint research and innovation plan, including, but not limited to, the submission of future collaborative proposals to other European funding programmes with the objective of providing answers to city regions challenges. This is aimed at knowledge sharing via blended mobility, based on short secondments of research and innovation staff combined with activities taking place synchronously with peers in a virtual environment, or any other which better suits the purposes of the collaboration.

This action should motivate the exploitation of complementary competences of the participating researchers, as well as other synergies, internal or external training in transferable skills (including SMART-ER Academy
SMART-ER

(https://www.eciu.org/smart-er-for-researchers#smart-er-academy), enable networking activities to facilitate sharing of knowledge and collaborative research activities, promote and increase the concept of citizen science in research and innovation activities, develop communication and dissemination events and activities aiming to reinforce the recognition and impact of the ECIU University among its communities and different stakeholders.

This action adopts a bottom-up approach designed in the scope of the four research areas: resilient communities, mobility and transportation, circular economy and energy and sustainability.

The research gaps identified in the scope of the SMART-ER co-created R&I agenda for each of the four research areas may be consulted by the applicants as inspirational research topics for the proposals to be submitted (appendix 1). Nevertheless, there is no impediment to address any other topic(s) within the above mentioned four research areas.

The participation of non-academic stakeholders is highly encouraged.

Networks may integrate researchers from all career stages.

**Conditions of the calls**

**Opening date(s), deadline(s) (appendix 3):**

**Call 1**
Opening: 15/01/2022
Closure: 18/03/2022; 11:59 p.m. (CET)

**Call 2**
Opening: 01/05/2022
Closure: 01/07/2022; 11:59 p.m. (CET)

**Indicative timetable for completion of the evaluation process and communication of final results:**
Maximum 2 months from the final date for submission

**Eligibility and admissibility conditions:**
Each proposal must involve researchers affiliated to a minimum of four (4) SMART-ER institutions.
Only SMART-ER institutions are eligible to coordinate a proposal and eligible for funding.
The Principal Investigator must be affiliated to the coordinator institution and have a doctoral degree.
Academic institutions outside ECIU consortium are not eligible.

**Duration and start of the action**

7 Deliverable 1.2 – SMART-ER Co-Created R&I Agenda
The maximum duration of the action is 12 months and will start in the first working day immediately after the communication of the funding decision to the applicants.

**Eligible costs:**
The following type of costs is eligible under this type of action:
- Travel & subsistence costs
- Consumables up to 10% of the total budget
- Training courses fees
- Conference fees
- Events organization (goods & services)

**Non-eligible costs:**
All type of costs that are not identified as eligible costs.

**Maximum grant per action:**
The maximum grant per action is 25,000€.

**Funding scheme:**
The funding scheme applicable to the action is the lump sum.

Additional information regarding funding procedures is available in section 9.

**Proposal submission:**
Proposals must be submitted by the coordinator, using the application form available at [https://www.eciu.org/for-researchers/funds/blended-mobility-to-create-networks](https://www.eciu.org/for-researchers/funds/blended-mobility-to-create-networks) before the call deadline.

The proposal, in pdf format, must be sent by e-mail to smarter_seed@ua.pt.

### 3.3 SPA3 - SMART-ER Seed Projects

**Objective:** This call promotes high-quality research outputs within SMART-ER through the funding of inter-institutional and intersectoral research and innovation seed projects directly linked to the SDG11 challenges defined under ECIU University.

**Scope:** The seed project involves researchers from the different SMART-ER academic institutions and, where applicable, other relevant stakeholders outside academia.

Support is provided for the development of research and innovation activities aimed at resolving the challenges defined under ECIU University: [https://challenges.eciu.org/](https://challenges.eciu.org/) or any other challenge identified by any citizen, group of citizens or external entity of any region of the SMART-ER academic institutions,
SMART-ER

contributing to SDG 11 and to the implementation of the challenge-based research strategy in ECIU University by “doing research with partners in society, using the grand challenges they face in reality as point of departure, with the objective of arriving at solutions to these challenges”\(^8\).

This call should motivate the exploitation of complementary competences of the participating researchers and of other relevant stakeholders outside academia, necessary to answer to the SDG11 challenges defined under ECIU University, or others identified in the proposals, through the design and implementation of collaborative research and innovation activities.

The participation of non-academic stakeholders is highly encouraged.

The consortium may integrate researchers from all career stages.

Conditions of the calls

Opening date(s), deadline(s) (appendix 3):

Call 1
Opening: 15/01/2022
Closure: 18/03/2022, 11:59 p.m. (CET)

Call 2
Opening: 01/05/2021
Closure: 01/07/2022; 11:59 p.m. (CET)

Indicative timetable for completion of the evaluation process and communication of final results:

Maximum 2 months from the final date for submission

Eligibility and admissibility conditions:

Each proposal must involve researchers affiliated to a minimum of three (3) SMART-ER institutions.

Only SMART-ER institutions are eligible to coordinate a proposal and eligible for funding.

The Principal Investigator must be affiliated to the coordinator institution and have a doctoral degree.

Academic institutions outside ECIU consortium are not eligible.

Duration and start of the action

The action should have a duration of 6 to 12 months and will start in the first working day immediately after the communication of the funding decision to the applicants.

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\(^8\) Erasmus+ project – Deliverable 2.5 - Challenge-Based Research in ECIU University - Towards a sustainable joint strategy.
Eligible costs:
The following type of costs is eligible under this type of action:
- Travel & subsistence costs
- Consumables
- Small equipment (max. 10% of the total budget)
- Events organization
- Conference fees
- Open science related costs
- Other goods and services

Non-eligible costs:
All type of costs that are not identified as eligible costs.

Maximum grant per action:
The maximum grant per action is 50.000€.
Additional information regarding funding procedures is available in section 9.

Funding scheme:
The funding scheme applicable to the action is the lump sum.

Proposal submission:
Proposals must be submitted by the coordinator, using the application form available at https://www.eciu.org/for-researchers/funds/smart-er-seed-projects before the call deadline.
The proposal, in pdf format, must be sent by e-mail to smarter_seed@ua.pt.

4 The application process

4.1 Proposal preparation

Proposal language
All proposals will have to be prepared and submitted in the English language. Proposals prepared in another language will not be taken into consideration.
Proposal contents

Any proposal should at least contain the following information:

Administrative Data:

- Basic contact data of the project partners and Principal Investigator / Main Supervisor
- Full title of the proposal
- Acronym of the proposal
- Identification/description of the challenge (where applicable)
- Summary
- Targeted research area
- Project duration

Description of the proposal

The proposal template provides an elaborate overview of sections that need to be present in the proposal for it to be considered. The following sections as described in the proposal templates will serve as the primary evaluation criteria:

SPA 1:

1) Excellence (max. 1 Pages)
2) Impact (max. 1 Pages)
3) Implementation (max. 1 Pages)
4) Budget estimation (max. 1/2 page)
5) Researchers profiles (max. 1 page per institution)
6) Annexes (letter of commitment per institution)

SPA 2 & SPA 3

7) Excellence (max. 2 Pages)
8) Impact (max. 2 Pages)
9) Implementation (max. 2 Pages)
10) Budget estimation (max. 1 page)
11) Researchers profiles (max. 1 page per institution)
12) Annexes (letter of commitment per institution)

4.2 Proposal submission

The proposal template per each SPA are available at https://www.eciu.org/smart-er-for-researchers#research-Funding for download (appendix 4).

Eligible proposals are to be submitted via e-mail, in pdf format, to smarter_seed@ua.pt.
Shortly after proposal submission, an acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to the applicant’s email address. This acknowledgment of receipt does not imply that the proposal has been accepted as eligible for evaluation. During the course of the project, an online survey for pilot assessment purposes may be conducted among all applicants.

5 Total budget

The total budget to be allocated to the SMART-ER Seed Programme implementation was discussed during the Executive Team meetings of the 7th and 13th of September 2021 (appendix 5).

The total amount shall be distributed between the approved proposals and the evaluation process, by supporting the expert’s activities.

The budget approved per type of action and activity is presented in the sub-section 5.1.

If the budget allocated to any of the actions or activities exceeds the requirements of all proposals positively evaluated in one call and estimated evaluation reports, the excess budget will be reallocated to other calls and/or activities with the approval of the Leader of WP3 of the SMART-ER project. Equally, if the allocated funding to a call is insufficient to fund the highest ranked proposals, the necessary budget will be transferred from other call(s), in order to ensure that the highest ranked proposals can be funded, if the necessary funds are available.

5.1 Budget distribution

The total budget allocated to the SMART-ER Seed Programme shall be distributed according to the table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of action</th>
<th>Call 1 (EUR)</th>
<th>Call 2 (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposals</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>funding</td>
<td>process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote joint supervision: co-tutelle</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>1 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of doctoral and industrial doctorates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended mobility to create networks</td>
<td>50 000</td>
<td>1 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART-ER Seed Projects</td>
<td>150 000</td>
<td>1 500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Evaluation process

Proposals will be evaluated by experts, on the basis of the award criteria ‘excellence’ ‘impact’ and ‘implementation’.

The aspects to be considered in each case depend on the type of action.
Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the criterion. Each criterion will be scored from 1 to 5. Scores with a resolution of one decimal place may be awarded.

If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals which have been awarded the same score within a ranked list. When the total scores are equal, priority will be based on the criteria detailed in the tables below.

6.1 Award criteria, scores and weighting

Table 2: Award criteria, scores and weighting of the SPA1

| Promote joint supervision: co-tutelle of doctoral students and industrial doctorates |
| Excellence | Impact | Implementation |
| Quality of the plan (including related inter/multidisciplinary, intersectoral and, where appropriate IPR aspects) | Expected impact in the career prospects of the doctoral student and contribution to her/his skills development | Appropriateness of the procedures, including risk management |
| Quality of the supervision (including expertise and previous experience of the supervisors) | | Appropriateness and complementarity of the host conditions |
| 30% | 40% | 30% |

Weighting

| 2 | 1 | 3 |

Priority in case of ex aequo

In case of ex aequo for individual criteria, gender dimension shall be considered. Priority shall be given to the proposals involving female doctoral students

Table 3: Award criteria, scores and weighting of the SPA2

| Blended mobility to create networks |
| Excellence | Impact | Implementation |
| Quality and credibility of the proposed workplan; including inter/multidisciplinary, intersectoral engagement of citizens, civil society and end users, gender and ethics aspects | Developing new and lasting research collaborations between participating organisations and contribution to improving research and innovation potential at ECIU University | Appropriateness of the management procedures, including risk management |
| | Quality of the proposed measures to | Appropriateness of the institutional environment (hosting arrangements, |

D3.2: Seed Programme guidelines (final) 17
Quality and appropriateness of knowledge sharing among the participating organisations, including applicable IPR aspects | disseminate and communicate the results of the action and to promote the recognition and impact of the ECIU University | 30% 40% 30%

Weighting

The proposals with the highest number of ECIU Institutions involved shall have priority in case of ex aequo. In case of ex aequo for the number of institutions involved, gender dimension shall be considered. Priority shall be given to the proposals with the highest number of female research staff.

Table 4: Award criteria, scores and weighting of the SPA3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMART-ER Seed Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the proposed research and innovation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches, use of stakeholder knowledge and, where applicable, engagement of citizens, civil society and end users, IPR and ethics issues and gender dimension in research and innovation content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposals with the higher number of ECIU Institutions involved shall have priority in case of ex aequo. In case of ex aequo for the number of institutions involved, gender dimension shall be considered. Priority shall be given to the proposals with the highest number of female research staff.

6.2 Evaluation procedures

Proposals will be evaluated by one of the four evaluation panels: one per each research area.

Each panel is composed of three (3) experts from different SMART-ER institutions. Each panel shall be composed by one Coordinator and two other experts of the research area (appendix 6).
Preparatory meetings between the panel members and the SMART-ER Executive Team shall take place before the call deadlines.

A reserve list of experts will be constituted in order to solve any difficulties resulting from conflict of interests by the panel members (appendix 6).

If necessary, the panel members may request the intervention of external experts pertaining to the reserve list during the evaluation process.

A general consultation to all ECIU institutions took place and the panels composition is based on the indications sent by institutions.

Efforts must be made to guarantee the gender balance in the different panels.

All panel members should be affiliated to different ECIU institutions.

Each panel establishes a ranked list based on the final score at or above 12.

Proposals will not be evaluated anonymously.

Proposals may be evaluated remotely.

Scores:

Experts score each award criterion on a scale from 1 to 5:

1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 – Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

6.3 Evaluation process and timeline

The evaluation process is composed by the following stages:

**Phase 1: Eligibility check**

Basic eligibility evaluation according to the eligibility criteria stated in sections 3 and 4 will be conducted by UAVR, as leader of the task 3.3, within 3 working days after deadline.

The UAVR will inform the candidates if the proposals were considered eligible or non-eligible and will give the latter 10 working days for preliminary hearing.

The UAVR will reply the candidates in 5 working days.

**Phase 2: Individual review process**

The UAVR will ensure that panel members are independent from the research groups in which the research teams are involved. If the proposal integrates a team(s) affiliated to the same institution(s) of one or more of the panel members, a declaration of conflict of interests will be requested to those panel members (appendix 7).

Each proposal will be reviewed by 3 independent experts.
Experts work individually. Each expert gives a score for each criterion, with explanatory comments, and prepares an individual evaluation report (appendix 8).

Each expert will rank the application by a score from 1 to 5 for each criterion (see section 6.2), administered in an Individual Evaluation Report (IER). The final score for each criterion, by applying weightings, and for the whole application will be calculated as the sum of the individual assessments provided by the Evaluators. The default threshold for individual criteria (Excellence, Impact and Implementation) is 3. The default overall threshold (the weighted sum of the three individual scores) is 12.

**Phase 3: Consensus group**

All IER will be combined and discussed at a consensus meeting where all reviewers will be present to agree on a common position, including comments and scores.

The outcome of the evaluation will be a ranked list of all proposals, combined of lists presented by each of the four evaluation panels, based on the scores obtained by each proposal and the final discussions of the reviewers at the consensus meeting.

If the panel considers it necessary it may be requested the intervention of external experts pertaining to the reserve list mentioned in section 6.2.

After reception of the proposals, the experts will have **10 working days** to send the IER and the Consensus Report (CR) (appendix 9) to UAVR, by email to smarter_seed@ua.pt.

**Phase 4: Ranking and communication of results**

The highest-ranked proposals per type of action are selected based on their ranking up to the limit of the budget availability as defined in the section 5.

The UAVR will communicate the results of the evaluation process to all candidates within **5 working days** after reception of the CR as well as the SMART-ER Administrative Project Manager, at University of Twente, in order to proceed with total approved funding transfers to beneficiaries’ institutions as established in section 9.

If an applicant believes that the selection procedure includes any procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment or misuse of powers, a complaint may be submitted, following the deadlines and procedures stated in the communication of the results.

In case of a re-evaluation, it will be done on the application as initially submitted and no additional information will be admissible. The re-evaluation will be limited to the criteria affected.

**7 Support to applicants**

For further assistance, information and questions regarding the different calls, applicants may contact the Support Team of UAVR, through the email smarter_seed@ua.pt.
8 Project management and communication rules

All the approved proposals must be implemented in accordance with the workplans, the SMART-ER Seed Programme regulations and applicable rules in each institution.

The Principal Investigator must submit a final technical report within 30 days after the end of the action (appendix 10).

The technical reports will be submitted by email, in pdf format, to the Support Team of UAVR, through the email smarter_seed@ua.pt.

The final results will be presented by the research teams during the joint events to be organized in the end of the SMART-ER project with this purpose.

All results and dissemination materials must acknowledge the funding received by SMART-ER:

“This project has received funding from the SMART-ER project, funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement #101016888.”

The partner institutions must — for a period of five years after the end of the SMART-ER project at 31/01/2023 — keep adequate records and other supporting documentation to prove the proper implementation of the actions.

The partner institutions do not need to keep record about the costs actually incurred for implementing the action.

9 Funding procedures

The SMART-ER Coordinator Institution will transfer the funds to all beneficiaries’ institutions, according to the received information from UAVR related with the proposals recommended for funding and the financial compensation for evaluators located at the institution.

The funds mentioned above will be transferred twice a year, in May and in September, in the total approved amount per institution in each call.

Each institution transfers the funds to each of the panel members involved in the evaluation process, according to its internal normal practices.

Each institution must make the funds available to its researchers since the starting date of each action.

Each researcher and research team use the funds in accordance with the SMART-ER regulations and applicable national and local practices and legislation.

All supporting documents must be kept by five years after the end of the SMART-ER project.

10 Data Protection Policy

The submission of the proposals under the different calls requires the provision of personal data by the experts and applicants, namely the name, title, affiliation, gender, career stage, contacts and research identifier.

The personal data provided by the applicants will be kept on file by the Research Support Office of the University of Aveiro, headquartered at Campus de Santiago, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal, the responsible for processing it. This data collection aims at support the evaluation process, financial and management procedures of the funded projects and the impact assessment of the implementation of the SMART-ER Seed Programme due in the scope of the H2020 funding of the SMART-ER project. The conclusion of these activities
will imply the transfer of the collected data to the SMART-ER institutions involved in each of the activities and proposals and, upon request, to the European Commission.

The operations for processing the personal data previously indicated are based on the pre-contractual relationship established, supported by GDPR, which consists of managing the received proposals, managing the evaluation process of the eligible proposals by the experts panels, contact the researchers and host institutions about the results, inform the management structure of the SMART-ER regarding funded projects and beneficiary institutions to support the transfer of the due funding amounts and to collect the necessary data to assess the impact of the programme and report to the European Commission.

The data provided for the purposes indicated above will be kept for five years after the end of the SMART-ER project.

By means of a written communication to be sent to the UAVR address indicated in the second paragraph above, unless any of the restrictions provided for in the applicable legislation apply, the researcher and subject data may exercise the rights of access to his/her personal data, as well as its rectification. Any request to erase or limit the data processing in any stage of the process will be subject to a careful analyses and may imply to immediate closure of the process and or the reimbursement of received funds.

For any additional information, clarification or request regarding the above paragraphs contact the Research Support Office of the University of Aveiro through the email account research@ua.pt.

The UAVR has a Data Protection Officer (DPO), who ensures compliance of the treatment of personal data with current legislation, and can be contacted at the following e mail address: epd@ua.pt.

11 Bibliography


Deliverable 1.2 – SMART-ER Co-Created R&I Agenda

ECIU long term joint research strategy - https://media.dcu.ie/media/ECIUsummary/

Erasmus+ project – Deliverable 2.5 - Challenge-Based Research in ECIU University - Towards a sustainable joint strategy.

Acknowledgements

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