



Open Lab Council Call

Guidance when seeking funding
(Version January 2025)

For your information

Here are the names of the universities and their acronyms as we use them in CIVIS.

AMU	Aix-Marseille Université
NKUA	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
UB	University of Bucharest
ULB	Université libre de Bruxelles
UoG	University of Glasgow
UNIL	University of Lausanne
UAM	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
SUR	Sapienza Università di Roma
PLUS	Paris Lodron University of Salzburg
SU	Stockholm University
UT	Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen




Introduction

CIVIS is a European Civic University formed by the alliance of 11 leading research higher education institutions across Europe: Aix-Marseille Université, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Université libre de Bruxelles, University of Bucharest, University of Glasgow, University of Lausanne, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Sapienza Università di Roma, Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Stockholm University and Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen.

It brings together a community of more than 470,000 students and 58,000 staff members including 35,000 academics and researchers.

This is the list of authors and their universities

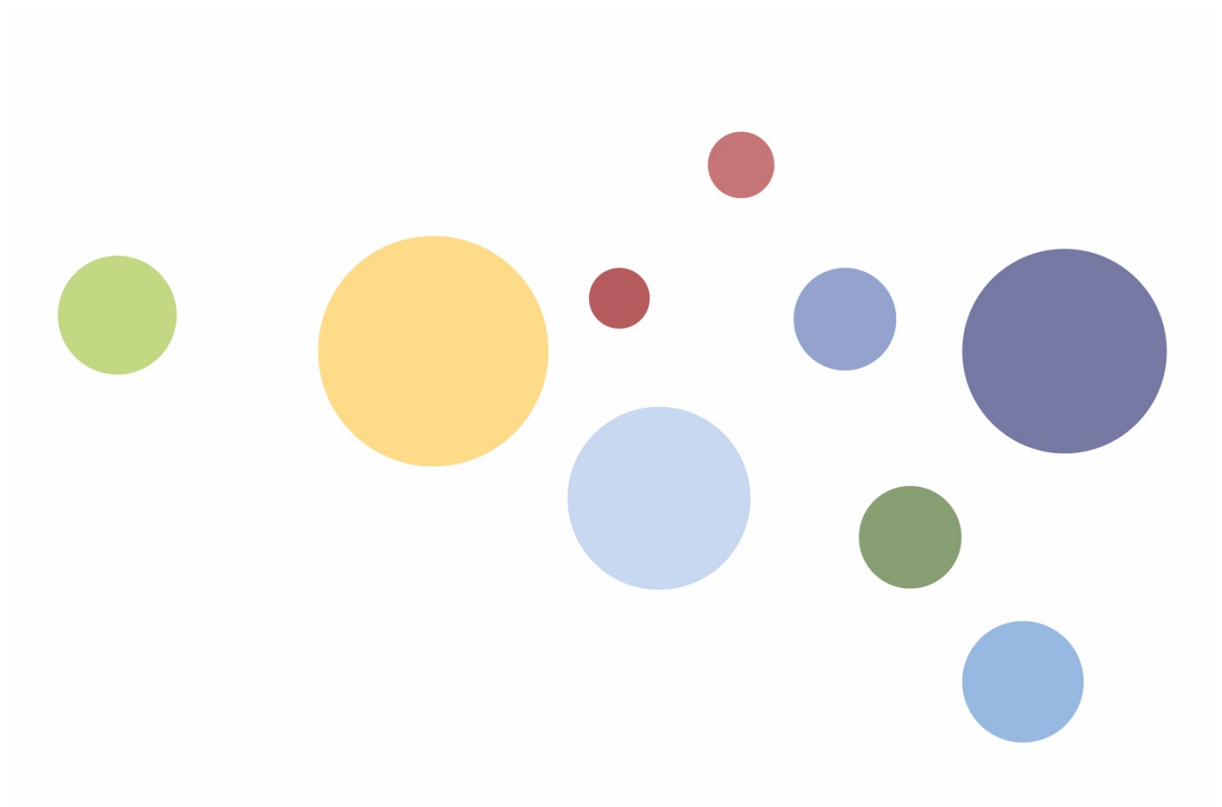


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1 Alliance
11 Universities
Countless Possibilities

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Guidelines for Submitting an Open Labs Project

Please read the document to ensure your project meets the CIVIS Open Labs objectives and financial framework

CIVIS Open Labs Call: Overview and Conditions

1. Purpose

This document is designed **to guide those applying for funding for a project via the CIVIS Open Lab Call**. This process is open to researchers, staff, and the different CIVIS alliance working groups, such as the Civic Engagement Expert Group and the Service-Learning Expert Group. It covers the objectives of the CIVIS Open Labs (section 3), a description of projects supported by CIVIS Open Labs (section 4), the Funding criteria and management and conditions (section 5), and the step-by-step process for applying (section 6).

Before preparing your application, you should consult your institution's CIVIS Open Lab coordinator. Contact details can be found in section 7.

2. The Open Labs of the CIVIS Alliance

CIVIS Open Labs can be described as places where we develop projects not only for the territory, its citizens and stakeholders, but also with them. They are sort of incubators for citizen projects within our universities, which allow us to leverage the knowledge and expertise of our lecturers and researchers, but also to allow our students to open up to the territory. It is also an opportunity to recognise the different ways knowledge can be created and to recognise the empirical knowledge of our stakeholders.

The Open Labs of the CIVIS Alliance connect member universities with local communities to foster participatory, inclusive, and impactful collaboration. These collaborative and interdisciplinary spaces — whether physical or virtual — bridge the gap between academia and society, promoting innovation and co-creation at local, regional, and international levels.

3. Objectives of CIVIS Open Labs

To bridge this gap, CIVIS Open Labs foster innovation, collaboration, and civic engagement. Their primary objectives include:

- **Promoting Service-Learning Activities:** Encouraging students and researchers to engage with communities through experiential learning that addresses real-world challenges.
- **Supporting Participatory and Citizen Research:** Actively involving citizens and stakeholders in the research process to co-create knowledge and develop solutions.
- **Advancing Design Thinking Methodologies:** Facilitating innovative problem-solving by integrating diverse perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches.
- **Building Partnerships Beyond Academia:** Collaborating with external organizations, such as NGOs, local authorities, businesses, and citizens, to create impactful teaching and research projects.

To achieve these goals, all Open Labs initiatives must align with the **CIVIS Stream 1 Objectives** (Details in section 9), which focus on:

- Advancing civic engagement and challenge-based education strategies.
- Strengthening connections between academia and local social, economic, political, and cultural stakeholders.
- Developing and sharing tools to address societal challenges and create new opportunities.
- Establishing knowledge co-creation teams involving universities and local/global partners.
- Facilitating the participation of associated global and local partners in challenge-based initiatives.
- Boosting civic engagement through impactful Open Labs projects.

By adhering to these principles, Open Labs become dynamic platforms for collaboration, innovation, and societal impact, both locally and internationally.

4. Projects and Activities supported by the CIVIS Open Labs

CIVIS Open Labs support a diverse range of projects and activities developed through the alliance that operates both locally and internationally. These initiatives span various domains, including but not limited to:

- **Promotion and dissemination of methods:** Training programs on service-learning, participatory research, or design thinking.
- **Workshops on specific themes:** Events involving researchers, local authorities, and community stakeholders to address pressing issues.
- **Collaborative projects:** Initiatives that connect academia with external organizations to co-develop solutions for societal challenges.

5. Lump Sum Funding

Eligibility Criteria for Funding

To obtain funding, projects and activities **must** meet the following criteria:

1. **Align with CIVIS Stream 1 Objectives** (section 3)
2. **Involve at least three CIVIS European Member Universities:**
 - Partners can play different roles in the project. For instance: One partner may contribute expertise to address a specific problem identified by another university in collaboration with its civic society partners.

In addition to these mandatory criteria, projects must also meet at least one of the following additional objectives:

- **Co-construction with External Partner(s):** Projects are developed in collaboration with one or more external partners (e.g., NGOs, local authorities, businesses).
- **Civic Engagement Dimension:** The project actively promotes civic engagement by meaningfully involving local communities or other stakeholders.
- **Involvement of Associate Member Universities in Africa:** The project includes participation from African Associate Member Universities to strengthen international collaboration.
- **Development of Existing Pilot or Showcase Projects:** The project builds on an existing pilot or showcase initiative that can be further developed and internationalized with support from CIVIS2 funding.
- **Relevance to CIVIS Hub Themes:** The project aligns with one of the five CIVIS Hubs. Applicants must explicitly refer to the relevant subject in their application.

Lump Sum Funding Management

Each eligible University has **80,000 EUR** in its budget allocated to open labs-related projects during the CIVIS2 period, ending on **30.09.2026**. The exact amount of funding available for individual projects should be discussed with the Open Lab Coordinators of the involved institutions.

Funding is available as a lump sum, enabling simplified financial management since the project holder does not have to justify specific costs. However, this flexibility comes with specific conditions. The project holder **must** demonstrate that the proposed activities **have been implemented** and have fulfilled **CIVIS 2 objectives**. In other words, instead of submitting a detailed list of expenses, **it must be demonstrable that the goals behind the funding have been achieved**.

While eligible universities will receive a lump sum transfer for Open Labs funded projects, compliance with the associated conditions is mandatory. Projects must align with CIVIS Objectives, as failure to do so will result in the CIVIS 2 project being unable to meet its stated objectives when the final report of CIVIS 2 is submitted to the European Commission.

Key Conditions of Lump Sum Funding

- **Restrictions on Fund Use:**
 - o Lump sum funding cannot be transferred or allocated to third parties.
 - o Direct payments to third-party service providers are permitted but must not be the major part of the budget.
 - o Funds cannot be used for equipment purchases.
 - o Funds may not be used to recruit new personnel. However, it is permissible to pay individuals already employed at the university or students.

Local institutions may impose additional requirements. Project holders must consult their Open Lab Coordinators and CIVIS Institutional Coordinators for guidance.

6. Process to Apply for Funding

The Open Labs Council has created the funding application process, which should be followed when seeking funding. This process is accessible to researchers and the different groups of the CIVIS Alliance, such as the Civic Engagement Expert Group and the Service-Learning Expert Group.

Follow these four steps to apply for Open Labs funding:

Step 1 – Identify Partners

To be eligible for funding, projects must include partners from **at least three CIVIS European universities and have a transnational dimension**. If you encounter challenges in finding collaborators, contact the Open Lab Coordinator at your home institution. They can assist you in connecting with potential partners and provide guidance on refining your proposal.

Step 2 – Prepare Your Application

Once your partnership is established, begin drafting your application using the [application form](#). Your application must clearly outline the following:

- **Project Summary:** Include the goals and objectives you wish to achieve.
- **Alignment with CIVIS Objectives:** Demonstrate how your project supports CIVIS 2 Stream 1 objectives (section 3)
- **Partner Contributions and Roles:** Clearly explain the role of each partner and why their involvement is critical to the project's success.
- **Work plan:** Provide a timeline and a structured plan for project implementation.
- **Budget:** Include an overview of expected funding needs. The budget form is available [here](#)
- **Letters of Support:** Attach letters from participating universities specifying their level of involvement, signed by the Open Lab Coordinator and Institutional coordinator. A template is available [here](#)

To help you prepare your application, you will find a checklist in section 8.

Step 3 – Submit Your Application

Following this, the Open Lab Coordinator of your institution should submit your application to the [dedicate form](#). Applications can be submitted monthly, with the deadline being the 30th of each month. The final submission deadline is January 31st, 2026.

Your application will be reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of:

- The Open Lab Chair or its deputy
- A member of the CIVIS coordination team
- A member of the CIVIS Stream 1,
- A member of the Service-Learning Expert Group

- A member of the Civic Engagement Expert Group.

This panel will evaluate your application based on its alignment with CIVIS 2 goals and provide feedback on the overall application. Panel feedback will be provided within the next month (Please note that under several circumstances such as, e.g., holidays, a large number of applications, constraints of the management and steering committees agendas, etc., the delay might be extended up to 2 months). Once the evaluation committee approves your application, CIVIS Institutional Coordinators will perform an administrative check, and it will be forwarded to the Management and Steering Committee for final approval.

Step 4 – Manage and Complete Your Project

During the implementation of the project, project holders will be asked to submit a short mid-term report.

Upon project completion, you must submit a narrative report demonstrating how the project met its stated goals and contributed to the CIVIS 2 objectives outlined in Section 3.

Annexe for Call Application

7. Contact info of the Open Labs Coordinators

- AMU: valerie.caraguel@univ-amu.fr
- NKUA: mmouliou@arch.uoa.gr
- PLUS: maximilian.grund@plus.ac.at
- SU: ivar.bjorkman@openlab.se
- SUR: irene.baldriga@uniroma1.it
- UAM: manuel.alcantara@uam.es
- UB: magdalena.platis@unibuc.ro
- ULB: robin.lebrun@ulb.be
- UNIL: christele.aubry@unil.ch
- UofG : civis@glasgow.ac.uk
- UT: mareike.kardinal@uni-tuebingen.de

8. Project Checklist

The below checklist should be used to ensure that your project will meet these objectives.

Objectives	1) Alignment with the Stream 1 objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	See section 3 above, and <u>explicitly</u> refer to these in your application	
	<i>This constitutes an admission criterion for assessment.</i>	
	2) Involvement of at least three CIVIS European member universities	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>This constitutes an admission criterion for assessment.</i>	
	3) Co-construction with external partner(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4) Civic engagement dimension	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5) Involvement of Associate Member Universities in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please ensure at least 3 of these criteria are covered, including criteria 1 and 2.	6) Have you identified an existing pilot showcase projects that can be further developed and internationalised with the support of CIVIS2 funding?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7) Relevance to CIVIS Hub Themes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	See here for an overview of the Hubs. Please explicitly refer to the relevant subject in your application.	
Ineligible Costs	Have you checked that your budget expenses do not relate to:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Equipment purchases	
	- Transfers to third parties	
	- Engagement of new personnel (not already employed by one of the universities).	
	<i>This constitutes an exclusion criterion. Please check with your local Institutional Coordinators before applying.</i>	
Essential Criteria to implement your project - Please ensure all of these criteria are covered.	Have you discussed your project with the Open Lab Coordinator and Institutional Coordinators of all involved institutions to check that it will fit in the agreed local/global budgets?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Have you fixed a timeline for your project and its implementation?	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Detailed Stream 1 Objectives

The most relevant objectives, tasks, and milestones for the Open Labs come from Stream 1, which includes Work Package 2 – Civic engagement and challenge-based education strategy and Work Package 4 – Local to global civic engagement projects. Below is a detailed breakdown of how these work packages should be achieved. Items highlighted in **bold** in the tables below are to be given more attention.

Work Package 2 – Civic engagement and challenge-based education strategy

Objective	Task	Description	Milestone
Develop CIVIS 2 civic engagement and challenge-based education strategy. Build bridges between the academic world and the local social, economic, political, and cultural stakeholders. Set up and share tools to tackle societal challenges creating new opportunities. Establish knowledge co-creating teams involving the universities with local and global partner. Facilitate the involvement of global and local associated partners in the challenge-based agenda.	To update the CIVIS strategy and agenda.	Consolidate the shared frameworks of Open Labs based on existing formats.	Tools and processes for Hubs and Open Labs.
	To encourage deeper operational and thematic links between Hubs and Open Labs.	Consolidate the shared framework of Open Labs based on the existing formats.	
		Articulate Hub and Open Lab strategies around shared societal challenges involving stakeholders.	
		Develop processes through which educational offerings developed through the Hubs can better incorporate stakeholder involvement stimulated by Open Labs.	
		Plan the development of the working environment of the Local Open Labs and develop their influence in their respective territories.	
		Propose products, processes and policies drawn from the Open Labs' intersectoral knowledge.	
		Deepen intersectoral networks.	

Work Package 4 – Local to global civic engagement projects

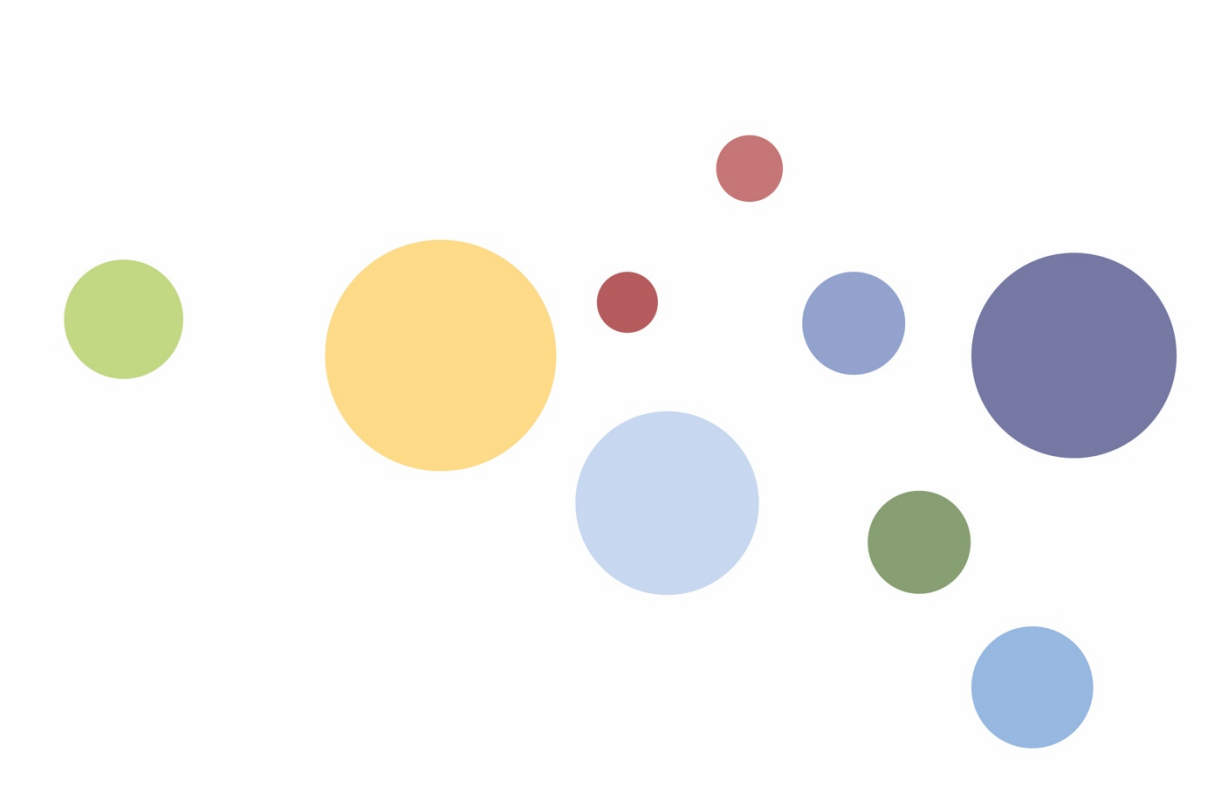
Objective	Task	Description	Milestone
Boost civic engagement through Open Labs projects.	Enrich beneficial interactions between communities on our respective campuses as well as societal stakeholders to encourage them to meet, exchange, collaborate and co-create. Substantially boost our civic engagement, notably through our Open Labs agenda in collaboration with the Hubs.	Develop service learning and internship through challenge-based projects with societal stakeholders.	List of Civic Engagement projects
		International projects focusing on challenges identified by the international associated partners.	Product, processes, and policy recommendations from OL
		Program a schedule of new Open Lab projects fostering greater interactions with stakeholders.	Identification of Citizen Science Projects
		Support concrete civic projects identified following internal calls for proposals.	
		Share expertise and best practices among Open Labs and associated partners.	
		Support the organization of Transnational Open Labs involving several Local ones.	
	Support Citizen Science projects.	Host Intersectoral and Transnational Open Labs tackling societal challenges.	
		Identification of citizen-science projects involving citizens & stakeholders via events.	

10. Resources

Several resources are available to support you in developing your projects, including:

- [CIVIS Service-Learning Guide for Lecturers](#): A comprehensive guide developed by the expert group of service-learning to implementing service-learning activities within the CIVIS framework
- [Vade-Mecum to develop a collaborative research](#): A practical guide developed by the University of Lausanne to help you design and implement collaborative research initiatives.

These resources provide valuable information and best practices to help ensure the success of your project.



Evaluation Process

Evaluation Process

The Open Lab Chair organises the evaluation process. After compiling the individual evaluations, the evaluation committee deliberates collectively on the application and provides feedback to the applicants.

The delay between the monthly closure of the call and the final validation by the steering committee usually is one month. Please note that under several circumstances (e.g., holidays, a large number of applications, constraints of the management and steering committees agendas, etc.), the delay might be extended up to 2 months.

Timing	Description
Last day of the month	Monthly deadline to apply for the call until January 2026
Beginning of the next month	Distribution of the applications to the evaluators
Middle of the next month	The evaluation committee deliberates on the applications and transmits the report to the applicants. The evaluation report and the validated applications are forwarded to the Management Committee and the Steering Committee
Before the Steering Committee	Administrative check by the CIVIS Institutional Coordinators
3rd week of the next month	Validation by the CIVIS Steering Committee
After validation by the steering committee	Start of the project implementation

Composition of the Evaluation Committee

- The Chair of the Open Lab Council — Deputy: next OLC chair OR another member of the OLC
- A representative from CIVIS Management
- A representative from CIVIS Stream 1
- A representative from the CIVIS Expert Group on service-learning
- A representative from the CIVIS Expert Group on civic engagement

To avoid conflicts of interest, a deputy must replace the members of the Evaluation Committee who are part of a project.

The composition of the Evaluation Committee is attached to each evaluation report.

Evaluation Grid

Qualification Criteria

The three qualification criteria should imperatively be met to proceed with further evaluation.

Qualification Criteria	
The project <u>explicitly and sufficiently</u> aligns with Stream1 objectives The project relates to WP2 and WP4 tasks, objectives, and milestones indicated in the guidelines pp. 6-8: civic engagement and challenge-based education strategy; local to global civic engagement projects	Yes / No
The project has a multilateral/transnational dimension and involves at least 3 CIVIS universities	Yes / No
The local Open Lab Coordinator have checked the project	Yes / No

Evaluators are expected to give short feedback if the qualification criteria are not met.

Evaluation Criteria

If the qualification criteria are met, the application will be evaluated according to the following grid.

The maximum score is 38. Projects need 19 points to be accepted.

Evaluation Criteria	Score = 0	Score = 1	Score = 2	Score = 3
A. General Quality of the Project Description				
The project description is clear	Application provides no clear project description.	Application provides a project description with minimal clarity, leaving essential details vague or unstructured.	Application provides a somewhat clear project description with limited specificity, leaving some details open to interpretation.	Application provides a clear and detailed project description, presenting all key details in a structured and coherent manner.
B. Relation to WP2 and WP4 Objectives				
a. Local Stakeholder Involvement	Application shows no evidence of engagement of local stakeholders	Application shows some evidence of engagement of local stakeholders, but no clarity is given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows some evidence of engagement of local stakeholders with little clarity given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows clear evidence of engagement of local stakeholders with clear examples of how it will be central to the project.
b. Co-construction with External Partners	Application shows no evidence of co-construction with external partners	Application shows some evidence of co-construction with external partners, but no clarity is given as to how it	Application shows some evidence of co-construction with external partners with little clarity given as to how it	Application shows clear evidence of co-construction with external partners with clear examples of how

		will be central to the project.	will be central to the project.	it will be central to the project.
c. Participatory Research Approaches	Application shows no evidence of participatory research approaches.	Application shows some evidence of participatory research approaches, but no clarity is given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows some evidence of participatory research approaches with little clarity given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows clear evidence of participatory research approaches with clear examples of how it will be central to the project.
d. Innovative Educational Activities	Application shows no evidence of innovative educational activities or student involvement in active and responsible roles.	Application shows some evidence of innovative educational activities or student involvement, but no clarity is given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows some evidence of innovative educational activities or student involvement with little clarity given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows clear evidence of innovative educational activities or student involvement with clear examples of how it will be central to the project.
e. Participation of CIVIS Associated Members	Application shows no evidence of participation of CIVIS Associated Members	Application shows some evidence of participation of CIVIS Associated Members, but no clarity is given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows some evidence of participation of CIVIS Associated Members, with little clarity given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows clear evidence of participation of CIVIS Associated Members with clear examples of how it will be central to the project.
f. Synergies with CIVIS Hub Councils	Application shows no evidence of synergies with Hub Councils.	Application shows some evidence of synergies with Hub Councils (e.g., identification of a common topic), but no clarity is given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows some evidence of synergies with Hub Councils with little clarity given as to how it will be central to the project.	Application shows clear evidence of synergies with Hub Councils with clear examples of how it will be central to the project.
g. Scaling Up Pilot Project for Internationalization	Application shows no evidence of scaling up an existing pilot showcase project for internationalisation.	Application shows some evidence of scaling up an existing pilot showcase project, but no clarity is given as	Application shows some evidence of scaling up an existing pilot showcase project with little clarity given as to how it	Application shows clear evidence of scaling up an existing pilot showcase project with clear examples of how

		to how it will be internationalised.	will be internationalised.	it will be internationalised.
C. Management and Sustainability				
a. Budget Includes Only Eligible Costs (min score: Yes)	No	Yes		
b. Budget Coherent with Activities (min score: 2)	Application shows no coherence between the project budget and the proposed activities.	Application shows some coherence between the project budget and the proposed activities, but lacks clarity on specific allocations.	Application shows some coherence between the project budget and the proposed activities, with limited clarity on budget allocations.	Application shows clear coherence between the project budget and the proposed activities, with detailed and transparent budget allocations.
c. Timeline Coherence (min score: 2)	Application shows no coherence between the project timeline and the proposed activities.	Application shows some coherence between the project timeline and the proposed activities, but lacks clarity on specific milestones.	Application shows some coherence between the project timeline and the proposed activities, with limited clarity on specific milestones.	Application shows clear coherence between the project timeline and the proposed activities, with well-defined and realistic milestones.
d. Project Might be Repeated	No	Yes		
D. Impact & Dissemination				
a. Societal Impact	Application shows no evidence of a positive societal impact.	Application shows some evidence of a positive societal impact, but lacks clarity on how this impact will be achieved.	Application shows some evidence of a positive societal impact with limited clarity on how it will be achieved.	Application shows clear evidence of a positive societal impact with specific examples of how it will be achieved and measured.
b. Public Dissemination	Application shows no evidence of public dissemination efforts.	Application shows some evidence of public dissemination efforts, but lacks clarity on the methods or reach.	Application shows some evidence of public dissemination efforts with limited clarity on the methods or anticipated reach.	Application shows clear evidence of public dissemination efforts with specific methods and a clear plan for reaching a broad audience.