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# UNITA CALL FOR STARTING GRANTS ON RESEARCH

## Renewable energy mixes and materials for a more sustainable world

### **1. Background**

The first phase of UNITA (2020-2023) has initiated deep transformation in the member universities that will continue and fully roll out during the second phase (2023-2027) and beyond, also integrating the new partners and associated ones.

Our long-term vision is to transform the way we cooperate, educate, do research, innovate, and reach out to society. In the coming years and in an expanded structure, the UNITA alliance intends to contribute to the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area and to the full roll-out of the European Universities Initiative. To make our vision a reality, we have agreed on a workplan for the coming four years and defined milestones for the period after.

After a very successful pilot phase, the UNITA consortium is convinced that a very strong commitment of everyone in their institutions is needed to achieve the ambitious objectives it has set itself: contributing to the educational, scientific and cultural progress of our regions, fostering their sustainable development, strengthening the local innovation ecosystems supporting their transition to a knowledge-based economy, whilst promoting and accelerating European integration within and beyond them.

They have therefore decided to devote a significant part of its budget to support the creation of transnational thematic and interdisciplinary groups, through grants attributed to the projects they initiate together. This seed money will accelerate the development of those groups of educators, researchers and innovators who share a common interest in a field of knowledge and want to develop the field further through exchanges of good practice and the launch of joint projects.

### **2. Goals and objectives**

The aim of this call for projects is to strengthen collaboration between UNITA partners through the implementation of new projects or the consolidation of existing projects.

The objectives of this call are as follows:

1. To promote the creation/evolution/development of UNITA academic and research communities
2. To promote thematic areas and/or methodological approaches that will enable the development of long-term academic and scientific cooperation;
3. To support scientific partnerships of common interest with a structuring effect, i.e. directing or encouraging the development of larger-scale research projects, the consolidation of innovative interdisciplinary scientific issues, and the creation of partnership transfer and valorization mechanisms;
4. Encourage closer links with actors from outside the academic world: the public, semi-public, private and non-profit sectors;
5. Encourage the launch of European projects by supporting preparatory studies and research.

Projects may take the following forms (non-exhaustive list):

- Preparation of a collaborative research project with a view to submission to national and/or European calls for projects;
- Organization of an event, conference, thematic seminar or summer or winter school, etc.;
- Organization of meetings to set up training, joint research, credited internships, etc.;
- Creation of courses linking research and education, for instance in the form of microcredentials between universities;
- Visiting periods of professors, researchers, doctoral students, students and/or technical or administrative staff.

### 3. Themes

Our societies became aware of the limited resources available on earth in the 1970s, and of the profound impact of our activities on the climate over the last 20 years. The question of resources - energy, materials, water, food, etc. - is becoming ever more pressing, forcing us to take a systemic and global approach to the energy transition.

To meet these challenges, our territories need to develop reversible and resilient symbiotic solutions that make sustainable use of local resources in the broadest sense. The issue cannot be limited to energy production alone. It must necessarily be coupled with questions of sobriety and recyclability.

This call for projects aims to support international research projects designed to:

- The energy autonomy of our territories through the development of sustainable energy mixes (materially, economically and socially) that make the most of renewable energy potential, manage intermittency and meet needs.
- Reducing embodied energy and increasing the recyclability of materials and systems with high energy and environmental impacts as well as identifying green and more sustainable substitutes.



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#### 4. Eligibility

1. To be eligible, a project must be submitted by at least three different university partners of the UNITA Alliance.
2. Each project is led by a member of the teaching staff or a researcher from the UNITA Alliance that serves as principal investigator, responsible for the scientific reporting of the project.
3. Each university partner participates with a team composed at least by a member of the teaching staff or a researcher (team leader) or will lead a team possibly composed by other teaching staff members, researchers, post-docs, and PhD candidates.
4. Each principal investigator or team leader can participate only in one project per call.
5. Additional associated teams (whose participants may participate to other projects in the call as principal investigator or team leader) from other university partner in the UNITA Alliance are encouraged to participate to projects without requesting funding in this call.
6. The duration of a project is up to 12 months

#### 5. Funding and Budgeting

This call finances projects up to a maximum of €15.000 for three partners, a maximum of €20.000 for four partners, and a maximum of €25.000 for 5 partners or more, eventually not evenly distributed among the partners. These amounts are in any case a maximum and could be adapted depending on the project. For the selected projects, the principal investigator and the team leaders will receive the budget allocated to her/his unit directly from her/his university.

##### Eligible expenses:

- Travel and subsistence costs for events or project meetings that take place in the countries of the full partner universities in UNITA;
- Joint communication, dissemination and publication costs;
- Logistical costs and costs of organizing meetings (including costs for coffee breaks and working lunches) that take place in the countries of the full partner universities in UNITA;
- Costs relating to the hiring of students and/or research assistants (maximum 30% of the funds granted);
- Consumables (maximum 40% of the total budget).

All expenses are also subject to the constraints of the university partner internal regulations.

#### 6. Evaluation and selection

Each project will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Added value of the project for the development of UNITA communities.
2. The leverage effect of the project beyond the funding (prospects for external funding).
3. A coherent and clearly formulated workplan.



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4. The scientific relevance of the project.
5. The originality and value of the interdisciplinary approach.
6. Feasibility of the project.
7. Links with actors from outside the academic world.

Priority will be given to projects involving a larger number of UNITA academic partners.

The projects will be pre-evaluated and ranked by each of the eleven universities, according to procedures specific to each institution and taking into consideration the above criteria. Each local selection team will be composed at least by the Vice Rector/President on Research or his/her delegate, the local responsible of the concerned Hub, a Senior Research Manager, and a representative from the UNITA Management Committee (Task 1.2).

The final selection of projects will be made by a committee composed by one representative designated by each university.

### **7. Obligations of the beneficiaries with regard to communication**

Beneficiaries agree to provide information on UNITA's and Europe's support for their project. This will take the form of the use of the UNITA and Erasmus+ logos on all communication media and during events linked with the project.

Moreover, the beneficiaries are committed to produce a report and/or to present their work in case a restitution event is organised.

### **9. Intellectual property**

In the case that during the project development new intellectual properties are generated, an agreement between the partner universities shall be set up.

### **10. Glossary**

University associated partner: each University in the UNITA Alliance who participated to the Matching Events on Research (UBI, IPG, UPNA, UNIZAR, UPPA, USMB, HES-SO, UNITO, UNIBS, UVT, UTBV, CHNU).

Full partner university: a university that participate to UNITA as full partner (UBI, IPG, UPNA, UNIZAR, UPPA, USMB, UNITO, UNIBS, UVT, UTBV).

Principal investigator: the coordinator of the project, a permanent member of the teaching staff or a researcher from a university partner.

Team leader: the coordinator of a team in a university, a permanent member of the teaching staff or a researcher from a university partner.



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## 11. Application

Applications shall be submitted on the platform accessible on <https://www.survey.unito.it/index.php/669326?lang=en>

## 12. Timeline

Launch of the call	08th of April 2024
Deadline for submission	08th of May 2024 -midnight
Result notification	June 2024
Latest project start date	30th of September 2024
Project duration	12 Months
Reporting due	30th of October 2025