

## Regulations of the Call for Projects

31.01.2024

This document defines the framework within which the [seal] Program can support collaborative innovation projects. In particular it explains the criteria, requirements and process for submission and selection of projects by its Steering Committee or its ad hoc Selection Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Selection Committee").

This document is issued in French (« *Règlement des appels à projets* ») and in English. In case of discrepancy between the two versions, the French version shall prevail.

### 1. Topic of the Call

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Each call for projects has a specific theme. This is described in an ad hoc document that sets out the context and issues involved, the objectives of the call for projects, the type of project that can be granted and the areas of expertise sought.

### 2. General Eligibility Criteria

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Eligible projects for financial support will have all of the following characteristics:

- [ They are strictly in line with the topic of the call for projects.
- [ They are part of an applied innovation process with the potential for direct benefits for the socio-economic fabric of the canton of Vaud.
- [ They involve the development and implementation of prototypes of technological solutions, innovative business tools or new approaches to professional practices that can be tested or directly applied by companies and/or other actors.
- [ They have a multidisciplinary and collaborative dimension, involving at least two Academic Partners (HEIG-VD, UNIL, EPFL) and at least one Implementation Partner (company, non-profit organization, public administration) and generating added value in the canton of Vaud.
- [ They include at least some results that can be valued and disclosed publicly, in the sense that they cannot be subject to total confidentiality.

### 3. Budget and Funding

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Except in exceptional circumstances, the amount granted to a project may not exceed CHF 100,000, or 90% of the total costs of the various partners involved in the project.

The eligible costs of the project include the human resources, materials and supplies of the Academic Partners (including the overheads) and of the Implementation Partners, as well as external legal and communication expenses up to a maximum of 10% of the total project budget.

Up to the above limits, the costs incurred by Academic Partners will be fully covered, if necessary, by increasing their own contribution.

The Implementation Partner(s) will contribute to the project in cash and/or in kind, by providing human and/or material resources. Their contribution represents at least 10% of the total cost of the project.

The budget structure must allow for a clear distinction between costs specific to each Partner, and those incurred by external parties (legal advice and communication costs).

With the approval of the Selection Committee, supported projects may seek additional funding from third parties (foundations, public funds, corporate sponsors). These must be fully and transparently disclosed within the submission of the application (*see section 8*).

The grant will be allocated to the Academic Partner who employs the Project Leader (hereinafter the "Project Leader") (*see section 5*), who will distribute part of it to the other Project Partners according to the planned budget.

Prior to the project, the Project Leader – or, in the case of the first incentive below, a person with an idea within one of the potential project Partners (the "Idea Owner") – may benefit from the following financial incentives:

[ A lump sum of CHF 2,500 to develop a project idea that meets the general eligibility criteria (*see section 2*).

[ A lump sum of CHF 5,000 to identify partners, agree on the framework for collaboration and set up the project.

These incentives are in addition to the financial support granted to the project, the terms of which are detailed in section 8.

#### **4. Project Duration**

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The typical duration of funded projects is 6 to 12 months. Shorter projects are possible. In exceptional cases, an extension beyond 12 months may be granted.

Projects must start within 3 months of the decision to grant funding (*see section 9*).

#### **5. Organization**

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Each project is placed under the responsibility of the Project Leader, who signs a grant agreement with the HEIG-VD, acting on behalf of the Program. The contract between the Project Leader's employer and the HEIG-VD regulates, in particular, the payment conditions, the reporting requirements, and the exploitation and valorization of the results.

The Project Leader is an employee of an Academic Partner (HEIG-VD, UNIL, EPFL) for the entire duration of the project. He/she coordinates with the other project Partners, manages the budget, prepares reports with the assistance of the other Partners, and generally acts as the Partners consortium's respondent for the Program.

Under the aegis of the Project Leader, a cooperation agreement will be signed by all Partners before the start of the project. The terms and conditions of this contract, including issues related to intellectual

property, confidentiality and disclosure of results, are left to the discretion of the Project Partners, subject to the conditions of the present Regulations. They must reach an agreement in principle, for example in the form of a *Memorandum of Understanding*, before submitting the application (see *section 8*). At the request of the Project Leader, the Program Manager (see *section 12*) may facilitate this process.

## 6. Commitments of the Project Leader

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The Project Leader, through the Academic Partner who employs her/him, agrees to:

- [ Communicate regularly with the Program Manager on the progress of the project.
- [ No later than 2 months after the end of the project, submit to the Program Manager a financial report outlining the use of funds and a technical report outlining the project's achievements, results and prospects.
- [ Make public at least some of the results of the project and participate actively in the promotion activities of projects funded by the Program (events, video clips, press releases, etc.).
- [ Offer project Partners and other interested parties the opportunity to continue the project under conditions to be defined.

## 7. Commitments of the Project Partners

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The project Partners agree to:

- [ Use the grant in accordance with the budget presented in the application.
- [ Provide interim results to the Project Leader on a regular basis.
- [ Contribute to the preparation of financial and technical reports.
- [ Define rights and obligations regarding intellectual property and exploitation of project results in accordance with the following minimum requirements:
  - Prior knowledge controlled by each Partner shall remain under its control, and no rights to it shall be granted free of charge to the other Partners, beyond what is necessary for the performance of the tasks assigned to each other Partner in the project; any rights to prior knowledge that may be necessary for the exploitation of the results of the project shall be negotiated and granted on fair and reasonable terms.
  - Partners promote the use of open innovation principles.
  - Each Partner's confidential information is protected by confidentiality agreement.
  - Each staff member of an Academic Partner involved in the project shall enjoy the freedom to conduct research, to teach and to publish scientific articles with regard to the results of the project.
  - Inventions and software directly based on joint results will be promptly disclosed to the other Partners and will be the subject of an agreement between the relevant Partners prior to any commercial use and/or use requiring licensing to third parties.

- The Implementation Partner(s) will be granted at least a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the results in a product and service area to be defined.

## 8. Project Submission and Financial Incentives

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The project ideation and setup process is a two-step process.

### 1<sup>st</sup> step: idea generation

Idea Owners wishing to submit an idea will contact the Program Manager to ensure that their idea can be considered from a thematic and budgetary point of view.

By the deadline (*see Program website*), project ideas must be submitted to the Program Manager, in French or English, on a one-page document (A4 format) that includes:

- [ Project title
- [ General description (state of the art, objectives, expected results, deliverables)
- [ Partners or skills required (already identified or being sought)
- [ General timetable
- [ Budget estimate and requested funding

In order to stimulate the ideation process, a lump-sum grant of CHF 2,500 will be awarded, within the limits of the Program's budget, to any pre-announced project idea that meets the general eligibility criteria (*see section 2*). This grant will be awarded regardless of the outcome of the project.

The same Idea Owner may submit multiple ideas, but may only receive one financial incentive for idea generation.

The terms of payment will be agreed in a written contract with the Idea Owner or his/her employer. In particular payment will be contingent upon presentation of the idea at the *Pitch & Connect Workshop*.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> step: project set-up

If the idea is accepted by the Selection Committee, and the Project Leader confirms his/her intention to pursue the idea and carry out the project, the Academic Partner employing the Project Leader will conclude a cooperation agreement in principle with its Partners, for example in the form of a *Memorandum of Understanding*, and submit an application, in French or English, to the Program Manager by the deadline (*see Program website*). The application should not exceed 8 pages (A4 format) and should include the following information:

- [ Project title (maximum 150 characters)
- [ Abstract (maximum 1,000 characters)
- [ Detailed description (state of the art, objectives, methodology, expected results)
- [ Deliverables (technical solutions, practical tools, scientific publications, other)

- [ Presentation of the Partners, their capabilities and their contributions to the project (letters of support, *Memorandum of Understanding* and/or cooperation agreement to be attached)
- [ Valuation of results and prospects at the end of the project (usability, replicability, sustainability)
- [ Assessment of potential impact (economic or social benefits for the canton of Vaud)
- [ Timetable indicating the main stages of the project and the distribution of tasks between the Partners
- [ Detailed budget (distinguishing the costs of each Partner and explicitly mentioning all sources of funding)
- [ Any other comments relevant to the assessment of the application (*see section 9*)

To cover the costs of identifying Partners and setting up the project, a lump-sum grant of CHF 5,000 may be awarded, within the limits of the Program's budget, to the Project Leader who submits an application in accordance with the above elements. This grant will be awarded regardless of the evaluation made by the Selection Committee (*see section 9*) or the follow-up given to the project.

If the search for Partners and/or the setting up of the collaborative project is unsuccessful, the Project Leader may still benefit from this financial support upon submission of a report of no more than two pages summarizing the steps taken, the difficulties encountered, and the reasons for abandoning or postponing the project.

The same Project Leader may submit only one application and therefore may receive only one incentive for project setup. If more than one of his/her ideas are selected, the Project Leader must choose to pursue only one of them.

Payment terms will be agreed in a written contract with the Project Leader.

## 9. Project Final Assessment

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Projects will be evaluated and selected by the Program Steering Committee or by an ad hoc Selection Committee on its behalf, based on the following main criteria:

- [ Subject: relevance to the topic of the call for projects
- [ Partnership: relevance, balance, and complementarity, cooperation between the Academic Partners and with Implementation Partner(s)
- [ Expertise: quality of the scientific and technical approach, competence of project partners in the field
- [ Innovation: potential for concrete application through technology and/or knowledge transfer to the Implementation Partner(s) and/or other actors in the field
- [ Impact: ambitions of Partners, potential economic outcomes societal impact
- [ Government strategy: contribution to the implementation of the cantonal and national digital strategy

[ Valorization: possibilities for dissemination of project results and potential for visibility (publications, conference, press articles, other means of dissemination)

[ Action plan: realistic objectives, timetable, and budget

Based on its assessment of the project and the availability of Program's budget, the Committee will determine the amount of the grant to be awarded to the project.

## 10. Provisional Timetable

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The tentative schedule will be published on the Program website ([www.seal-innovation.ch](http://www.seal-innovation.ch)).

## 11. About the Program

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The **[seal]** Program is the result of a strategic alliance between the University of Lausanne (UNIL), the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) and the University of Applied Sciences in Business and Engineering of the Canton of Vaud (HEIG-VD).

The three universities boast unrivalled capabilities in digital trust and cybersecurity that complement each other and are recognized both nationally and internationally: EPFL with its [Center for Digital Trust](#), HEIG-VD with its [Y-SECURITY cybersecurity cluster](#), and UNIL with its unique expertise in computer crime and digital forensics within the [School of Criminal Sciences \(ESC\)](#).

Together, through the **[seal]** Program, they are pursuing the mission of bringing together their brilliant scientists to collaborate in solving the challenges facing the economic fabric in the field of digital trust and cybersecurity by promoting applied research and encouraging the transfer of knowledge and technology to local companies and actors in the field.

## 12. Contact

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If you have any questions or would like assistance in initiating a project, please contact:

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