

Guidelines

ICN Business School Seed Funding Programme

Introduction

The ICN Business School Seed Funding Programme champions the development of ATM research, rooted in the transdisciplinary philosophy of Art, Technology, Management. This programme is designed to encourage our faculty to pursue new and innovative research paths, offering essential financial support to projects that both challenge academic conventions and embody ICN's unique ethos.

Objectives

To ensure that the School Seed Funding Programme aligns with our strategic vision and delivers impactful outcomes, it is imperative that all proposed projects comply with one or more of the following objectives:

1. **Encourage Innovative Research:** To stimulate faculty and research teams to embark on new research projects.
2. **Support Transdisciplinary Collaboration:** To promote projects that cross traditional disciplinary lines, encouraging collaboration among different academic departments and fields to address complex research questions.
3. **Facilitate Early-stage Research:** To provide initial funding for promising research ideas, enabling researchers to generate preliminary data or develop their concepts to a stage where they can attract additional external funding.
4. **Align with Institutional Values:** To advance projects that reflect the institution's commitment to openness, creativity, and the UNESCO values of education, science, and culture, thereby enhancing the school's identity and reputation.
5. **Contribute to Academic and Societal Impact:** To support research that has the potential for significant academic contributions and practical impact on business practices and policy, addressing current and future challenges in the business world.
6. **Ensure Sustainability and Growth:** To show promise for growth beyond initial funding, focusing on scalability, external funding potential, and enduring field contributions.

Eligibility Criteria

The Seed Funding Programme invites applications from a broad range of potential candidates within our academic community. Eligible applicants include full, associate, and assistant faculty, as well as research affiliate faculty. Additionally, joint projects with researchers from outside the ICN Business School are eligible for seed funding. If successful, pro-rata funding will be granted. This inclusive approach aims to foster a diverse, dynamic research environment, encouraging contributions from various perspectives and disciplines.

Amount and Use of Funds

There are two funding calls each year: one in October and another in February/March, with a total annual budget of €20,000, split into two lots of €10,000. Half of this funding is provided by the endowment fund.

In our effort to support a wide range of innovative research projects with the potential to advance knowledge and foster interdisciplinary collaboration, we have established that, in specific cases, the amount of Seed Funding awarded can reach up to €5,000. This substantial level of support is designed to enable significant progress in research endeavours that demonstrate exceptional promise and align closely with our institution's strategic priorities. However, it is important to recognise that, while we aim to provide the most substantial support possible, the total fund available for distribution is limited. Furthermore, in recent times, we have observed an increasing number of applications for Seed Funding. Given these constraints, the actual amount awarded to individual projects may often be less than the maximum of €5,000. This adjustment is made with the objective of distributing the available funds as equitably as possible, thereby enabling us to support a larger number of research initiatives across our community.

Funds allocated under this programme should, in principle, be fully utilised within the current budget year, meaning by the end of August. This requirement aims to ensure rigorous financial management and to promote a dynamic renewal cycle for funded projects. However, since we are aware of the logistical challenges this may present, especially for projects approved during the February call, last year we introduced a policy of flexibility.

Timeline

The deadlines for submission, the subsequent review process, and the final decision are specifically outlined in each call for applications. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review these details to ensure their proposals are submitted on time and in accordance with the outlined schedule. A period of one week following the first decision announcement will be granted to applicants for the purpose of submitting an appeal. This provides individuals who wish to contest the outcome of the evaluation process with an opportunity to seek a review of the decision, thereby ensuring transparency and fairness in the selection procedure.

How to Apply

To apply for the Seed Funding Programme, candidates should complete the application form in Word format in English and send it to Morgane LEONARD via email, adhering strictly to the specified submission deadlines. It is important to wait for a confirmation of receipt to ensure that the application has been successfully submitted.

Selection Criteria

When evaluating applications for the Seed Funding Programme, our committee employs a comprehensive set of criteria designed to identify projects that not only embody the spirit of innovation and academic excellence but also contribute significantly to the strategic objectives of ICN Business School. The following key criteria form the basis of our evaluation process:

1. Originality:

The extent to which the proposal presents unique ideas, methodologies or approaches within its field. We value projects that offer fresh perspectives and challenge the status quo of existing knowledge and practices.

2. Alignment with ATM research:

This includes the project's commitment to fostering openness, multidisciplinary and creativity, its capacity to address contemporary business issues, as well as its potential to enhance the school's research profile and advance its strategic priorities.

3. Potential Impact

The expected significance of the project's outcomes on academia, industry or society. This includes both the immediate impact of the research findings and their longer-term implications for theory and practice.

4. Quality

The academic and methodological rigour of the proposed research. Proposals should exhibit a high level of clarity and feasibility in their research design and objectives.

5. Ambition and Development Potential

The project's scope and its capacity to grow beyond the initial seed funding phase are key considerations. We look for proposals with the potential to scale, attract further external funding such as Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, and others, and make a lasting contribution to their field.

6. Expected Contributions

The anticipated contributions to knowledge within the field of study. Proposals should articulate the new insights, theories or practices they aim to develop.

7. Probability of Success

An assessment of the project's feasibility, including the research team's expertise, the proposed timeline, and the adequacy with the requested budget. Projects should demonstrate a realistic path to achieving their objectives.

Previous Projects

Our Seed Funding Programme has catalysed a diverse array of research initiatives. This section highlights the projects that have utilised seed funding to explore crucial questions, from healthcare resource allocation during the COVID-19 pandemic to the role of gender in startup growth and the intricacies of consumer behaviour in the face of greenwashing.

#	Project title	Applicant
1	Efund fees for ERASMUS+ application	J.-F. STICH
2	Data acquisition and collection of data	O. MESLY
3	Allocation of scarce healthcare resources in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic	A. DUENAS
4	Am I being misled? Impact of advertising elements on greenwashing beliefs and brand reputation	J. FLORES-ZAMORA
5	Research in Collaboration with KD and SS	N. RAINERI
6	Role of gender and strategic choices of top management teams in startup growth performance: A cross-country entrepreneurship study	N. NIGAM
7	Data acquisition/collection. Research key consensus factors in projects - PROLIFIC	C. RETHORE
8	BOT @Fault? Service failure and recovery in customer - chatbot interactions	E. KATSIKEA
9	Acquisition/collection de données sur le site de recherche PROLIFIC	N. HUCK
10	Legitimation strategies, reputation building & firm performance in foreign markets: Insights from SME artisanal champagne producers	H. MAVOORI
11	TRIALOGOS – Transdisciplinary approaches for a new logic of sustainability	N. GUIMARAES DA COSTA
12	Phénomène de déconnexion pour les produits de luxe	O. MESLY
13	Comprendre la perception des projets institutionnels vs. les projets privés vs. les partenariats publics-privés	S. IVANAJ
14	Social rules between institutional actors that foster social innovation for inclusive organisations	O. BRAUN
15	Jean François and the quest for the holy ERC consolidator grant	J.-F. STICH
16	Advertising green innovation through storytelling. The role of innovators and opinion leaders.	J. FLORES-ZAMORA
17	Is culture a moderating variable in the triangle of advertising-disconnection purchase intention constructs, and does disconnection vary according to culture?	O. MESLY
18	Sustainable behaviours in the workplace: An interplay between people and organisations through moderated mediating models	I. COSTA MELO
19	Shift and preservation of social value orientation in seed-funded ventures	L. GEBHARDT

Success Stories

The Seed Funding Programme contributes to supporting researchers at our school, helping turn innovative ideas into reality. The following personal stories demonstrate the programme's impact: from securing major grants, to publishing in top journals and launching collaborative projects across disciplines.

In 2020, I received a seed fund to apply for an ERASMUS+ grant. To maximize our chances of being successful in this application, we used the Seed Fund to outsource the application process and consortium building to a specialised company. With their help, we ended up obtaining the grant for a total value of €385K. The research project is exciting and has a high impact. We would never have got the grant without the help of this company and, thus, without the Seed Fund.

Jean-François STICH

As it is well known, publishing scientific articles often presents a major challenge. Reviewers and journals tend to demand more at each stage: after one round of research, they ask for a second, then a third, all the while maintaining the same maximum word count. This process, though necessary to maintain the quality and rigour of publications, can quickly become costly. In the current context, it has become particularly difficult to access top-tier journals without presenting solid, often quantitative, research results, which can significantly weigh on a budget. This is where the importance and necessity of receiving Seed Funding become clear. Without such support, it would have been practically impossible for me to double my annual output or even to be published in a three-star journal. This collaboration benefits not only individual researchers but also ICN, as it strengthens its recognition in the academic world.

Olivier MESLY

My demand for Seed Funding was triggered by the preparation of a series of applications to different funding mechanisms, including the Belmont Forum, Horizon Europe, and ANR PRCI. The projects I am submitting to these agencies are transdisciplinary in nature and require extensive coordination between partners that are not necessarily used to working together (at least with ICN). These partners include academics in the areas of history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology and philosophy, as well as engineers, artists, and representatives of different local stakeholders from both French and international universities, global NGOs, companies, and local or regional authorities. In order to bring the different teams together, you have to present, discuss, and convince various individuals and organisations of the merits of your idea, even before you know you'll be able to actually submit anything. And that's where Seed Funding comes into play! Starting with a good idea and interesting prospective partners, thanks to Seed Funding I was able to promote a series of team-building initiatives that culminated in the submission of both Horizon Europe and ANR PRCI proposals. The key to obtaining Seed Funding was providing a detailed request, including a clear definition of the goals and objectives, and its alignment with ICN's vision and mission in terms of research outreach and impact.

Nuno GUIMARAES DA COSTA

We received the Seed Funding in 2022. The funding was mainly directed at accessing paying databases and carrying out some data collection from India. The project was delayed for a year because the principal investigator changed schools (BIGA), and I (Nirjhar NIGAM) had to step in to fill in his shoes. In addition, he kept us waiting for a long time and we couldn't push matters because we thought he might be on sick leave. In consequence, in 2023, I resumed the project with a new team including Marco Bade (our colleague from the Berlin campus). We managed to work last year and finish the paper, which was accepted and presented at an international conference and is now under review for the ABS 3 journal.

Nirjhar NIGAM

The Seed Funding we received was essential for collecting the additional data needed for our research project, following reviewers' comments on our research paper. Thanks to these additional data, we were able to respond to reviewers' comments during the first round of revision and resubmission, and eventually publish (after three rounds) in a highly ranked journal. Without this financial support, we would have struggled to make the additions and modifications requested by the reviewers. I am convinced that this would have seriously compromised our chances of implementing the improvements suggested by the reviewers and obtaining publication in a top-tier journal.

Nicolas RAINERI

Thanks to the Seed Fund, we were able to visit and collect data from 17 winegrowers in the Champagne region, which will help us develop influential papers based on the multiple case study method, amongst others. Two pieces were accepted at highly competitive sessions in international conferences in 2023 - "Legitimizing authentic identities: The case of artisanal champagne producers" was presented at the 2023 EGOS Colloquium, and one more paper focusing on the development of dynamic capabilities and their impact on organisational reputation was accepted at a highly competitive session of the 2023 Strategic Management Society Conference, which took place in Toronto. An additional paper was submitted to the 2024 ATLAS-AFMI, and one more will be submitted to the 2024 Strategic Management Society Conference that will take place in Istanbul, Turkey. Our data collection is still in progress. We are now collecting data from different institutions (such as the CIVC, Syndicat des vignerons de la Champagne, Big Houses, cooperatives etc.). Such organisations support the champagne winegrowers in their legitimisation, Business Model Innovation (BMI) and internationalisation efforts. Our next step is to finalise data collection and analyse all the data. Soon after, we will start developing several papers to submit for publication consideration in peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, we plan to develop two impact case studies. Two colleagues are involved in the project and will contribute to some of the papers, namely our ICN colleague Maxime Koromyslov and Marios Theodosiou from the University of Cyprus.

Evangelia KATSIKEA

The ICN research fund for our project: "BOT @ Fault? Service Failure and Recovery in Customer-Chatbot Interactions" was almost fully utilised to carry out our Prolific Survey. This research area is currently very active, particularly AI applications in marketing. We have completed two rounds of pre-tests of the ChatBots' anthropomorphic characteristics and, in the next stage, we will be carrying out the main survey, almost entirely on the Prolific platform. We expect to generate 600-900 quality responses for the main survey. Along with the ICN team comprising Evangelia Katsikea, Krishanu Rakshit and Christophe Réthoré, our research team includes one external member: Professor Pronobesh Banerjee from the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode.

Evangelia KATSIKEA

Contact Information

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