Paris Seine Initiative for Excellence
Support for scientific excellence and internationalization

Call for proposals 2020

Objectives of the call
and application details

Deadline for the pre-submission project abstract: 13/12/2019, 1pm
Deadline for the final proposal: 14/2/2020, 1pm
1. Objectives of the call for proposals

1.1 Institutional framework

The Paris Seine Initiative for Excellence launches a fourth call for proposals to support excellence in research and internationalization.

The Paris Seine Initiative (PSI) is supported by three institutions, namely the University of Cergy-Pontoise and EISTI (which will merge into CY Cergy Paris University in early 2020) and the ESSEC Business School. PSI has an annual budget of €7.4m, of which 75% (€5.1m) is dedicated to scientific development. The main aim of the PSI is to promote excellence in research and to strengthen the scientific potential of the partner institutions.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this call for proposals is to support the scientific community of the Paris Seine Initiative in order to enhance research output and impact, reinforce international outlook and foster research collaborations, both internally and with external partners.

The call supports original research projects, both at the level of individual researchers and research groups, that seek to explore new research directions and or consolidate existing research expertise. Targeted projects will also contribute to the strengthening of doctoral and post-doctoral training and the emergence of transversal projects involving several research entities belonging to the Paris Seine Initiative. The scientific quality of the projects, their contribution to the visibility of Paris Seine research and the dynamics of excellence in the scope of the initiative will be decisive.

The call also seeks to reinforce the international appeal and visibility of Paris Seine by attracting talented young researchers willing to develop their research in one of the Paris Seine research groups.

The call aims to support the implementation of an ambitious research strategy developed at Paris Seine research group level. Selected projects will have a significant structuring effect on the research activities of the centers and laboratories concerned by allowing them to remove identified research bottlenecks and explore high-potential fields of research in order to take a major step towards increased visibility and impact.

The call will also support the development of international scientific collaborations, particularly with the strategic partners of the Paris Seine Initiative and notably in Europe, with the University of Warwick and more generally the partners of the European University
Alliance EUTOPIA\(^1\) (the University of Warwick, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), the University of Ljubljana, Pompeu Fabra University and the University of Gothenburg).\(^2\) In Asia, a special partnership has been established in Singapore with Nanyang Technological University\(^3\). Other partnerships with universities are under development (the University of Mauritius, the University of Western Cape, etc.). Collaborative projects undertaken with these and other international institutions are encouraged.

Lastly, projects are also expected to demonstrate their ability to attract external funding for research activities in order to sustain their scientific aims beyond the support received from the present call. All selected projects will therefore be expected to offer the prospect of attracting additional funding from national or international funding agencies.

1.3 Areas of research

The present call for proposals welcomes both fundamental and applied research projects in all scientific disciplines.

Beyond the scientific quality of the projects, the PSI aims to shed light on major contemporary societal issues through the development of high-level academic research. These issues will be understood in their global complexity, favoring an interdisciplinary approach, mobilizing different disciplines within the major disciplinary fields, and more broadly combining social sciences and modeling with other disciplinary fields. Special attention will be paid to projects revealing and tackling social challenges linked to the fields of economics, finance and management, heritage, art and luxury, risks, society and security.

The call for proposals complements existing Paris Seine structures that support scientific excellence, notably including Paris Seine Laboratoires d’Excellence (Labex). It makes it possible to extend the dynamics of excellence to other fields of science and to reinforce already recognized poles of excellence. Projects within the relevant fields should be first submitted to the Labex.es. If they are also submitted as part of the present call for proposals, support obtained or requested from the relevant Labex should be mentioned and discussed.

Valorization and translational research projects, developed in partnerships with socio-economic partners, will be supported under the dedicated CIREX call for proposal for research projects leading to industrial applicability (aap_cirex@universiteparisseine.fr).

\(^1\) [https://www.u-cergy.fr/fr/universite/actualites/l-alliance-europeenne-d-universites-eutopia-annonce-l-entree-de-son-quatrieme-membre.html](https://www.u-cergy.fr/fr/universite/actualites/l-alliance-europeenne-d-universites-eutopia-annonce-l-entree-de-son-quatrieme-membre.html)


\(^3\) [http://www.ntu.edu.sg/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.ntu.edu.sg/Pages/home.aspx)
2. Main provisions

The fourth call for proposals of the Paris Seine Initiative is structured around four funding programs:

1) The **Ambition program** aims to support medium-term ambitious research programs developed at the level of a research group or research center;
2) The **Talent program** aims to support the recruitment of high-profile young researchers;
3) The **Emergence program** aims to incubate the development of innovative individual research projects in preparation for external research funding;
4) The **International PhD training program** aims to improve doctoral training in relationship with international partners, in particular within the EUTOPIA alliance;

The fourth program targeting **International PhD training** will be organized through a separate call managed jointly by the Universities of Warwick and VUB, offering an integrated application and selection process for participating universities. Practical terms for this call will be announced later.

2.1 The **Ambition program**

This program aims to support **large-scale scientific projects** in strategic research areas demonstrating a significant leverage effect on research output, impact and visibility. Funded projects are expected to run over a duration of **4 years** and to have a transformative effect on the research dynamics of the research centers involved.

Projects submitted to the Ambition Program will be developed at the level of a research group or research center comprising a significant mass of researchers. These research groups could be defined at the level of existing research laboratories or departments. They could also comprise researchers from different Paris Seine research centers involved in an interdisciplinary research project.

Applications should demonstrate both research excellence and impact. Projects will need to be based on an explicit strategy outlining the expected structuring effect of the project in terms of international visibility (as demonstrated by publication and ranking impact), strategic scientific positioning, partnerships with external institutions and appeal.

Applicants should also explain in detail the societal relevance of their project and possible outreach and dissemination strategies.

Large-scale projects should be based on funding from the present call and additional external funding, to be secured over the course of the project. Applicants are invited to explain how additional funding will be secured, which sorts of funding they intend to apply.
for and at what stage of the project. They should also detail how both types of funding, coming from the call and from external sources, will together allow them to achieve the project’s final goals.

Financial support for this program may include a research budget, teaching waivers for the researchers involved and HR funding (PhD, RAs, Post-doc or non-permanent junior researcher positions).

Indicative funding: about €0.3-0.4m per project.
Targeted number of projects (estimation): 2 – 5.

2.2. The Talent program

The Talent program aims to support the recruitment of high-profile young researchers willing to develop their research in one of the Paris Seine research groups.

The program welcomes applications from junior researchers, with two to ten years of postdoctoral experience and with a high research potential as demonstrated by their past academic achievement and their innovative and ambitious research project.

The program offers an attractive compensation and research environment for a duration of 3 years in the form of integrated junior chairs. Applicants should not have previously held a research position (including PhD) at any of the institutions belonging to the Paris Seine Initiative. The program is also open to junior researchers from National Public Research Organizations wishing to conduct research at one of our associated research centers.

All recruitment will be based on a comprehensive research project, to be implemented by the recruit during his/her time at Paris Seine and embedded in the strategy of a Paris Seine laboratory or research group to which he/she will be affiliated. The impact of the project on the laboratory’s or research group’s strategy and its development and evolution should be detailed in the application.

Future recruits must have the intention to submit applications for additional external funding (H2020 / Horizon Europe, ANR, etc.) during their time at Paris Seine in order to complement the funding provided in the framework of the present call. The way both types of funding will together allow them to achieve the project’s final goals should be detailed in the application. Candidates bringing new skills to develop emerging research areas and researchers with an industrial background are welcome to apply.

Financial support for this program may include the salary of the future recruit, teaching waivers for the future recruit, a research allowance and funding for PhD or Post-doc recruits enlisted by the future recruit.

Indicative funding: about €0.25 – 0.4m per project.
Targeted number of projects (estimation): 2 - 5.

2.3 The Emergence program

Emerging research projects with high potential can be supported under the present call for a period of 2 years, up to €50k. The purpose of this financial support is to enable the progress of research and the application for external funding at the national (including ANR), European (ESF, ERC, PCRD, H2020) or international level. Applicants for these different funding opportunities are requested to apply to funding agencies during the two-year project period.

The submitted project must involve the work of a team (at least two researchers), allow for the exploration of new research themes and be part of the scientific development strategy of the supporting entities, institutions and the Paris Seine Initiative (‘areas of research’, above).

2.4 International PhD training

Funding for PhD scholarships under the International PhD training program aims to support international collaborations and co-supervisions under a co-tutelle agreement. Applications for PhD funding under this scheme will be organized through a separate call, managed jointly by the Universities of Warwick and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The call will open in the spring of 2020 and details will be announced later.

Financial support from the Paris Seine Initiative will cover half of the cost of PhD funding. The total yearly support for PhD scholarships is valued at €40k/year including employer contributions (€37k for the salary + €3k for research expenses).

Through the joint call for applications, a co-funding agreement has already been established with the University Warwick for a total of up to 5 PhD scholarships and with the VUB for a total of up to 4 PhD scholarships.

It will also be possible, through this call, to apply for PhD co-funding with other international partners, particularly with other institutions in the EUTOPIA Alliance. Other foreign partnerships may, however, also be exploited, or foreign agencies in the case of a co-tutelle or a co-supervised PhD involving mobility. Applicants should, however, secure co-funding from international partners at the time of application.

For the International PhD training program, the relevance and the quality of the scientific project, its strategic nature, its contribution to the scientific development of the Paris Seine Initiative and to the structuring of international scientific collaborations with the co-supervising entity, the quality of the candidates and their international potential, as well as the quality of the scientific environment (supervision, laboratory, interactions with the national and international academic world, etc.), will be key elements in the evaluation of the proposals.
Funding for PhD projects developed in partnership with socio-economic partners will be supported under a dedicated CIREX call for proposals, calling for research projects leading to industrial applicability (aap_cirex@universiteparisseine.fr).

3. Practical arrangements

3.1 Timeline and submission process

- The deadlines for submission are as follows:
  - For the Talent program: Pre-submission of a project abstract by **Friday 17th January 2020**, 1pm
  - For the Ambition and Emergence programs: Pre-submission of a project abstract by **Friday 13th December 2019**, 1pm
  - Submission of the final proposal by **Friday 14th February 2020**, 1pm (Talent, Ambition and Emergence programs)
- The submission will be made online from **Monday 4th November 2019** via the application platform: [https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org](https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org)
- Application materials will be made available online from **Monday 4th November 2019** via the application platform: [https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org](https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org)
- Project leaders should refer to the **administrative and financial rules** available on the application platform: [https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org](https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org)

For the **International PhD training** program, deadlines will be indicated in a separate call which will open in early 2020 (see above).

3.2 Application materials

Application materials will be made available online from **Monday 4th November 2019** via the application platform: [https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org](https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org)

- For all programs covered by this call, the application will include a presentation of the scientific project and a description of the scientific development strategy to which the project relates. The objectives of the project, in terms of scientific quality, impact and visibility, should be described, as well as, for the Ambition program and the Talent program, their structuring effect on the strategy of the submitting/supporting laboratory or research group. The application file may be supplemented by an appendix.
- The application may be written in English or French. English is preferred in order to promote international evaluation.
- Who can apply:
  - Applications to the Ambition program may be submitted by a research team (existing or prospective), a department or a research center. Applications must be explicitly endorsed by the research centers with which the team’s members are affiliated. The research team is expected to involve a majority of
researchers already working in one of the partner institutions of the Paris Seine Initiative.

- Applications to the Talent program are open to candidates not already working in one of the partner institutions of the Paris Seine Initiative. Applications will be explicitly supported by the research center(s) with which the candidate would be affiliated.
- For the Emergence program, applications are open to researchers already working in one of the partner institutions of the Paris Seine Initiative. The submitted project must involve the work of a team (at least two researchers).
- For the International PhD training program, application details will be provided later (see above).
- Doctoral students and applicants for a doctoral or post-doctoral fellowship are not entitled to submit an application on their own.

- In all cases, a detailed recommendation from the head of the research center hosting the project must be included and will be sent online after the application file has been submitted.

3.3 Recruitment

- All recruitments planned through this call need to respect the following deadlines: working contracts must be signed before 24th September 2021 for academic positions (PhD, Post-doc, Tenure Track, Junior Professorships etc.: funding from the Paris Seine Initiative for these positions will be available until 24th September 2024, except for post-docs, which will be available until 24th September 2022) and before 24th March 2021 for administrative positions (funding from the Paris Seine Initiative will be available until 24th September 2021).
- For applications for Talent program funding, the candidate is expected to have been identified beforehand and the application to include the elements allowing the quality of the candidate to be assessed. Complete applications, including the prospective candidate, will also be favored for PhD training, doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships.

3.4 External funding

It is expected that selected projects will offer the prospect of attracting additional funding from national or international funding agencies (H2020, ANR, etc.), to be used either on top of the funding from the present call during the implementation phase of the project or as follow-up funding. Applications will provide a detailed description of the external funding strategy.

For projects involving funding from external partners (private partners or universities) already identified at the time of submission, a pre-agreement with the partner should be attached to the proposal. The final partnership agreement, including financial and
intellectual property aspects, can, however, be finalized in the months following the announcement of the results and before October 2021 at the latest.

3.5 Contacts

- At the institutions, correspondents are as follows:
  - ESSEC: Celine Alves-Pinto (alvespinto@essec.edu) / Institutional partnerships and research office of ESSEC Business School
  - For UCP and EISTI: Nicola Ebenburger (nicola.ebenburger@u-cergy.fr) / Director of International Scientific Development

- For administrative and financial support in setting up the project for applicants from all establishments:
  - Isabelle Hoefkens (isabelle.hoefkens@u-cergy.fr), Izabel Martins (izabel.martins@u-cergy.fr) / Direction de la Recherche of Université de Cergy-Pontoise

> Applicants are invited to contact Ms Hoefkens and Ms Martins before submitting the pre-submission of an abstract of their project (13th December 2019) and at the latest 4 weeks before the submission of the final proposal (14th February 2020); they can expect assistance in setting up the project in accordance with the administrative and financial rules of the call (https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org), as well as in the recruitment process.

- Contact for the coordination of this call for proposals:
  aap-excellence-scientifique@universiteparisseine.fr.

3.5 Administrative and financial rules

The administrative and financial rules of the call will be available on the submission platform: https://apply.theparisseineinitiative.org.

Further information and assistance in setting up the scientific projects in accordance with this framework is provided for by the Direction de la Recherche of Université de Cergy-Pontoise and the Institutional partnerships and research office of ESSEC Business School (see contacts 3.4).

3.6 Evaluations and results

- Applications will be evaluated by the scientific committee whose evaluations and selection proposals will be transmitted for decision to the executive board of the Paris Seine initiative
of excellence. The evaluation will be based on the elements submitted via the submission platform. For the *Ambition program*, shortlisted teams may, additionally, be invited to present their project to the evaluation committee at the end of April 2020.

- Results will be published in early May 2020.

- The criteria taken into account in the evaluation will be as follows:
  - The scientific quality and the innovative aspect of the project
  - The strategic nature of the project and its contribution to the scientific development of the initiative of excellence
  - The expertise of the researchers involved in the project and the quality of the scientific environment
  - The impact of the project
  - The quality of the candidate (PhD, Post-doc, junior professor, etc.).
ANEXE 1 – Principal external calls

ANR

https://anr.fr/fr/appels/

Main deadlines:
- AAP ANR 2021: end of October 2020 (including PRCI),
  https://anr.fr/fr/detail/call/appel-a-projets-generique-2020/
- AAP ORA+: September 2020 (call SHS France Germany England Netherlands)
- AAP Astrid and Astrid Maturation: year 2020 (industrial partnership)
- AAP SHS France Germany: year 2020

H2020

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/h2020

Main deadlines:
- MSCA ITN: 14/01/2020 (collaborative project including PhD recruitment)
- MSCA IF: 09/09/2020 (individual project including incoming or outgoing mobility)
- MSCA RISE: 28/04/2020 (collaborative project financing mobility between different countries)
- ERC ADV: end of August 2020 (excellence grant for researchers holding a PhD for more than 12 years)
- ERC COG: Spring 2020 (excellence grant for researchers holding a PhD for more than 7 but less than 12 years)
- ERC STG: Mid October 2020 (excellence grant for researchers holding a PhD for more than 3 but less than 7 years)
- ERC SYNERGY: mid November 2020 (collaborative excellence project)

COST

https://www.cost.eu/

The program aims at strengthening scientific and technological research by supporting cooperation through networking activities.

Next deadline: 29 April (several deadlines per year)