CESAER

The strong and united voice of universities
of science and technology in Europe

COMPETITION 2021 BEST IDEA

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

DATED 1 SEPTEMBER 2020

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WHY SHOULD WE APPLY?

Are you a student or PhD candidate with a brilliant idea for how science and technology can help revolutionise our society's efforts towards sustainability? Are you ready and already collaborating in a team on a concept? Do you want to benefit from unrivalled access and support from over 50 leading universities of science and technology across Europe, with the potential to win a cash prize of €20,000? Then this competition is for you!

We are explicitly not looking for new ideas, but for concepts that have emerged (bottom-up) from student-led teams already collaborating around well identified scientific and societal needs and goals. Such a concept can originate from completely novel approaches to answer scientific questions or to respond to the need of specific stakeholders in society.

ARE WE ELIGIBLE?

Diversity in teams, ideas and how you approach the competition is highly encouraged! To accommodate this, the competition is flexible and the evaluation and assessment will be carried out in two stages by an independent and diverse expert panel. The first stage is submission of a short abstract where a first evaluation and selection is made (early 2021). The retained abstracts will be invited to design the idea further and submit it for a second assessment to select the winner (summer 2021). However, there are a few eligibility criteria to consider first:

- Abstracts must be in English.
- Abstracts must be submitted no later than the deadline on 31 January 2021.
- Abstracts must be short.
    - o Maximally two A4 pages (arial font, font size 11, 2 cm margins all around, single space) outlining the idea and the implementation plan, and with maximally one additional A4 page describing the team composition.
- Teams must be student-led

    - o The leader of the team must be enrolled as a bachelor student, a master student or a PhD candidate at one of our Member universities (full list here) at the date of the submission of the abstract.

- Teams must include at least one member of staff (at the date of the submission of the abstract) from one of our Member universities (full list here).

- The abstract must identify one or more areas of sustainability where it seeks to contribute.

    - o The competition uses a broad and flexible approach to define sustainability based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG). For example, contributions related to COVID-19 can for example identify UN SDG 3.

As long as the eligibility criteria above are fulfilled, the team composition and the idea the team chooses to pursue are highly flexible. For example, there is no minimum or maximum team size and teams are encouraged to include students from other our member universities and external participants coming from industry, government, and non-governmental and civil society organisations to be members of the team.

HOW TO APPLY?

This competition takes a low-barrier, two-stage evaluation and assessment approach. To apply to join the competition you are invited to prepare a short abstract outlining your idea, your implementation plan and your team composition by following these steps:
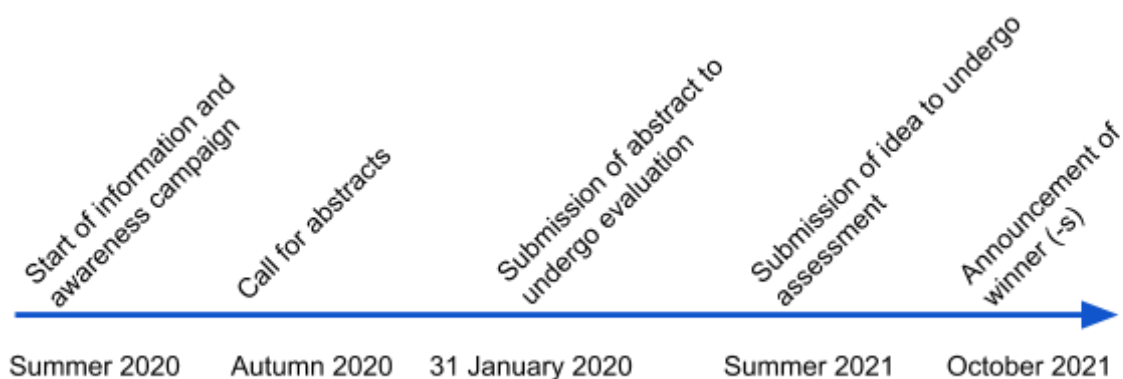
1. Read this documentation carefully, including the eligibility criteria and the evaluation steps.
2. Assemble your team.
3. Prepare and submit your abstract before the deadline to indre.antanaviciute@cesaer.org. The submission email should state that the whole team has approved the abstract for submission, and only one abstract per team should be submitted.
4. The abstracts will be evaluated by an independent expert panel (first evaluation in early 2021), and all teams will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation. Successful teams will receive full guidance on how to design their ideas further.
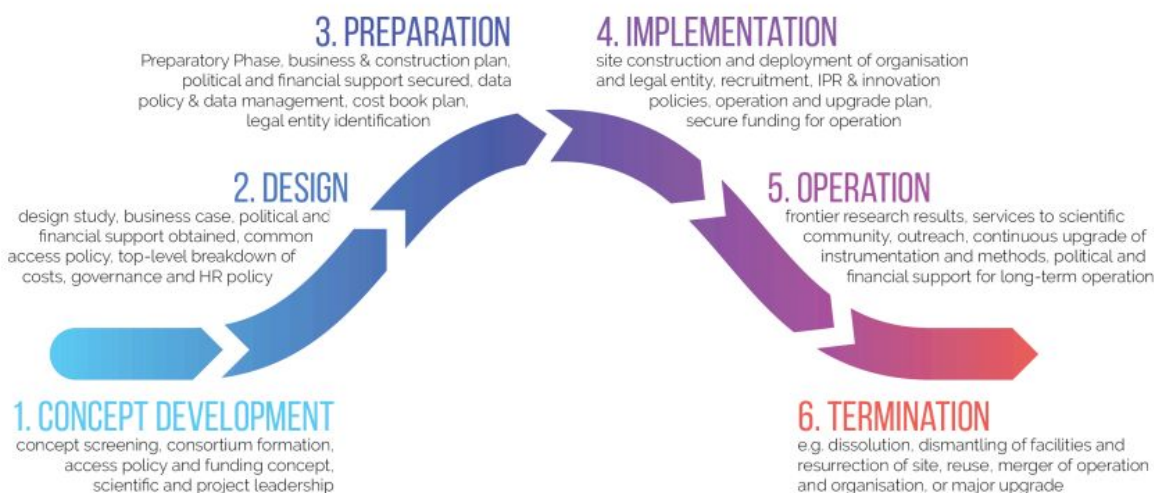
WHEN IS THE DEADLINE?

The deadline for submission of abstracts is 23:59 CET on 31st January 2021. Abstracts must be received via email to indre.antanaviciute@cesaer.org before the deadline, abstracts received after the deadline will not be considered. The exact deadline for the second assessment (summer 2021) will be communicated to the teams retained after the first evaluation.

HOW WILL WE BE EVALUATED?

The competition takes a two-step approach to evaluation, see images below.

TIMELINE OF EVALUATION

LIFECYCLE APPROACH USED IN THIS COMPETITION (IMAGE BASED ON ESFRI GUIDE)

In order to be considered as a ´concept´, an abstract must meet the key requirements for the ´design´ phase and score a grading of at least 'high' on all three dimensions:

REQUIREMENTS TO ABSTRACT FOR SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

- Solid scientific case is testified by senior academic leadership;
- Horizontal integration is proven, i.e. the inter- and, trans-disciplinary approach linking of SSH with STEM is evident;
- Vertical integration is testified, i.e. at least two out of the three levels (bachelor, master, PhD) are involved and guidance by a senior academic (principal investigator) is proven (the more, the better);
- Initial needs for ICT and research data management are described.

REQUIREMENTS TO ABSTRACT FOR IMPACT AND OUTREACH

- Outline of expected impact is provided;
- Contribution to ecological, social and economic sustainability is described and credible;
- Preliminary indicators to estimate impact and contribution to sustainability are described;
- Main stakeholders are analysed and described;
- Involvement of Member universities is described (the more, the better);
- Outline for outreach strategy is provided.

REQUIREMENTS TO ABSTRACT FOR MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Measures for planning, monitoring and evaluation are described;
- The management and organisation is outlined;
- The human resources needed are outlined;
- A rough estimate of the finances needed is provided;
- The key legal issues and risks are identified.

WILL THERE BE ANY SUPPORT DURING AND AFTER THE COMPETITION?

1. BEFORE ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

All teams may ask questions and ask for clarifications from the Secretariat via our Advisor for Higher Education Indrė Antanavičiūtė at indre.antanaviciute@cesaer.org. No other support is provided.

We will organise an online information workshop during CAM 2020 on 15 October from 13:30 to 15:00, presenting the competition and providing an opportunity for potential entrants to ask questions to the organisers.

2. FOR TEAMS WITH SUCCESSFULLY EVALUATED ABSTRACTS (AFTER EVALUATION)

During development from abstracts to excellent and mature ideas, the teams will get guidance, coaching and mentorship from mentors assigned to them. The mentors will provide help in further designing the ideas along 'impact and outreach' and the 'implementation' dimensions.

3. AFTER ASSESSMENT

All teams who were assessed excellent and mature will continue to receive support developed together with the team and tailored to their needs, for example in outreach and engagement activities or to seek external funding for the preparation and implementation of their idea.

Selected teams will receive €1,000 for communication and outreach, with support from the Secretariat.

Selected teams will be invited to attend our CESAER Annual Meetings hosted by Lund University from 13 to 15 October 2021. The teams will be helped in showcasing their ideas at the high-level conference. All travel and accommodation costs will be covered.

They will also be invited to contribute to a joint conference on this topic hosted by the Royal Academy of Engineering in London and to contribute to white papers on ´linking SSH and STEM´ and on 'contribution to sustainability'. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered