

ENLIGHT Thematic Networks (ETN)

Call for Applications- Spring 2024

INTRODUCTION

Empowering academics and stimulating joint knowledge creation (WP3) is at the core of ENLIGHT mission. The general objective of this call is to widen up the bottom-up engagement and challenge-based cooperation between ENLIGHT academics with genuine added value. Specifically, with the following **objectives**:

- Creating sustainable transnational communities of academics, involving PhDs, junior and senior researchers engaged with other local or international partners and stakeholders.
- Generating opportunities for new joint interdisciplinary and challenge-driven research, education or service to society initiatives:
 - o To develop long-term collaborations leading to projects/initiatives with a view to attract external funding.
 - o To develop joint education and training offer, bachelor, master, PhD and Lifelong learning (LLL), with a variety of formats.
 - o To outreach and engage with society fostering participatory initiatives.

These objectives are operationalised through a new instrument of ENLIGHT, namely the ENLIGHT Thematic Networks (ETNs). In this call, a total number of 10 ENLIGHT Thematic Networks (ETNs) will be selected.

WHAT IS AN ETN?

An ETN is a community of multidisciplinary academic teams from at least three ENLIGHT Universities joining forces **around a specific topic in research and education with societal relevance and impact**.

ETNs are aimed to become stable collaboration networks characterised by the following **features**:

- **Thematic.** Focused on one (or more) of the six ENLIGHT focus areas¹.
- **Multidisciplinary.** Bringing teams from different disciplines to tackle complex challenges.
- **Long-term view.** ETNs are long-term strategic engagement of academics towards common advancement where joining forces will add value.
- **Leverage effect.** Collaboration within an ETN should become a catalyser for deepening and strengthening collaboration between academics and, eventually, a lever to apply for external funding.
- **Connected to** local and regional ecosystems of public bodies and civil society stakeholders.
- **Opportunity for early career researchers.** ETNs offer a privileged space particularly to Early Career Researchers (ECR) to build their international networks.
- **Age and Gender** balanced. Both ECR and senior academics play a role in the full spectrum of the ETN Activities.
- **With real transformative impact potential.** Ultimately contributing to address societal challenges.

¹ <https://enlight-eu.org/university-about-us/flagship-domains>

Activities and expected results

As a space for catalysing cooperation, an ETN will conduct **preparatory, coordination and support activities**. For example:

- Exploratory actions leading to joint initiatives.
- Organization of meetings and workshops.
- Mobility and exchange of academics.
- Outreach and engagement encounters with societal stakeholders.
- Setting-up of joint proposals for external funding.
- Other activities.

Specific outputs of an ETN could be new joint seminars, summer courses, thematic conferences, Bachelor (BA) Master (MA) or PhD courses and programmes, co-supervision of PhDs, grant applications (Horizon Europe, MSCA, ERC, Erasmus+, Intereg,...), citizen science initiatives, mobility programmes, knowledge transfer programmes, leadership and entrepreneurship programmes, etc.

ETN Governance

There is no “one size fits all” model of governance, each ETN is expected to organize as it deems most appropriate to meet its own purposes.

It is expected that each ETN is co-led in order to foster shared strategic vision and balance responsibility among academic teams and partner universities.

For management purposes each ETN must include two types of roles:

- **ETN coordinator**, responsible for the compilation of information and documents, submission of the proposal and reporting deliverables.
- **Members**, that may play multiple activities, as considered in the ETN action plan. They will be responsive to the coordinator’s demand for information and documentation.

HOW AN ETN WILL BE SUPPORTED

- Each selected ETN under the current call will be allocated with a maximum total **amount of 150.000€** as seed funding for a period of 36 months.
 - **Eligible costs** can include:
 - Personnel costs.
 - Travel costs and subsistence.
 - Costs of hosting seminars/conferences or workshops (e.g., venue rental, catering, lodging, etc.).
 - Consumables and supplies.
 - Other goods and services.
 - **Costs that are not eligible:**
 - Scientific equipment.
 - Office equipment and supply.
 - Fellowships and scholarships for theses.
 - Entertainment costs.
 - Indirect costs.
- ETNs will be accompanied by support staff from each participating university who will help academics to extend collaboration opportunities and connections, while allowing autonomy to achieve the expected outputs and outcomes.

HOW ETNs ARE SELECTED

Each ENLIGHT Thematic Network must apply using an application form (Annex I) with due attention to the following eligibility and selection criteria:

Eligibility criteria

- **Network composition.** ETNs must be composed of teams of academics belonging to at least three ENLIGHT Partner Universities.
- **Thematic scope.** ETNs should be aligned with one (or more) of the six ENLIGHT focus areas.

Evaluation criteria

1. **Quality and relevance (30%).** It should be clearly described the ambition and value added of the joint efforts and how it contributes (a) to addressing challenges in the focus areas as well as (b) to building, diversifying, and creating added value for ENLIGHT.
2. **Network and Team composition (20%).**
 - a. Network composition, interinstitutional balance, complementarity of capacities and engagement of external stakeholders.
 - b. Pull of senior and junior academics, and interdisciplinary, intergenerational and gender **balance**.
3. **Feasibility (20%).** Degree of alignment of well-defined objectives, duly designed working plan, described tasks, and distribution of required funding according to the work intensity of each team.
4. **Expected outputs and desired impact (30%).** Roadmap of outputs and their leveraging effect and impact on the Alliance and beyond.

Selection procedure

As a first filtering process, applications are evaluated on formal criteria to confirm their eligibility.

Eligible applications will go through a **two-step selection procedure**.

- **STEP 1:** One joint selection committee, consisting of representatives from all ENLIGHT University Partners, will evaluate and rank proposals following the evaluation criteria (quality and relevance, network and team composition, feasibility and expected outputs).
- **STEP 2:** The executive committee of ENLIGHT 2.0 WP3, composed of the vice-rectors for research and research directors of the ENLIGHT universities, will make the final decision and resolution departing from the 'step one' ranking and balancing as much even as possible the participation of the Partner Universities, coordination role and focus areas.

APPLICATIONS

Applications must be submitted by the Coordinator of the ETN through the online ETN application form /using the pdf forms (see annex I Application Form) at the **ENLIGHT central online submission point**.

Upon consent of the applicants, title of the ETN, abstract, involved teams and key contact persons will be made available within the ENLIGHT webpage to enhance visibility and networking opportunities.

REPORTING

ETNs will report their activities every 18 months (see annex II Activity Report Template) to follow-up their progress, introduce their planning for the next 18 months and help them with further assistance if needed.

TIMELINE

1st Call for ETN proposals	
Call for ETN published	1 April, 2024
Closing date	30 June, 2024
Evaluation and selection	August-October 2024
Kick off meetings of the ETNs	November 2024
1 st report (M18)	
2 nd report (M36)	

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

For any clarification question you can contact the ENLIGHT liaison at your university.



Annex I. Application Form
Annex I. Activity Report Template