



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO



Seed4Innovation Scouting Program

Short version of the Call Text 2026



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1. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The **University of Milan** (“UNIMI”) launches a new edition of the **Seed4Innovation Scouting Program** (“S4I” or “Program”) with the aim to identify and select ideas and solutions capable of generating innovation with industrial and/or commercial exploitation potential.

In order to bridge the gap between academic research and the market, S4I is designed to support the academic community and the researchers of the Program's Research Partners in creating opportunities for the valorisation of innovative ideas and in fostering their technological, applicative and/or entrepreneurial development.

The Program seeks to encourage:

- the generation of intellectual property arising from fundamental research and its valorisation;
- academic collaborations with industry aimed at research and development activities;
- the creation of innovative start-ups.

It is open to projects belonging to **any disciplinary and research area** of the University of Milan, its departments, and affiliated research institutions (“Research Partners”).

2. WHO CAN APPLY

The Call is open to professors, researchers, doctoral candidates, research fellows, students and recent Alumni of the University of Milan, as well as eligible participants affiliated with the Research Partners.

Multidisciplinary teams are encouraged and may include external members, provided that at least one participant is affiliated with UNIMI or one of the following Research Partners:

- I.R.C.C.S. Galeazzi – Sant’Ambrogio Hospital;
- Fondazione I.R.C.C.S. Istituto Neurologico “Carlo Besta”;
- I.R.C.C.S. European Institute of Oncology (IEO);
- I.R.C.C.S. Centro Cardiologico Monzino;
- Fondazione I.R.C.C.S. Ca’ Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico;
- Fondazione I.R.C.C.S. Istituto Auxologico Italiano.

Applications may be submitted by individuals or teams. For projects submitted by a team, individuals with no formal affiliation to the University or a Research Partner may participate, provided that at least one team member is a professor, a researcher, a student of the University of Milan or affiliated with one of the Research Partners.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will be accepted starting from **8 September 2026** until **27 October 2026 at 5:00 PM CET**, through the dedicated online platform accessible at the following link:

https://elixforms.unimi.it/rwe2/module_preview.jsp?MODULE_TAG=S4I_seed4innovation_2026

Applicants are required to provide a detailed description of their innovation, its potential applications, team composition and expected impact.

All submitted information will be handled under confidentiality provisions designed to preserve future intellectual property opportunities.



Projects aimed at developing technologies covered by patents owned by the University of Milan, whose priority patent applications were filed on or after **1 January 2025**, will be automatically admitted to the Program, provided that they were not selected for mentoring in previous editions of the Call and are not already subject to a valorisation agreement.

4. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The Program is organised into four main stages.

First, applications undergo an *initial assessment* focusing on innovation level and market potential.

Up to **30 projects** are admitted to *training sessions* covering technology transfer, intellectual property protection, market assessment, business opportunities, pitch preparation.

Following presentations before the S4I Jury, up to **20 projects** will enter a dedicated *mentoring programme*. Teams will receive support from experts in the following fields: technology development, business modelling, market validation, intellectual property strategy, investment readiness.

Finalists will present their projects through formal pitch presentations to a multidisciplinary Jury composed of technology transfer experts, investors, industry representatives and innovation professionals.

Winning projects will be announced during a public event that will take place by May 2027. The selected projects will have access to an *acceleration programme* lasting approximately 6–10 months.

During acceleration, teams will work on prototype development, technology validation, team building, business model refinement, commercialisation strategies and access to financing opportunities.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects will be assessed according to four main evaluation criteria:

1. Level of innovation;
2. Technical feasibility;
3. Quality and expertise of the team;
4. Market need and business potential.

Evaluators will consider in their assessment the novelty of the proposed solution, the maturity of the technology, its scalability, expected impact and the team's capability to implement successfully the proposed project.

6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The University of Milan has allocated a total budget of **€ 400,000** supporting at least **8 winning projects** involving at least one UNIMI participant.

Each selected project may receive a grant of up to **€ 50,000** to support technology maturation, validation and development activities.

In addition, Corporate Partners may establish dedicated grants to address specific innovation challenges. Corporate Grants may be awarded to projects of particular strategic interest, regardless of the official S4I ranking. The University of Milan encourages the participation of companies as affiliated sponsors of the Program in order to increase the effectiveness of technology transfer activities and to orient innovations towards needs that are genuinely perceived by industry and the market.



7. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROVISIONS

For projects receiving institutional funding, intellectual property management will follow the University regulations and relevant agreements between participants and participating institutions.

In particular, members of teams affiliated with the University of Milan acknowledge their awareness of:

- Article 65 of the Italian Industrial Property Code;
- the University Regulations governing Industrial and Intellectual Property¹.

Beneficiaries agree that, where intellectual property generated through the project is not already owned by the University, ownership of the relevant exploitation rights shall be transferred to the University.

Without prejudice to the moral rights of inventors and authors, the University shall take the necessary actions to protect intellectual property in accordance with applicable legislation through patents or other suitable forms of protection.

In addition to the Grant, the University will bear the costs associated with:

- patent filing;
- registration procedures;
- industrial property protection activities.

In accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Regulations (article 13), inventors and authors affiliated with UNIMI shall be entitled to 50% of all revenues generated through valorisation activities involving the protected intellectual property.

For project teams including participants affiliated with institutions other than the University of Milan, disbursement of the Grant is subject to additional conditions.

Where a project generates:

- new know-how; or
- new industrial property rights,

all co-owners of such rights must agree in advance that the value of the Grant may be reimbursed to the University of Milan from future revenues arising from exploitation of the resulting intellectual property.

Repayment arrangements shall be defined through the valorisation agreements negotiated between the parties.

If, after selection, it is determined that a project does not satisfy the conditions required for award of the Grant, no funding shall be disbursed, and the participants shall not be entitled to any claim against the University

8. EXPECTED IMPACT

Seed4Innovation is designed to transform promising research results into commercially viable technologies, products, services and start-ups.

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<https://www.unimi.it/sites/default/files/regolamenti/Regolamento%20in%20materia%20di%20Propriet%C3%A0%20Industriale%20e%20Intellettuale%20definitivo.pdf>



By fostering collaboration among researchers, entrepreneurs, investors and industry partners, the Program contributes to regional and international innovation ecosystems while maximising the social and economic value generated by academic research.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Project information will be treated confidentially throughout the evaluation process.

Submitted materials remain the property of participants, while evaluation activities are conducted under appropriate confidentiality agreements involving the S4I Jury's members.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the official Call Text and to have a look at the proposal form template visit the Seed4Innovation Program official website at the following link <https://seed4innovation.unimi.it/>.

Any questions can be addressed, via e-mail, writing to seed4innovation@unimi.it.

In case of any discrepancy the Italian version of the Call shall prevail.