

2021 Interdisciplinarity call for projects

Framework text

***Deadline for submission of projects:
28 February 2022 – noon (Paris time)***

Publication address:

<https://www.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/lancement-de-lappel-projets-interdisciplinarite-2021>

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1. Context

1.1 Presentation of the A*Midex initiative of excellence

The A*Midex university foundation is responsible for the Initiative of Excellence (I dex) at Aix-Marseille, holder of the national accreditation obtained in the context of the French government's INVESTMENTS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME (IFP). The I dex project presented by Aix-Marseille University and its partners (CNRS, INSERM, IRD, CEA, AP-HM, Sciences-Po Aix, Centrale Marseille) was selected in February 2012 by the International committee and confirmed in April 2016. Its objective is to promote and develop the exceptional potential of the Aix-Marseille site, by equipping it with world-ranking research and higher education. To achieve this aim, A*Midex is trialling new actions and functions as strategic methods to promote growth within the geographical area.

1.2 Presentation of the strategic challenges related to the call for proposals

In the context of a first "Consolidation of trials" field of action from its roadmap 3.0 (2021-2024), A*Midex is pursuing its objective in favour of **promoting interdisciplinarity across the whole of the Aix-Marseille site**, with an **exploratory aim**, to construct a pilot interdisciplinary university cluster. This ambition particularly relies on the **Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes**, which promote interdisciplinary actions in their themes.

Incubation of projects to meet major priority scientific and societal challenges, and risk-taking are also key opportunities in the A*Midex roadmap 3.0, to which this call for projects will contribute.

The call for projects was designed to respond to challenges defined in common by the partners of the A*Midex initiative of excellence, the governance of the University and the Interdisciplinarity(ies) Mission. This new Mission, launched in 2021, aims to accompany and stimulate the existing dynamic promoting interdisciplinary innovation on the Aix-Marseille site, by contributing to overcoming structural hindrances to the implementation of interdisciplinarity, in particular through observation, support of stakeholders, networking, and trialling and disseminating facilitating practices.

2. Presentation and objectives of the call for proposals

2.1 Presentation of the call for proposals and its objectives

In 2021, the A*Midex Foundation is launching the fifth edition of the "Interdisciplinarity" call for projects, designed to **recognise and encourage novel interdisciplinary approaches** in particular in response to current and future societal challenges.

This call for projects relies on the **Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes** in their role structuring and animating interdisciplinary communities. Projects must involve several **disciplinary fields** entering into the priorities of an Aix-Marseille-affiliated institute. Unexpected collaborations between distinct disciplinary fields, on new subjects, are particularly welcome.

Specific objectives

This call intends in particular:

- ❖ To support **structuring efforts across the whole site relying on the Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes**, and promoting **interdisciplinarity**;
- ❖ To set up **interdisciplinary research projects, presenting added-value in terms of training while also responding to major scientific and societal challenges**;
- ❖ To promote scientific audacity for the **resolution of novel questions through interdisciplinarity**;
- ❖ To support projects that enter into the overall strategy of interdisciplinary on the site.

Definition of interdisciplinarity:

Pluri-disciplinarity consists in addressing a topic or study theme from different points of view due to a juxtaposition of disciplinary perspectives.

Interdisciplinarity relies on dialogue and collaboration across disciplines from the development of the subject of study, a process which allows co-production of new integrated knowledge.

Finally, trans-disciplinarity involves extra-academic stakeholders working together with academics to solve a particular societal problem.

2.2 Target audience / Eligible candidates

The 2021 Interdisciplinarity call is exclusively dedicated to the perimeter of Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes. **Each institute will promote the emergence of projects in its thematic perimeter and will pre-select a maximum of 3 projects**, classed in order of priority, that will be submitted to the A*Midex Foundation for assessment and validation. The call is thus for projects specific to the A*Midex Foundation.

The scientific and technical leader of a project must be a **tenure scientist or lecturer-researcher affiliated with a research unit on the Aix-Marseille site**.

2.3 Type of projects supported

The call for projects covers **all scientific research disciplines** and **all scientific fields** in the perimeter of the Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes. Projects may relate to **basic or more finalised research**.

Duration

The project submitted should include a provisional schedule for activities, and indicate the desired start date for the project. From the effective start of the project, the teams involved will have **up to 36 months** to complete the project.

Budget and amount of funding allocated

The funding awarded will be around **€300,000 per Aix-Marseille-affiliated institute**.

To ensure funding has an impact and that projects complement the actions of the institutes, it is recommended that institutes submit **projects with a minimum funding amount of €100,000** to A*Midex.

The funding allocated by the A*Midex Foundation **will be made available to the scientific and technical leader for the project and their research unit - manager of the project - on an A*Midex budgetary line** once an attribution-of-funding agreement has been signed with A*Midex.

Eligible costs

Costs related to non-permanent research personnel, with the exception of PhD students, are eligible.

Running costs and business trips are eligible.

Investment costs specific to research equipment are eligible within the limit of 20% of the overall funding allocated by A*Midex.

To be eligible for A*Midex funding, investment costs must relate only to costs for specific equipment, in line with the project (necessary to implementation of the scientific project / training and its innovative nature), excluding any recurrent or classical costs for a research unit or learning and teaching department.

Computing equipment: only costs related to specific computing equipment for scientific/pedagogical use linked to the execution of the project are eligible - for projects justifying specific needs in terms of computing equipment and based on the nature of the scientific and pedagogical activities implemented. Not including office-based material, which is not covered by the A*Midex funding.

Items of expenditure must be eligible according to the A*Midex regulations relating to the attribution of A*Midex funding, available in the University's Guide to procedures. These regulations should also be studied to determine which items are eligible for purchase using funds managed by the University.

2.4 Key roles in successful projects

- **Scientific and technical leader (STL):** each project must be coordinated by a tenure researcher, or lecturer-researcher from the Aix-Marseille site, who will ensure coordination and monitor implementation of the project.
- **Organiser:** a named individual will be morally responsible for the use of funds awarded for the project. This person will be the director of the research unit with which the scientific and technical leader for the project is affiliated.
- **Financial manager:** an administrative manager within the research unit with which the scientific and technical leader is affiliated will be responsible for financial and/or administrative operations (recruitments, etc.).
- **Administrative manager:** it is highly recommended to designate a person who will undertake a supporting role alongside the STL for the administrative management of the project (recruitments, drawing up agreements, etc.) within the research unit with which the STL is affiliated, this person could for example be the administrative manager, management accountant, financial assistant.

The scientific and technical leader of the project must demonstrate in their application the capacity of their research unit to undertake the steering and administrative management of the project.

Summary

- **Duration of projects:** Maximum 36 months
- **A*Midex funding:** approximately €300,000 per institution
- **Budget for the call for proposals:** The provisional budget for this action is 6 million euros.

3. Modalities for submission of applications and contact details

3.1 Modalities for submission of applications

The application form for the CFP can be downloaded from <https://www.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/lancement-de-lappel-projets-interdisciplinarite-2021>

Submission of the application is a single-step process, based on the form available at the following address: <https://formulaire.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/aap-interdisciplinarite-2021-candidatures>

Identification and preselection of projects is done as follows:

- **IDENTIFICATION AND PRESELECTION OF PROJECTS BY EACH INSTITUTION**

Specific call for projects involving the Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes within their roles, to identify, classify and **rank preselected projects in order of priority**.

Each institute will promote the emergence of projects in its thematic perimeter and will pre-select a maximum of 3 projects for submission to A*Midex for assessment and validation. As part of project mentoring, **projects will be iteratively validated**, the A*Midex steering committee will award funding to projects based on the assessment and the recommendations of the experts consulted, as well as on the strategic objectives for the site; **project leaders may be asked, if necessary, to re-work their proposal, in preparation for a second and final assessment.**

- **TRANSMISSION OF PROPOSED PROJECTS TO A*MIDEX**

Submission of the application is a single-step process, based on the form available at the following address: <https://formulaire.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/aap-interdisciplinarite-2021-candidatures>

Candidates preselected by the institutes provide a full application at this step, presenting their project (activities and budget). This application will be analysed and assessed.

Candidates are invited to **submit their completed application by 28 February 2022 at the latest**.

- The completed application form
- The budget for the project
- The appendices. NB: some appendices are required

Deadline for submission of the completed application 28 February 2022 12:00 noon Paris time.

3.2 Contact details

Until the closing date for the CFP, candidates can contact the following people:

- For questions related to the management of this CFP and to the framework text:
Ouafia BELHOUL, Project manager for training and scientific mediation
A*Midex Foundation
ouafia.BELHOUL@univ-amu.fr

- For questions related to project development:
Support for project development is provided within the research unit.
- For questions related to the Interdisciplinarity(ies) Mission, please contact Flore NONCHEZ, project manager for Interdisciplinarity(ies) Mission: flore.nonchez@univ-amu.fr

4. Project validation process

The assessment process described below meets the A*Midex Foundation's firm commitment to guarantee that the projects it supports combine scientific excellence, operational quality and a high potential for impact.

4.1 Analysis of eligibility

The eligibility of each application will be verified by the A*Midex Foundation upon receipt of the full application submission. Projects not meeting these criteria will be declared ineligible and, consequently, will neither be assessed nor presented to the A*Midex steering committee.

- *Nature of the scientific and technical leader for the project: Tenure researchers and lecturer-researchers from the Aix-Marseille site (affiliated with a research unit linked to AMU);*
- *Project preselected by an Aix-Marseille-affiliated institute;*
- *Nature of the project: the project must involve several disciplinary fields and explicitly state the added-value of its interdisciplinary aspects.*

4.2 Administrative analysis

The following administrative elements will be analysed by the A*Midex Foundation for each eligible application. This analysis will be provided to the steering committee alongside the two scientific assessments of the project.

- Duration of projects: at most 36 months
- Amount of the grant awarded per institute: €300k approximately to be modulated depending on the number of projects submitted
- The administrative and financial capacity of the research unit to manage the project
- The application must be complete, and all the documents requested must be communicated in line with the application guide (see "Application form")
- The budget and time-line must comply with the regulations defined in the framework text.

This analysis will be provided to the steering committee alongside the results of the scientific assessment.

4.3 Scientific assessment

Management of the assessment process is handled by the A*Midex Foundation in line with its quality approach. Each project will be the subject of two independent scientific assessments by experts external to the Aix-Marseille site, in order to ensure a high quality of scientific expertise. Each assessor will be identified by their scientific qualification level, their relevance with respect to the project **to be assessed, and the challenges of the “Interdisciplinarity” call for proposals**. The expertise will be undertaken by two assessors from disciplinary fields relevant to the project, who have demonstrated experience in interdisciplinarity (coordination of interdisciplinary projects, participation in interdisciplinary instances, etc.), and who are capable of appreciating the added-value of the interdisciplinary integration involved in the project. If divergent opinions (two different letters) are given on the quality of the project, the two assessors will be put in contact for discussion to arrive at a consensual report.

Experts will sign a declaration of confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest before any communication of the proposal in full. These procedures aim to guarantee a high level of scientific expertise and impartiality in this assessment approach.

Eligible projects are assessed by two scientific experts, according to the following assessment criteria, with weighting factors applied:

Selection criterion	Comments	Grade
1) Quality and ambition of the project		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interdisciplinary nature of the project for the Aix-Marseille site involving several disciplinary fields; definition of interdisciplinarity given by the principal investigator and relevance of the combination of disciplines mobilised with respect to the objectives of the project,</i> <i>Innovative nature; scientific audacity and resolution of new questions through interdisciplinarity,</i> <i>Quality and adequation of the interdisciplinary team defined for the project (in particular experience in similar projects and knowledge of the issues related to interdisciplinarity)</i> 	<p><i>at least 40, at most 150 words</i></p>	<p>/5 Weighting factor 4</p>

2) Implementation modalities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions and support for the project provided by the Aix-Marseille-affiliated institute • Capacity to develop interdisciplinary approaches in line with the work plan, • Quality and coherence of the project (defined programme of activities, description of activities and resources, of project organisation, overall management, tools implemented to promote and measure interdisciplinary integration), 	at least 40, at most 150 words	/5 Weighting factor 4
3) Expected impact and returns		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential contributions of the projects to the ecosystem, clarity of the contributions and expected interdisciplinary results; • Improvement of the position of projects on the Aix-Marseille site in national and European or international programmes 	at least 40, at most 150 words	/5 (Weighting factor 2)
Total		/50

Modalities for grading

All eligible projects are subject to double grading by the experts.

1/ Grading of the 3 criteria above

Each of the 3 assessment criteria is graded according to the following system:

Note	Signification des notes
0	Critère non traité ou ne pouvant être évalué avec les informations fournies
1	Insuffisant : critère traité de manière superficielle et non satisfaisante
2	Médiocre : critère traité de façon relativement satisfaisante mais il y a de sérieuses faiblesses
3	Bien : critère bien traité mais il y a des améliorations nécessaires
4	Très bien : critère très bien traité, quelques améliorations sont encore possibles
5	Excellent : critère parfaitement traité, les lacunes éventuelles sont mineures

Grade	What the grade means
0	Criterion not treated or impossible to assess with the information provided

1	Inadequate: criterion treated superficially and not adequately
2	Mediocre: criterion treated relatively satisfactorily but serious weaknesses remain
3	Good: criterion well treated but improvements necessary
4	Very good: criterion well treated, some improvements still possible
5	Excellent: criterion treated perfectly, any remaining issues are minor

Each criterion is thus graded out of 5.

Weighting factors are applied to each criterion:

- Criterion 1-Quality of the project and relevance to the objectives of the CFP: weighting factor 4
- Criterion 2-Quality of project implementation and contribution of the collaboration across disciplines: weighting factor 4
- Criterion 3-Expected impact and returns: weighting factor 2

A final grade out of 50 will thus be attributed.

The experts attribute a letter to the project reflecting their overall recommendation to fund it or not:

- A: project to be shortlisted as a priority
- B: good project, but with reservations; *projects graded B have a low probability of being shortlisted*
- C: inadequate project, projects to be re-worked

Project validation modalities

The A*Midex steering committee will validate projects based on the assessment of the qualified experts consulted; **if necessary, the committee may ask project leaders to re-work their proposal in preparation for a second and final assessment.**

4.5 Validation of accredited projects by the A*Midex steering committee

The A*Midex steering committee will award funding to the top-ranking projects from the CFP on the basis of the assessments returned by the experts, and also taking into account the administrative analysis provided by the foundation.

5. Indicative schedule

18 November 2021, 12-noon (Paris): Launch of the call for proposals

28 February 2022, 12-noon (Paris): Deadline for submission of proposals

March - May 2022: Assessment of projects (eligibility & administrative analysis, scientific assessment)

June 2022: Validation by the A*Midex steering committee

July 2022: Communication of results (provisional date)

September 2022: Start of projects, provided agreements have been signed (provisional date)

6. Conditions under which selected projects will be implemented

The projects selected will be funded by the A*Midex Foundation by making financial assistance available. A specific agreement for attribution of financial assistance will be drawn up before any funds can be used. This agreement will be signed by the scientific and technical leader of the project, the project organiser (manager/director of the research unit), and the President of the initiative of excellence (and by delegation of the board of management of the A*Midex Foundation).

In addition, the designated management assistant of the research unit who will undertake the financial management of the project must be accredited.

A launch meeting for successful projects will be organised following their selection by the steering committee, during which all the necessary information relating to project implementation (agreements, reviews, financial and HR procedures, etc.) will be provided.

It is important to note that, for any recruitments to be made in the context of the project, the profiles recruited must be external to the Aix-Marseille site and their most recent university degree/diploma must have been awarded by a university other than AMU (or A*Midex partners). Any projected recruitment must be advertised internationally. For further information on the financial and HR implementation modalities relating to projects, please consult the documents listed in chapter 7.

The scientific and technical leaders and their administrative support team will be bound by agreements with the A*Midex Foundation, described in the agreement for attribution of assistance, in particular in terms of annual project reports to be provided, lists of eligible costs, compliance with Aix-Marseille University's publication charter, acknowledgement of A*Midex in publications and on communication supports, etc.

7. Documents and useful links

- General information on A*Midex: <https://www.univ-amu.fr/en/public/excellence-initiative>
- A*Midex procedures¹ (A*Midex regulations, Reference documents for finance, HR and Training): <https://procedures.univ-amu.fr/amidex> (or by return email for personnel outside AMU)
- Open A*Midex calls for proposals: <https://www.univ-amu.fr/en/public/calls-projects-progress-amidex>
- General information on Aix-Marseille-affiliated institutes: <https://www.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/instituts-detablissements>
- General information on the Interdisciplinarity(ies) Mission: <https://www.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/mission-interdisciplinarite> (under construction: for the moment preferably contact flore.nonchez@univ-amu.fr)

¹ We invite you to subscribe to the procedures in order to be informed of any future updates