



Interreg



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NEXT MED

EUSEEDS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Establishment of Employability Centers within the framework of the
EUSEEDS project – Interreg NEXT MED Programme

1. Call for Applications

Brief Presentation of the EUSEEDS European Project	EUSEEDS (Enable, Upgrade and Spread Employability, Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills) is a project co-funded by the European Union under the Interreg NEXT MED Programme. It is being implemented in 5 Eastern Mediterranean countries to strengthen youth employability and digital skills. It is implemented by AUF Middle East, the lead partner of a consortium that also includes the following partners: • Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus) • Enroot (Egypt) • Aix-Marseille Université (France) • Jordan Youth Innovation Forum (Jordan) • Forward Mena (Lebanon) • Palestine Information and Communications Technology Incubator (Palestine) The project foresees the establishment (creation or revitalization) of 20 university centers across five countries (Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) in order to strengthen both the employability and the digital skills of the youth.
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	This call for applications aims to select 20 beneficiary universities. These centers, located on university campuses in areas with high social challenges, will have the mission of sustainably providing (during the project and beyond): • Internal university services (targeting students and recent graduates): training in employability and digital skills, micro-credentials, and pre-incubation assistance for student entrepreneurship projects; • External university services (for vulnerable populations): training in literacy and digital professionalization, opened to the surrounding community and delivered by students. The selection of the 20 universities will be carried out following this call for applications, based on various criteria (location, organizational capacity, social dimension, impact, sustainability, etc.)
Project duration	3 years (project closure in August 2028)
Countries of implementation:	Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine
Quantitative Objectives	The results to be collectively achieved through the 20 beneficiary centers are as follows: <u>During the project (2025–2028):</u> • 380 trainers (University staff) affiliated to the centers trained by project partners; • 7,100 final beneficiaries trained during the project (including 3,000 students per year in digital/transversal skills, 800 vulnerable individuals, and 300 students per year in entrepreneurship); <u>After the project (2028 and beyond):</u> • 4,100 beneficiaries trained each year, ensuring a lasting impact.

Scope of the call	The call aims to select 20 universities that will develop, within their campuses, employability centers capable of: Internally, within the university: • Offering training in soft and digital skills tailored to labor market needs; • Supporting the professional integration of students and recent graduates; • Developing student entrepreneurship through pre-incubation programs; Externally, as part of the university's social responsibility: • Providing services opened to vulnerable segments of the local community (literacy and digital professionalization), implemented by students.
Presentation of the activities to be implemented	Within the framework of the project, the universities will benefit from: • Support for material equipment (furniture and IT) or rehabilitation works, with an average budget of €15,000 to €20,000 per center outside Palestine, and €35,000 to €40,000 per center in Palestine, enabling the provision of modern resources adapted to the needs of students and faculties; • Support for the management and governance of the employability center, including the definition of a viable economic model tailored to the university's specific situation, the establishment of alumni activities, and the regular evaluation of impact to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the centers; • Training of trainers in the following areas: soft skills, digital skills, and student entrepreneurship, according to international standards, with the possibility of certifying trainers' competencies. On average, around 19 trainers (covering transversal skills, digital skills, and student entrepreneurship) will be trained in each beneficiary university, with significant variation depending on university size; • Provision of a study on medium-term skills requirements (professional, interdisciplinary, soft and digital skills) to meet labor market demand in the five project countries, anticipating high-demanded jobs and the emergence of artificial intelligence tools; • Provision of training materials in soft skills, digital skills, and student entrepreneurship, focusing on the key skills identified as mostly required by employers;

	• Provision of innovative modules and micro-credentials, directly aligned with current labor market needs in the digital sector, giving students concrete advantages for their professional integration; • Provision of a portal hosting job offers from the partnership countries, serving as a link between potential employers and students, facilitating access to the labor market in the digital sector; • A dynamic networking system, combining in-person international meetings of staff from the 20 centers (in France, Lebanon, Cyprus) and access to an online collaborative platform, to promote the sharing of best practices and the creation of synergies among center managers; • Enhanced support for student entrepreneurship, to facilitate the centers' interaction with their local ecosystems; • Development of university pre-incubators, enabling structured support for cohorts of student entrepreneurs, from ideas to concrete projects; • Individualized coaching for each center in the implementation of these activities. The cost of these benefits provided to the beneficiary universities (equipment, trainer training, provision of training modules, coaching, networking, etc.) fully funded by the project is estimated at around an average of €100,000 per university. In return, the beneficiary universities will be required to commit to providing: • Material resources: allocation of a designated physical space on the campus (accessible and suitable facilities); • Human resources: appointment of a dedicated manager for the employability center; assignment of administrative and technical staff to support the management and organization of activities; and mobilization of faculty and trainers to participate in activities (e.g., workshops on transversal and digital skills, mentoring, support for student entrepreneurship).
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	They will also commit to organizing training sessions in the Employability Center: - On average, it is expected that approximately 355 beneficiaries will be trained by the university during the 2-year project, with this total roughly divided into 150 students per year in digital and soft skills, 15 students per year in active entrepreneurship training, and a cohort of 40 vulnerable individuals per year from the surrounding community, with significant variations possibly, depending on the size of the university. Finally, they will also need to commit, in principle, to: - Ensuring the sustainability of the centers created by providing resources over the long term; - As part of their social responsibility, offering services opened to the local community (basic literacy and digital professional skills) for vulnerable segments of the population (unemployed or low-income individuals, women in vulnerable situations, non-graduates, refugees, displaced persons, etc.), implemented by students. In the long term, after the end of the project, starting in 2028, it is expected that approximately 205 individuals will be trained by the University each year at the Employability Center, with this total roughly divided into 150 students in digital and transversal skills, 15 students in active entrepreneurship training, and a cohort of 40 vulnerable individuals from the surrounding community, with significant variations possibly, depending on the size of the university.
Number of structures to be selected	20 beneficiary universities will be selected through this call, aiming, as much as possible, for a balanced geographical distribution.
Eligibility criteria	The applicant university must: Be located in one of the following five countries: Cyprus, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt (only the following governorates are eligible: Matrouh; Alexandria, Al Beheira; Kafr El-Sheikh; Al

	Sharkia; Al Dakahlia; Damietta; Al Ismailia; Port Said; Cairo Governorate); • Be accredited by the ministry responsible for higher education in its country; • Be able to allocate staff and infrastructure for the implementation of activities defined by the project. Only one application per university will be allowed, formalized through an official letter signed by the highest authority of the university (university president or equivalent). Applications from universities located in areas with significant social challenges will be prioritized. Areas with significant social challenges include, for example, regions affected by recent conflict, the presence of vulnerable communities such as refugees or displaced populations, or a university recruitment within a highly disadvantaged population. Important notes: • Beneficiary universities will not receive direct funding (as required by the European Union). All expenses (provided equipment, travel costs, training of trainers, training modules and micro-credentials, coaching) will be directly implemented by the AUF or its partners. • The project does not cover the remuneration of trainers or university staff engaged in activities organized within the framework of the project.
Selection procedure	1. Online form and submission of supporting documents (application) 2. Pre-selection based on the application 3. Online interviews 4. Notification letter 5. Contracting 6. Indicative dates: • Deadline: November 24, 2025 • Pre-selection: November 28, 2025 • Interviews: December 8–12, 2025 • Notification: December 19, 2025

	• Start of support: early January 2026
Selection criteria	<u>Impact</u>: size of the targeted student population, diversity of beneficiaries, planning of the number of students trained and the vulnerable populations reached. <u>Organizational capacity</u>: existing human and technical resources mobilized to quickly develop the center. <u>Social dimension</u>: ability to involve not only students but also recent graduates and vulnerable populations (e.g., refugees, women, rural areas), with a commitment to promoting equality and training marginalized groups. <u>Sustainability</u>: prospects for the center's continuity beyond the initial funding (co-funding, budget integration, partnerships). <u>Level of university commitment</u>: nature of the official commitment from the governing body of the university to support and sustain the employability center. <u>Mobilization capacity</u>: designation of a dedicated internal team and availability of a campus space to host the center. <u>Strategic alignment</u>: integration of the initiative into the university's institutional strategy (employability, entrepreneurship, digital skills, social responsibility). <u>Location of the applicant university</u>. The different training components targeted in the project will be considered in the evaluation: a) Internal training at the university (for the benefit of university students or recent graduates): • Employability • Digital skills • Student entrepreneurship b) External training outside the university (for the benefit of vulnerable populations): • Digital literacy
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