

« EU-DOCS for SmUCS » - MSCA COFUND

# Call for thesis subjects

■ Call #2 deadline: September 5<sup>th</sup> 2025

univ-larochelle.fr

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## 1. Context and scientific orientation

La Rochelle Université has been awarded with an MSCA COFUND to develop a European interdisciplinary doctoral programme with a challenge-driven approach related to Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS). This doctoral programme is called "EU-DOCs for SmUCS" and will deliver 17 cotutelle thesis over 2-year groups of students.

This program is being launched in two stages:

- In the first phase, thesis topics are to be submitted by the research teams.
- In a second phase, the eligible thesis offers will be circulated so that candidates can apply.

The aim of this second call for proposals is to identify thesis topics that could be co-supervised by a researcher from La Rochelle Université and a researcher affiliated with an international institution of doctoral education.

## 2. Cotutelle eligible partners

Each thesis is funded for a period of 36 months. It has to be a "cotutelle" between La Rochelle Université and another institution of higher education. The list below is not exhaustive and may be extended to other partners.

EU-CONEXUS partners	
University of Zadar	Croatia
Frederick University	Cyprus
University of Rostock	Germany
Agricultural University of Athens	Greece
South East Technological University	Ireland
Klaipeda University	Lithuania
Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest	Romania
Catholic University of Valencia	Spain
International partners	
Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Spain
Deakin University	Australia
University of Calgary	Canada

University of Sherbrooke	Canada
University of Helsinki	Finland
University of Cape Coast	Ghana
Università Degli Studi Dell'Aquila	Italy
Sapienza University of Rome	Italy
University of Barcelona	Spain
Universidad de Sevilla	Spain
Case Western Reserve University	USA
University of Science & Technology of Hanoi	Vietnam

**Academic partners (non-exhaustive)**

### 3. Cotutelle framework

The PhD student should spend **a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 9 months** (consecutive or not) at the partner university.

To be considered as a cotutelle, each thesis must comply with the following criteria:

- PhD student is **jointly enrolled at two universities** and is **jointly supervised by academic staff at each institution**.
- **The PhD/doctoral thesis is only defended once** and the candidate gets a PhD or equivalent title from each university. The defence committee should include at least one member from a different EU-CONEXUS partner, specialized in the PhD thesis topic, different from the 2 supervisors involved in the cotutelle.
- A **cotutelle bilateral agreement** will specify all the conditions required to deliver the two PhD degrees and legal diplomas.

### 4. Special requirement for the thesis

#### 4.1. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

The student must get a minimum of 10 ECTS by attending the courses of the programme (1 ECTS = 25 hours of work) and 20 ECTS by following other courses or participating in other research activities (research reports, participation in EU-CONEXUS Summer school, etc.), i.e. a total of 30 ECTS or 750 hours of work over the period of the thesis.

#### 4.2. Secondment

Each thesis needs to include a **three-month secondment** with a **non-academic actor**, during which the PhD student will be able 1/ to experience SmUCS challenges with a hands on perspective in a work environment related to his or her sector of activity, 2/ present his/her research activity to the host structure thus sharing potential solutions and getting the opportunity to debate with stakeholders on how this can meet their future needs (impact and dissemination activities) and 3/ contribute to any reflection going on within the structure in relation to his or her research domain.

Non-academic partners may be chosen among the list of partners in EU-DOCS for SmUCS (cf. 13 partners below). This list can be extended depending on the relevance of the secondment for the PhD student in relation with the subject of the thesis. If you need help identifying a non-academic partner, please contact: [eudocs\\_cofund@univ-lr.fr](mailto:eudocs_cofund@univ-lr.fr) or [campusinnov@univ-lr.fr](mailto:campusinnov@univ-lr.fr)

Port Atlantique La Rochelle	France
Alstom	France
Plateforme TIPEE	France
District 2, Municipality of Bucharest (PS2)	Romania
Platforma 22	Croatia
ISOTECH	Cyprus
Southern Regional Assembly	Ireland
Port of Waterford	Ireland
ProtoQSAR	Spain
MATCH Biosystems	Spain
MOLDRUG	Spain
PHARMAQUA	Greece

**Non-academic partners (non-exhaustive list)**

## 5. Career development, training, professionalization

The EU-DOCS for SmUCS program will provide a range of services for doctoral students, with a particular focus on **individual follow-up** and **career guidance**. These services have been designed in line with the HRS4R principles: some (such as events for doctoral students or the Career Center) will be implemented at the European University level and will help consolidate the framework for joint doctoral actions within our alliance; others will be based on specific contributions from La Rochelle Université, notably in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship, promoting employability and professional impact. By offering personalized follow-up and career services, the EU-DOCS for SmUCS program aims to create a new generation of international researchers, ready to tackle the global challenges linked to the Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS). This initiative will strengthen international scientific cooperation and make a significant contribution to the socio-economic ecosystems of Europe's coastal regions.

## 6. Eligibility criteria of the subject

EU-DOCS for SmUCS aims at recruiting the best PhD candidates in all disciplinary fields contributing to addressing the challenge of sustainability in coastal environments and societies.

All the subjects deemed eligible will be published. The eligibility check is based on:

- A **letter of commitment completed and signed** by the Rector, the Vice-President for Research or the President of the partner institution, as well as by the thesis co-supervisor.
- **Alignment of the subject with the objectives of the programme**: quality of the subject, addressing SmUCS challenges.
- **Quality of the supervision** provided by the co-supervisors (approval from the Doctoral Schools and research laboratories).
- **Compliance with the EU rules** regarding ethics for research and address SmUCS

challenges.

- Identification of a **non-academic partner** or specific business/ professional area for the secondment.

## 7. Open science

As part of the France 2030 framework managed by the ANR and the Horizon Europe programme, the project must comply with the following open science requirements. Based on FAIR principles data should be findable and accessible on the Internet, interoperable with other computer systems and reusable both for people and computers.

- Obligation to submit **peer-reviewed publications in open access**: in all cases, submission in [HAL-La Rochelle](#).
- Obligation of **open access for research data** under the condition: 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'.
- Obligation of a **Data Management Plan (DMP)** for all projects that generate or re-use data to be carried out within 3 months after the beginning of the project.
- **Open access recommended for all outputs other than publications and data** (software, modelling, applications, etc.).

## 8. Dissemination and exploitation of results

Responding to socio-environmental issues, the project will have to position itself in terms of its impact on society and the dissemination of results. Particular attention will be paid to the transmission of knowledge to the general public through actions to **disseminate scientific culture** and/or the transfer of results to socio-economic players by describing its potential for innovation. The impact of the project may also be considered in terms of support for public policies in coastal areas.

## 9. Holder's commitment

The beneficiary undertakes to:

- Display on all media:
  - The reference of the projects financing this action « **ANR-21-EXES-0010** » and **"101179124 — EU-DOCs for SmUCS"**
  - The mention of **France 2030** and **the European Union**
  - The France 2030 and the European Union **logos**

*The words "This work has benefited from State aid managed by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche under the Plan France 2030, bearing the reference ANR-21-EXES-0010 and is co-funded by the European Union as part of the Horizon Europe programme, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions call COFUND 2023 and under the Grant Agreement N°101179124" should be added to any presentation or publication*



- Comply with Open Science obligations (see above);
- Provide a detailed account of the project and a statement of expenditure in line with the funder's requirements;
- Make themselves available to present their project and initial results at the Rencontres LUDI and/or any other event.

## 10. Guidelines: how to apply?

The application should be completed in English and submitted along with the mandatory supporting documents:

- Filled **subject proposal form** (fully dated and signed)
- Filled **assessment of ethical issues** (fully dated and signed)
- **Letter of commitment** signed by the rector, the Vice President of Research, or the president of the academic partner institution
- **CV** of the two supervisors (max. 4 pages)

Any project submitted must include the opinions of:

- The **heads of both research units** to which researchers belongs
- The **Doctoral Schools** (or similar structure) on the doctoral supervision of each supervisor.

Applications must be sent no later than **5 September 2025** at [eudocs\\_cofund@univ-lr.fr](mailto:eudocs_cofund@univ-lr.fr)

## 11. Provisional timetable

**9 June – 5 September 2025:** Call for thesis subject

**September 2025:** Eligibility and ethics check

**October - December 2025:** Call for applications

**December 2025 – April 2026:** External and internal assessment process – selection of PhD students

**May 2026:** Interviews by the Interview committee

**From September 2026:** beginning of the thesis

### For further information please contact

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## Scientific partners of ExcellR project



## Public partners of ExcellR project







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