



## UNIVERSITY FUND FOR RESEARCH YEAR 2023

### CALL FOR THE FUNDING OF INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PROJECTS

**HAVING REGARD TO** the resolution of the Board of Directors of 22 December 2022, which in the 2023 budget approved the allocation of €2,400,000 for the funding of scientific research on the project "Fondo di Ateneo per la Ricerca - Gestione bandi interni" (University Research Fund - Management of internal calls for proposals);

**CONSIDERED** that these resources shall partly be allocated to those sectors that the academic bodies identify as strategic and fundamental for research activities, in line with the three-year Strategic Plan and the Research Policies;

**CONSIDERED** that the University is enrolled in the National Research Register under final code 000274\_UNIV;

**HAVING REGARD TO** the resolution of the Academic Senate of 18 December 2019 appointing the University Research Commission coordinated by Prof. Paolo Pavan and composed of Professors Claudio Baraldi, Graziella Bertocchi, Francesca Fanelli, Stefano Lugli, Cecilia Vernia, Marco Vinceti, Michele Zoli, and Dr. Barbara Rebecchi;

**CONSIDERED** that the Fondazione di Modena's main area of intervention is Scientific and Technological Research and that it has indicated the following priority challenges in its Strategic Steering Document 2021-2023, among others:

#### CHALLENGE 9: Promoting scientific research

Fondazione di Modena supports and encourages innovative research projects, possibly interdisciplinary, aimed at advancing scientific knowledge, with particular attention to the actual impact on the territory in terms of the environment, society, health and work. Its aim is to contribute to scientific and technological progress with a focus on European and international issues, as well as to support the entry of young people into research, stimulating interaction between the world of research and the world of work.

#### CHALLENGE 5: New professional skills

By bringing together ancient knowledge and new know-how, with a view to economic and environmental sustainability, the Modena Foundation promotes the training of new professional skills through the dissemination of knowledge among the younger generations. New digital, technological, creative and management skills, offered from the first levels of education to

university and post-graduate training are the basis for achieving new forms of entrepreneurship and employment.

#### CHALLENGE 6: Dynamic heritage

Fondazione di Modena supports a dynamic and innovative conception of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, of the landscape and of the synergy between the evidence of the past and the values of communities, with a view to awareness and social growth. Innovating means first and foremost permanently combining conservation measures with enhancement, business generation and tourism promotion of the area, by consistently adopting and applying new technologies. The innovative approach to the use and management of heritage is applied through actions that continue over time, generating resources for communities and protecting heritage.

**HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED** the agreement between the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and the Fondazione di Modena for the financing of scientific research projects;

**HAVING REGARD TO** the resolution of the Board of Directors of the Fondazione di Modena and the note file no. 116.23.8A dated 18/04/2023 (internal file no. 102802 dated 18/04/2023) with which the Fondazione di Modena communicated that the Board of Directors of the Fondazione has approved the commitment of €958,000 for the realisation of a joint call for proposals with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia;

**HAVING REGARD TO** the proposals put forward by the University Research Commission, which met electronically on 03/03/2023 and 18/04/2023;

**HAVING REGARD TO** the resolution of the AS of 12/04/2022 approving the proposals of the University Research Commission;

**HAVING REGARD TO** the resolution of the BoD of 22/04/2022 approving the proposals of the University Research Commission;

**CONSIDERED** that among the various activities that can be financed by FAR there are interventions aimed at financing "Multi-year interdisciplinary projects on a competitive basis (with anonymous external reviewers)" aimed at stimulating greater participation in competitive research projects;

**CONSIDERED** therefore the opportunity to issue, on the basis of the provisions of the above-mentioned resolutions, the FAR 2023 call for proposals for the funding of interdisciplinary research projects;

### **DECREES**

#### **ART. 1 - SUBJECT**

The present decree regulates the procedures for the funding, by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, of research projects presented by its Professors and Researchers on permanent and temporary

contracts ex art.24 L.240/2010 (A) and (B) (hereinafter referred to as Principal Investigator(s), “PI(s)”) through the use of a sum allocated to the funding of scientific research included in the 2023 budget estimate and of the funding made available by the Fondazione di Modena. Researchers on fixed-term contracts ex art.24 L.240/2010 (A) may apply on condition that the duration of the employment contract is equal to or longer than the duration of the project (see art. 3 of the present call) and that the said contract is activated on free funds that are not to be accounted for on another project.

The programme aims to finance projects of an innovative and interdisciplinary nature that require the collaboration of several Professors/Researchers, in order to promote the strengthening of the scientific basis of the University.

The programme is divided into two funding lines, each with a specifically dedicated budget:

- UNIMORE Line
- FOMO line.

Within one year from the end of the programme, a University event will be organised during which the results of the approved projects will be presented.

## **ART. 2 – PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

Each Professor or Researcher may participate, in any capacity, in only one project and in only one of the two funding lines (UNIMORE or FOMO), under penalty of ineligibility of all the projects in which he/she is included.

Winners (PIs) of a FAR Mission Oriented project of the 2011 and 2022 calls are not allowed to participate in any capacity in this call.

In addition, participation in the FOMO Line is allowed only to PIs belonging to Departments with administrative offices in Modena. Still with reference to this Line, please also note that PIs and members of the research group must not be in the conditions of incompatibility provided for the Bodies and employees of the Foundation by relevant acts and regulations (Statute, General Regulation and Regulation for the resolution of the conflict of interest) available in the "Documentation" section of the website [www.fondazionedi Modena.it](http://www.fondazionedi Modena.it).

## **ART. 3 – PROJECT DURATION AND START DATE**

All projects must have a duration of 18 months with no possibility of extension, starting from 02/11/2023

#### **ART. 4 – PROJECT FEATURES**

Submitted projects may address topics related to any research field within the three ERC fields (Life Sciences - LS, Physical, Chemical and Engineering Sciences - PE, Social Sciences and Humanities - SH) and should be inspired by the characteristics of projects supported by the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (FP HE), with a focus on the Horizon Europe Missions ([https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe_en))

Projects funded by the programme must address a specific topic of investigation through an interdisciplinary approach and must provide for the activation of at least one research fellowship contract. If publications are envisaged among the research products, at least one of them must be in open access and must be available within the deadline for submitting the results of the funded projects, as set out in art. 1.

For indications on how to publish in open access, please consult the website <https://www.pop.unimore.it/>

The total budgets made available by UNIMORE and FOMO are:

- €660,000 (including €20,000 for proposal evaluation) for the UNIMORE line
- €958,000 (including €20,000 for proposal evaluation) for the FOMO line.

The UNIMORE and FOMO budgets are broken down between the three ERC macro-sectors as follows:

ERC macro-sector	UNIMORE Line	FOMO line	Total
PE	€ 240,000	€ 336.000	€ 576.000
LS	€ 240,000	€ 336.000	€ 576.000
SH	€ 180,000	€ 286.000	€ 466.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 660,000</b>	<b>€ 958.000</b>	<b>€ 1.618.000</b>

Projects will receive a maximum funding per project of:

- €80,000 for the ERC PE and LS;
- €60,000 for the ERC SH.

Within the overall budget of the call and for each funding line, at least one project submitted by PIs aged under 40 on the date of publication of the call will be funded. In the event that no project with a PI of less than 40 years of age is among those proposed for funding at the conclusion of the evaluations, the project (eligible for funding as the 17/20 threshold has been reached) with the highest score among those not proposed for funding due to exhaustion of funds will be selected, regardless of the macro-sector it belongs to. The budget for this project will be reserved by taking a proportional sum from the three ERC fields.

Maternity periods (18 months for each child), parental leave (e.g. paternity leave) and other documented reasons (e.g. long term illness of the PI, more than 90 days) are an exception to the age limits for access to the quota reserved for PIs under 40 years of age.

**The contribution allocated to the projects deemed worthy of funding shall be entirely managed by the Department to which the PI belongs.**

In order to maximise the use of the budget available on the UNIMORE Line and on the FOMO Line, any residuals in the budgets will be added to finance any projects that are profitably placed in the ranking list and that respect the characteristics of the call.

## **ART. 5 – EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

Regardless of the Line selected, projects will be evaluated by anonymous reviewers and those with a score greater than or equal to **17/20** will be considered eligible for funding. FOMO Line projects eligible for funding on the basis of the anonymous review will be subject to a second evaluation by a joint UNIMORE-FOMO committee, coordinated by the Foundation.

### **UNIMORE Line Projects.**

*Stage 1:* the projects will be evaluated by a Panel composed of 3 experts of clear national and/or international reputation, identified among those included in the REPRISÉ database of the MUR through an automatic matching procedure that will first associate the ERC subfields of reference and then the CUN keywords (see Art. 10 of this call) indicated when submitting the proposal. The Research Committee will compare the scores assigned by the three reviewers: the final score will correspond to the arithmetic mean of the two scores that are least different from each other; if the three scores expressed by the reviewers are equidistant from each other, the lowest one will be excluded.

*Stage 2:* projects that pass the first stage will enter three separate rankings per ERC fields. The projects with the highest score will be financed until the amount available is exhausted. Any unallocated budget



within an ERC fields will be used to fund the best remaining projects in the ranking list of another ERC fields.

In case of a tie, the project in which the PI has been in the university for the shortest period of time will be funded. For the purposes of this calculation, the first position held at any University shall be considered. In calculating the period of seniority in the roles, periods of maternity (with the possibility of subtracting 18 months for each child), parental leave (for example, paternity leave) and other documented reasons (such as, for example, long-term illness of the PI, over 90 days) will be considered, with the possibility of subtracting the corresponding period of leave taken. In case of further equal merit, in each ERC fields, the project for which gender equity is best ensured in the overall ranking of funded projects will be funded.

### **FOMO Line projects.**

Stage 1: it will follow the same evaluation procedures provided for the UNIMORE Line.

Stage 2: projects that pass the first stage will be evaluated by a special joint UNIMORE-FOMO Commission which will apply the additional criteria 4, 5, and 6 described below.

The final score for each project will be the sum of the scores awarded in stages 1 and 2.

Three separate rankings will then be drawn up per ERC fields, and the projects with the highest score will be funded until the amount available is exhausted.

Any FOMO budget not allocated within each macro-sector may be used to partially fund projects remaining on the ranking list of another ERC fields, always following the highest-score criterion.

In case of a tie, the project in which the PI has been employed by the university for the shortest period of time will be funded. For the purposes of this calculation, the first position held at any University shall be considered. In calculating the period of seniority in the roles, periods of maternity (with the possibility of subtracting 18 months for each child), parental leave (for example, paternity leave) and other documented reasons (such as, for example, long-term illness of the PI, over 90 days) will be considered, with the possibility of subtracting the corresponding period of leave taken. In case of further equal merit, in each ERC field, the project for which gender equity is best ensured in the overall ranking of funded projects will be funded.

The selection of the applications and the determination of the contribution will be made at the sole discretion of the Fondazione di Modena. Appeals, complaints, requests for re-examination or other forms of appeal will not be admitted.

## **FIRST STAGE EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

### **1) Quality of the research project, up to 10 points**

Quality of the research project – scientific merit and innovative nature of the project – with particular regard to:

- a) clarity and relevance of the project objectives;
- b) relevance and originality of the proposed project in the specific scientific area; and
- c) adequacy of the proposed methodologies and of the available instrumentation (where relevant), project consistency;
- d) project positioning in relation to the state of the art in the specific scientific area.

### **2) Composition of the research team, feasibility and adequacy of the project, up to 7 points**

Composition of the research team, feasibility and adequacy of the project, scientific merit of the research team, feasibility of the work plan and reasonable nature of the funding request, with particular regard to:

- a) CV of the Principal Investigator;
- b) ability to carry out the proposed project (qualification and composition of the research team, preliminary data, where relevant);
- c) project organisation with regard to the proposed objectives, the timeframe considered necessary for completion of the project and the resources required (equipment, personnel, etc.)
- d) consistency and relevance of the expenditure plan with the objectives and the activity breakdown.

### **3) Project impact, up to 3 points**

Project impact, with particular reference, depending on its disciplinary field, to:

- a) challenges that the research addresses in terms of its impact on theoretical and/or methodological advancement in the relevant scientific field, i.e. on technological innovation, industrial applications, economic growth or on the solution of social problems, on the protection of cultural heritage or of the environment also with interdisciplinary approaches;
- b) effectiveness of the dissemination of the research project and its results; impact of the project on the scientific community and society in the light of the objectives defined by the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.



## **SECOND STAGE EVALUATION CRITERIA - FOMO LINE:**

The FOMO Line projects will be assessed by a special joint UNIMORE-FOMO commission, which will apply the following additional criteria only to those projects deemed eligible for funding by the external review (score equal to or greater than 17/20) in order to determine the final ranking of projects admitted to funding:

### **Admission criterion 4: Consistency of the policy guidelines of Fondazione di Modena**

In order to be eligible for selection, projects must be consistent with the priority challenges, in particular Challenges 5, 6 and 9, of the FOMO 2021-2023 Strategic Steering Document, listed in the introduction to this call.

### **Criterion 5: Impact on human capital, up to 3 points**

Adequacy and quality of the proposed activities for the professional development of the staff involved, with specific reference to the development of the figure of researcher to be recruited.

### **Criterion 6: Impact on the territory, up to 3 points**

Evaluation of the potential impact on the territory, also intended as application, enhancement and use of the knowledge produced to contribute to the social, environmental, health, cultural and economic development of the local community.

Given the interdisciplinary approach, estimated contribution of the project to develop skills and competences in the field of productive innovation processes, cultural, social or environmental promotion in the context of the province of Modena.

Projects, if funded, will have to produce a final scientific report giving an account of the results obtained.

## **ART. 6 – PROJECT SUBMISSION**

The PIs must submit a detailed research project by **25/05/2023 at 5pm**; the project must be written in English, using only the forms provided by the University. The submission of the proposal shall be made exclusively by the project PI through the online application that will be made available, which the PI may access with his/her University identification. The date and time of submission of the proposal shall be the date and time of validation and closure of the application by the PI using the online application. By validating and closing the application, the PI consents to make the project proposal available to the external evaluators, as well as to make the project proposal and the assessments made by the external



evaluators available to the members of the University Research Committee, the Senatorial Research Committee and the UNIMORE-FOMO Joint Committee.

The PI shall send to the National Research Office, by the same deadline, the resolution of approval of the proposal by the Department or a letter of approval by the Director of the Department itself, to be ratified at the first useful meeting of the Council.

Projects which, at the time of submission, do not comply with the required forms (in particular, the indications on the maximum and minimum number of characters, the criteria set out in the operating instructions for the management and reporting of projects funded by FAR, the rules for the participation of teaching and research staff, and which reach the Office after the deadline) will be automatically excluded from evaluation. **In any case, funding applications received by email or through channels other than the one indicated above will not be considered.**

Applicants shall declare, under their own responsibility and under penalty of exclusion from the call, whether or not their project requires the approval of the Ethics Committee. In the event that a project to be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval proves to be a winner, the starting date of the project activities is the day after the Committee's approval is obtained.

#### **ART. 7 - APPROVAL OF UNIMORE LINE PROJECTS AND FUNDING AMOUNT**

The Research Commission reserves the right to fund individual projects that have been deemed suitable, even if to a lesser extent than that requested, if deemed appropriate.

The lists of funded projects will be approved and disclosed by a specific Rectoral Decree.

#### **ART. 8 - APPROVAL OF FOMO LINE PROJECTS AND FUNDING AMOUNT**

The Fondazione di Modena, through the evaluation of the relevant Joint Committee, reserves the right to finance the individual projects that have been found to be suitable following the two-stage evaluation process, even to a lesser extent than that requested, if deemed appropriate.

The Foundation shall notify the University of the list of funded projects, which shall be disclosed by a specific Rectoral Decree. The project management is entrusted to the PI's Department.

#### **ART. 9 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING**

The PI is scientifically responsible for the project and guarantees the implementation of the project within the timeframe and in the manner indicated in the application.

The PI may submit a request for remodelling during the course of the project by sending an email to [ricercanazionale@unimore.it](mailto:ricercanazionale@unimore.it). This request will be forwarded to the Research Commission for projects funded under the UNIMORE Line and to the Fondazione di Modena for projects funded under the FOMO Line.

Within three months from the end of the project, the PI shall submit a detailed scientific report, complying with the specifications set out in the appropriate forms, on the results obtained, the staff employed on the project funds and the scientific communications made.

Together with the scientific report (within three months of the end of the project), the PI must submit the accounts, together with copies of the duly receipted supporting documents. Expenditure must have been incurred within the project duration and paid by the end of the reporting period.

Pursuant to the Modena Foundation's Regulations and in line with its general guidelines on evaluation, the grant is awarded subject to the correct completion and submission of the end-of-project report form.

Both the scientific report and the accounting report shall be sent in electronic format to the National Research Office: [ricercanazionale@unimore.it](mailto:ricercanazionale@unimore.it).

The project design, management, and reporting shall be carried out in accordance with the operational guidelines provided for projects using FAR funds of the University published at the following link <http://www.ricerca.unimore.it/site/home/nazionale/unimore.html>. For any doubts regarding the management of certain expenses, please send a request for clarification to [ricercanazionale@unimore.it](mailto:ricercanazionale@unimore.it).

#### **ART. 10 - REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND FORMS**

Clarifications and information may be requested from the Research, Technology Transfer and Third Mission Directorate - National Research Office

Tel.: 059 205 7031 - 6553 - 6675 - 6570

e-mail: [ricercanazionale@unimore.it](mailto:ricercanazionale@unimore.it).

This decree is published on the website: <http://www.unimore.it/ricerca/>

Useful links:

- [ERC Fields](#)
- [Horizon Europe](#)
- [CUN keywords](#)



- [FOMO Strategic Steering Document 2021-2023](#)

#### **ART.11 - PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE PROCEDURE**

In accordance with the provisions of art. 5 of law no. 241 of 7 August 1990, the person responsible for the procedure of this call is Dr. Barbara Rebecchi, National Research Office - Research, Technology Transfer and Third Mission Directorate - University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Via Università, 4 - Modena, email: [ricercanazionale@unimore.it](mailto:ricercanazionale@unimore.it)

The Rector

Prof. Carlo Adolfo Porro