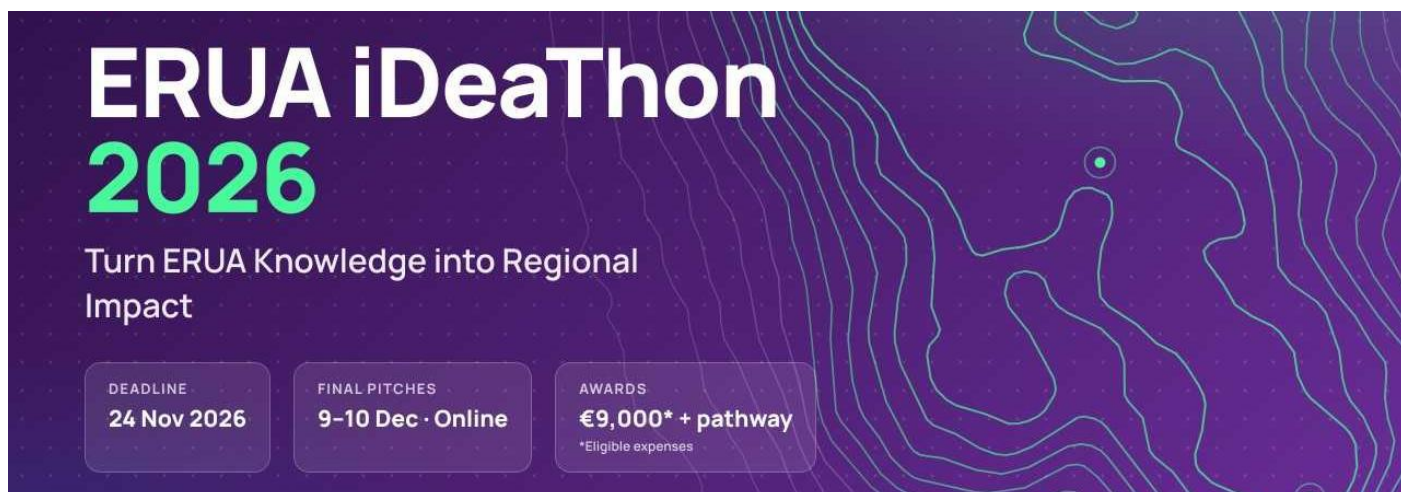


#ERUAiDeaThon2026



ERUA iDeaThon 2026

Turn ERUA Knowledge into Regional
Impact

DEADLINE 24 Nov 2026	FINAL PITCHES 9-10 Dec · Online	AWARDS €9,000* + pathway *Eligible expenses
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Challenge-to-Impact Initiative: Future Learning and Student Experience Terms & Conditions

NOTICE

Applications for #ERUAiDeaThon2026 must be submitted through the [online application system](#), until **24 November 2026, 23:59 CET**.

Before applying, please check the eligibility conditions in this document. Applicants must follow all of their instructions and complete the online application form in full. Applications that are incomplete or submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

For questions about the #ERUAiDeaThon2026, please contact the organizing team at:
erua-challenge2impact@aegean.gr

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

1. Purpose

The **European Reform University Alliance** (ERUA) is organising #ERUAiDeaThon2026, which will run from October to 10 December 2026, with final presentations on 9-10 December 2026. The #ERUAiDeaThon2026 is part of the ERUA Challenge-to-Impact Initiative: Future Learning and Student Experience. It is jointly organised by Work Package 5 (led by the **University of the Aegean**) and Work Package 6 (led by the **University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria**) and is open to the whole ERUA community.

The initiative invites **students, academic staff** and **regional stakeholders** from the eight ERUA universities and their regions to develop innovative social entrepreneurship ideas that address real societal challenges. By drawing on the shared knowledge, skills and resources of the alliance, it aims to turn academic expertise and regional needs into inclusive, sustainable and viable solutions.

The #ERUAiDeaThon2026 links future learning and the student experience with practical engagement in society. It encourages students to work with regional communities on initiatives that create social value and strengthen regional innovation ecosystems.

2. Objectives

As the first stage of the ERUA Challenge-to-Impact Initiative, #ERUAiDeaThon2026 aims to:

1. Address societal challenges within ERUA's five thematic areas (see "Identify a societal challenge" section).
2. Promote social entrepreneurship by encouraging original ideas, products, services and initiatives that respond to concrete societal needs, create social value and can be sustained over time.
3. Draw on ERUA's shared knowledge and resources, connecting students with the research, teaching and innovation expertise of the eight universities.
4. Strengthen cooperation between universities and their regions by bringing together students, academic staff, public authorities, civil society organisations, businesses and ERUA Associated Partners to co-create solutions with local communities.

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

5. Encourage evidence-based innovation by using identified regional challenges, the Sustainable Development Goals and ERUA's knowledge resources to connect academic expertise with regional needs and opportunities.
6. Support the development of promising ideas through collaborative learning, mentoring and progression to the ERUA Bootcamp (Las Palmas) and the ERUA Hackathon 2027 (Lesvos), contributing to sustainable regional development.

3. Challenge

About the challenge

Participants develop innovative social entrepreneurship ideas that address real societal challenges by bringing together the knowledge, skills and resources of the eight ERUA universities and their regional communities. Building on the challenges identified through WP6 research across ERUA regions, participants are encouraged to turn academic knowledge, local experience and regional strengths into inclusive, sustainable and viable solutions. Ideas should respond to identified societal needs, create social value and contribute to sustainable regional development.

Identify your societal challenge

The starting point is WP6 research across ERUA regions, which included more than 200 interviews with regional stakeholders about local needs and challenges.

The findings are brought together in a challenge inventory, [Attachment 1 – ERUA Social Entrepreneurship: Societal Challenges Across the Alliance](#), organised around ERUA's five thematic areas:

1. Migration, Exile and Refugees
2. Democracy and Human Rights, Inclusion and Gender Equality
3. Environmental Transition
4. Interculturality and Multilingualism
5. Arts and Edges

These thematic areas form the framework of the ideathon. Participants should first select one thematic area and then identify a specific challenge within it. The challenge can come from the inventory (Attachment 1) or from other needs identified in their own region. More information is available on the ERUA Social Entrepreneurship Lab website: <https://ecos.erua-eui.eu/info/social-entrepreneurship-lab/>

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

Explore ERUA knowledge and resources

Participants are encouraged to draw on the research, teaching and digital resources of the eight ERUA universities. Two further attachments introduce ERUA tools that can help participants spot opportunities, develop their ideas and connect with relevant expertise.

Attachment 2 – ECOS and AEIPHORIA

ECOS, the ERUA Collaborative Open Space, connects academic knowledge, regional stakeholders and societal challenges through WP5 activities, including AEIPHORIA.

AEIPHORIA is an evidence-based method for linking university knowledge to regional impact. It combines three things:

- ERUA's academic and research expertise, mapped against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- regional needs and challenges related to SDGs, drawn from Eurostat indicators
- regional innovation capacity, drawn from the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS)

By matching these and checking the needs with regional stakeholders, AEIPHORIA helps identify opportunities in education, skills development, advisory services, research collaboration and social innovation.

Participants who wish to explore AEIPHORIA and its data will receive access credentials. Using it is encouraged but not compulsory, and the tool is still being developed for wider use within ERUA. To request access, please email us at erua-challenge2impact@aegean.gr.

Attachment 3 – ERUA Digital Campus

The ERUA Digital Campus introduces the alliance's shared digital environment, which is under continuous development. It includes the Shared Learning Platform, the Research Portal, ERUA-ID, digital wallet and credential services, and other tools for learning, research and cooperation across universities. It may inspire ideas that use digital technologies, data, open-source applications or responsible artificial intelligence to address societal challenges, develop new services and widen access to opportunities in regional communities.

All three attachments are optional supporting material. Participants are encouraged, but not required, to use them.

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

From ideas to regional impact

Participants may bring an existing idea or develop a new one, working with students, educators, researchers, mentors and regional stakeholders.

Each proposal should:

- identify a concrete societal need
- describe an innovative response
- show its potential social value
- explain how the initiative could become sustainable

A fully developed solution, prototype or business plan is not required at this stage. What matters is a clear concept, its expected benefits for society and a credible path for further development. Selected ideas will receive mentoring and progress to the ERUA Bootcamp (Las Palmas) and the ERUA Hackathon 2027 (Lesvos), in accordance with the selection and participation conditions.

4. Who may participate

#ERUAiDeaThon2026 is open to:

- **undergraduate, Master's and PhD students** of the eight ERUA universities
- **academic and research staff** of these universities
- **regional stakeholders** from the ERUA regions listed below

Participants may apply individually or in teams of up to five members, under the following conditions:

- ERUA students may apply individually or as team leaders.
- Academic and research staff may take part as team leaders or members, provided the team includes at least one ERUA student.
- External regional stakeholders may take part as team leaders or members. This includes public authorities, civil society organisations, businesses, social enterprises and ERUA Associated Partners. They must be based in an ERUA region or represent an organisation operating there, and their team must include at least one ERUA student.
- Each team must name one representative, who submits the application and is the organisers' contact person. Interdisciplinary teams, teams from more than one university, and teams that bring together universities and regional stakeholders are strongly encouraged.

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

ERUA universities

- Paris 8 University (France)
- University of the Aegean (Greece)
- New Bulgarian University (Bulgaria)
- SWPS University (Poland)
- University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain)
- University of Macerata (Italy)
- European University Viadrina (Germany)
- Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania)

ERUA regions (NUTS 2)

- France: Île-de-France (FR10)
- Greece: North Aegean (EL41); South Aegean (EL42)
- Bulgaria: Yugozapaden (BG41)
- Poland: Warsaw Capital Region (PL91); Lesser Poland – Kraków (PL21); Silesia – Katowice (PL22); Greater Poland – Poznań (PL41); Lower Silesia – Wrocław (PL51); Pomerania – Sopot (PL63)
- Spain: Canary Islands (ES70)
- Italy: Marche (IT13)
- Germany: Brandenburg (DE40)
- Lithuania: Capital Region (LT01)

5. How it works and timetable

#ERUAiDeaThon2026 is an online ideathon open to participants from all ERUA regions. It will run from October to 10 December 2026, in two steps.

Date (2026)	Activity
2 November	Online capacity-building session 1
24 November, 23:59 CET	Application deadline
25 November	Evaluation of applications (end of Step 1)
26 November	Applicants informed of results by email
27 November	Online capacity-building session 2 for finalists, with organisers and mentors
9–10 December	Final presentations and evaluation
11 December	Announcement of final results (end of Step 2)

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

Step 1: Application and team formation

- Applicants choose a thematic area and a specific challenge, and submit their idea through the online application form.
- Each person may take part in up to two applications.
- Applicants from ERUA universities must apply with their university email address. Applications from other addresses may be rejected unless there is a valid reason. External stakeholders should use their organisation's or personal email address.
- The Evaluation Committee, made up of ERUA members, assesses all applications against the criteria in the Evaluation Process section. It may suggest that teams or similar ideas be merged.

Step 2: Development, mentoring and final presentation

- Finalists take part in a second online session with the organisers and mentors to refine their ideas and prepare their pitches.
- Finalists present their ideas to the Evaluation Committee on 9-10 December.
- Final results are announced on 11 December 2026.

6. Evaluation process

The Evaluation Committee will assess all applications against the four criteria in the table below.

1. Innovation & Relevance	2. Impact Measurement	3. Feasibility	4. Sustainability
• Is the problem clearly defined, and is the solution both unique and socially relevant? • Is your idea related to the challenge and aims of the #ERUAiDeaThon2026?	• Technical readiness • Maturity of ideas and methodologies • Does your idea identify the social group clearly and explain how impact will be measured?	• Is there a realistic implementation plan with clear resources, team, and partnerships? • Does the implementation of your idea depend on technologies that are available to your team? • Team members and work allocation	• Does the plan present a credible financial/ support model for long-term operation?

Each criterion is scored from 0 to 5, where 0 means missing or not relevant, 1 very poor, 2 poor, 3 good, 4 very good and 5 excellent. The maximum total is 20 points. The highest-scoring applications will go through to Step 2, and the same criteria will be used to evaluate the final presentations.

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

7. Awards and prizes

The three highest-ranked ideas will receive awards funded by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC):

1st place: €5,000

2nd place: €3,000

3rd place: €1,000

Eligible expenses and funding conditions

The awards are not paid in cash. They cover eligible expenses that help develop the winning ideas and the winners' entrepreneurial skills, such as:

- Training and professional development: courses, workshops and specialised training programmes
- Conferences and events: registration fees for relevant conferences, seminars and entrepreneurship events
- Consultancy and mentoring: specialised technical, strategic or business development support
- Prototyping and validation: professional services to develop, test and validate the proposed solution
- Communication and dissemination: services to present and promote the winning idea

All expenses must relate directly to the winning proposal, follow the applicable ERUA funding rules and be approved in advance by ULPGC. ULPGC will manage payments directly, in line with its administrative and financial procedures. The amounts above are the maximum available to each winning team or individual.

Additional benefits

- A funded trip to ERUA Bootcamp (Las Palmas) in 2027
- Mentoring: for the 10 highest-ranked ideas, to prepare for the ERUA Hackathon 2027
- ERUA Hackathon 2027: the winning ideas will take part in the Hackathon in Lesvos, Greece, in May 2027

E-certificates

- E-certificate for winners
- E-certificate of participation for all applicants

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

8. Publicity and promotion

The best ideas will be featured on ERUA's website and in the ERUA newsletter, as well as on ERUA's social media channels: www.erua-eui.eu, [Facebook](#), the **ERUA UAegean Facebook group**, [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

They may also be shared through the websites and social media of ERUA partner and associated universities, and through the channels of ERUA stakeholders, reaching academic, regional and wider public audiences.

Follow and use the hashtag #ERUAiDeaThon2026

9. Competition rules

By submitting an application, participants confirm that they have read, understood and accepted these Terms and Conditions and wish to take part in #ERUAiDeaThon2026. Anyone who does not accept them should not apply.

In these Terms and Conditions, "the Organisers" means the ERUA alliance, the University of the Aegean and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), as partners and administrators of the competition.

General rules

- Participation is free of charge.
- The competition runs from October to 10 December 2026. Applications must be submitted through the online application system by 24 November 2026, 23:59 CET.
- All applications must be written in English, be complete and comply with these Terms and Conditions. Applications that do not comply will be rejected.
- Each person may take part in up to two applications, individually or as a team member. Each application must address one thematic area and be consistent with the specific challenge.
- A team of students may include students from different departments of ERUA universities.
- Ideas that have already won a prize in another national, European or international competition are not eligible.
- Finalists must accept the invitation to Step 2 by replying to the confirmation email within three working days.

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

Cancellation and changes

The Organisers may, at their sole discretion, cancel, suspend or change all or part of #ERUAiDeaThon2026, or disqualify affected applications, for any of these reasons:

- technical or administrative problems
- computer viruses or unauthorised interference
- fraud
- too few or no applications
- any other circumstances beyond their reasonable control that affect the fairness, security or proper running of the competition

In such cases, participants will not be entitled to any compensation.

Responsibilities

Participants take part at their own risk. They agree not to make any claim against the Organisers, their affiliates or their staff for any loss or damage resulting from their participation in the competition or from accepting an award.

The Organisers are not responsible for:

- applications that are incomplete, invalid, illegible, damaged, altered, fraudulent or late, all of which will be disqualified
- failed transmissions or technical failures of computer systems, networks or connections

Copyrights and intellectual property

By applying, participants confirm that their idea is their own and that their application does not infringe anyone's copyright or other rights. This also includes videos, presentations, images and documents. Where third-party material is used, participants must credit the owner and have the owner's permission. Where open-source material is used, they must credit the owner and link to the source. The Organisers are not responsible for the content of applications.

Participants keep the rights to their ideas. By applying, they allow the Organisers to use their submitted personal information (e.g. short bio) and a description of their idea to promote the competition and its later stages. The Organisers will always credit participants as the authors of their ideas and will ask their permission before changing any texts or videos. The Organisers will provide a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect participants' intellectual property.

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

9. Data protection and privacy statement

The Organisers process personal data in line with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR) and applicable national law.

The University of the Aegean manages the data collected for #ERUAiDeaThon2026, in cooperation with the ERUA partners. Internal policies and controls are in place to keep data secure and to ensure it is accessed only by authorised staff.

By applying, participants confirm that they have read and accepted this statement, subject to the privacy policies of [UAegean](#) and [ULPGC](#).

Why we process personal data

Personal data are collected and stored in the ERUA database only in connection with #ERUAiDeaThon2026 and its awards. They are used to:

- manage applications, verify participants' identity, answer questions and deliver the awards
- share participants' contact details with the Evaluation Committee and mentors
- send emails about #ERUAiDeaThon2026
- publish participants' names and ideas on the ERUA website, newsletter and social media to promote the competition

At application stage, the data may also be used to:

- invite them to other ERUA events, as speakers or participants
- invite them to join related ERUA communities and groups

What data we collect

- Application: first and last name, email, phone number, organisation and role, country/region/city, short CV, photo, videos, social media accounts and presentation
- Awards: first and last name, email, phone number, organisation and role, country/region/city
- Publicity: first and last name, organisation and role, country/region/city, short CV, photo and videos
- Emails and event invitations (optional): title, first and last name, email, organisation and role

#ERUAiDeaThon2026

Who has access to your data

- Authorised staff of ERUA and its partner universities who run the competition, and members of the Evaluation Committee and mentors.
- Bodies responsible for monitoring, such as internal audit, accounting and legal departments.
- The general public, for promotion only. This covers name, organisation and role, photo and short CV.

Personal data will not be sold, and will not be transferred to other third parties or outside the European Union.

How long we keep data

Personal data will be kept in the ERUA database for one year after the results of the ERUA Hackathon 2027 are published, and will then be deleted.

Your rights

Participants have the right to:

- access their personal data, and have it corrected or deleted
- object to or restrict its processing
- receive their data in a portable format
- withdraw consent at any time

To exercise these rights or ask questions about how your data is processed, email [**erua-challenge2impact@aegean.gr**](mailto:erua-challenge2impact@aegean.gr).

If you do not provide your data

The data needed for the application are required to take part. Participants who do not accept this statement on the application platform cannot apply, and no personal data will be collected. Participants who ask for their data to be deleted, or who withdraw consent for the application data during the competition, will no longer be able to take part.

10. Contact us

For any questions you may have regarding the #ERUAiDeaThon2026, please send us your inquiry to [**erua-challenge2impact@aegean.gr**](mailto:erua-challenge2impact@aegean.gr).