

Project: 101082938 – SMART – ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE

Project SMART

SMART Idea Students Contest

Call for students

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: March 14th 2025

January 2025.

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1) SMART project

The project *SMART Innovation Centers for the Development of Innovative and Entrepreneurial Thinking to Facilitate the Development of Sustainable Smart Solutions in the Western Balkans* is Erasmus+ project co-funded by European Union aims to enhance online education, foster innovation, and promote sustainable business practices.

The SMART project supports partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from target countries, Albania, Bosnia&Herzegovina, and Montenegro, to transcend their role as knowledge providers and become active shapers of the regional innovation ecosystem cooperating with various stakeholders.

The project aims at targeting the existing gap between HE outcomes and labour market demands by:

- Addressing the challenges of HEIs in the field of smart specialisation and the related innovation & entrepreneurship competence development with the introduction of new smart specialisation-related learning modules and innovative teaching approaches into HEIs' curricula, including online teaching, cross-curricular learning, and virtual mobility.
- Supporting the professional development of HEIs academic staff in the field of innovation & entrepreneurship competence development for the requirements of smart specialisation along with hybrid & online teaching practices.
- Setting up 7 SMART Innovation Centres at HEIs in Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina and integrating them into the existing HEI structure.
- Facilitating sustainable cooperation between HEIs and the business sector through the SMART Knowledge Exchange Network.
- Encouraging student and staff work placements and (virtual) mobility.

The SMART Consortium is composed by 14 partners coming from Slovenia, Italy, Germany, Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project partners are:

- P01 DOBA Faculty of Applied Business and Social Studies Maribor (DOBA)
- P02 Fondazione di Politecnico di Milano (FPM)
- P03 Politecnico di Milano (POLIMI)
- P04 Technical University Dresden (TUD)
- P05 Ismail Qemali University of Vlora (UNIVLORA)
- P06 Fan S. Noli University of Korçë (UNKO)
- P07 Luigj Gurakuqi University of Shkodër (UNISHK)

- P08 AULEDA Local Economic Development Agency (AULEDA)
- P09 University of Banja Luka (UNIBL)
- P10 University of East Sarajevo (UES)
- P11 Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Srpska (CCIRS)
- P12 University of Donja Gorica (UDG)
- P13 University of Montenegro (UOM)
- P14 Chamber of Economy Montenegro (CEM)

2) The SMART Idea students contest

The SMART Idea students contest is a SMART project activity that support students from Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina working on innovative projects/ ideas. The contest is aimed at nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit and fostering a culture of innovation among the students.

The objective is to actively engage students into the activities of the innovation centres, provide opportunities for them to work on real-life cases, and to encourage university-business collaboration.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Srpska (CCIRS) from Bosnia and Herzegovina coordinate activities regarding the contest.

WHAT IS ABOUT?

Within the theme – Smart Specialization, it is possible to compete with the business idea initiatives, which operate in one of the following categories of the “SMART Idea Students Contest related to the SMART Innovation Centers established in Bosnia and Herzegovina at University of Banja Luka and University of East Sarajevo (UES).

The competition is designed to foster creativity and entrepreneurial spirit among students. The primary goal is to challenge students to develop viable, sustainable business models that can contribute to a greener, more efficient future. The competition is focused on key areas that are pivotal for a sustainable future, and students are encouraged to develop innovative business ideas in the following sectors:

- 1) **Agriculture – smart farming, ideas in the field of agriculture:**
- 2) **Smart Tourism - Conceptual Solutions:**
- 3) **ICT with a focus on developing innovative mobile applications or other applications;**
- 4) **Improving the living environment: Commercial Conceptual solutions for environmental protection, Businesses in the field of energy efficiency**
- 5) **Other creative, innovative and sustainable initiatives**

FOR WHOM IS OPEN CALL?

Student teams from all HEIs in Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina can apply. Teams (min 3 and max 5 students) that already have an initial business idea can apply.

This Contest is focused on supporting young and highly motivated student teams that are looking to commence their entrepreneurial careers in the startup world. The program is ideally intended for student teams and newly-established startups offering potentially highly scalable and technically sound solutions for relevantly identified problems in the market and hoping to build a compelling business on these ideas.

Through this competition, students will have the opportunity to:

- Gain practical experience in developing business ideas with sustainability at their core.
- Enhance their entrepreneurial skills in a competitive environment.
- Showcase their talent and ideas to potential investors and business leaders.
- **Bring their ideas to life** and focus on creating impactful businesses that address key global challenges
- **Get recognized and win prizes**

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

Students from partner HEIs will register and submit their project/solution proposals within following email address: gordanas@komorars.ba;

Or FORM:

Students must provide the form and submit to the email or form provided. The Form is available attached as part of this call.

3. Selection procedure

SMART Quality & Ethics Board consisting of representatives of Business Support Organizations, Academia and Business and will evaluate all submitted ideas according to contest structure:

Competition Structure:

- **Preparation Phase:** Students are encouraged to start working on their ideas immediately.
- **Submission:** Students will submit their sustainable business ideas, including a detailed proposal and plan outlining how their idea addresses environmental challenges while being commercially viable.

- **Start Up Acceleration:** the phase where students receive hands-on support and mentorship to refine their business ideas and transform them into actionable, detailed plans. The goal is to guide students through the process of developing their business concept from a mere idea to a well-structured, feasible proposal.
- **Pitching event** where will be judging criteria and proposals will be evaluated based on:
 - a. Innovation – How original and innovative is the business idea?
 - b. Sustainability – Does the idea effectively contribute to environmental sustainability?
 - c. Feasibility – Can the idea be realistically implemented in the current market?
 - d. Impact – What is the potential social, economic, and environmental impact of the idea?

Students (winning teams) will then present their ideas during the end-of-the-project conference which will be held in Podgorica, Montenegro and compete with other winning teams from Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4. Deadline, logistic information and awards

Deadline for application: 14.3.2025.

Second phase (start up acceleration): February – March 2025

Pitching event – presentation of the business ideas: May 2025.

End – of-the-project conference: September - October 2025.

For further information you can contact: gordanas@komorars.ba;

More information about project: <https://smartinnovationcentres.com>

AWARDS:

Winning teams will get opportunity to take internship in the SMART Innovation centres (University of Banja Luka and University of East Sarajevo (UES) and in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Srpska (CCIRS). The accommodation and transport will be provided for students.

Internship will last for 3 days. Winning teams will do the internship in the cities different from their place of studying and living, unless students insist different.

Be the future of Innovation!