



# Polisocial Award

Call for Proposals - 2022 edition

Financed with "5×1000 IRPEF" funds



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## 1. Objectives of the initiative and nature of proposals

**1.1.** Politecnico di Milano is inaugurating the ninth edition of the “Polisocial Award” competition, financed with “5×1000 IRPEF” tax share donations.

The initiative is aimed at research projects that seek to encourage social change by generating, through their development, a high impact and recognised social utility.

This means projects capable of becoming conduits of the University's Third Mission, understood to be the transfer of the benefits of research and academic activity to society, and the “production of public goods of a social, educational and cultural nature”, according to the definition provided by the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Institutes (ANVUR).

As such, the initiative promotes responsibility and inclusivity in research and innovation practice, and primarily focusses on social challenges, the adoption of high ethical standards, the promotion of scientific education and the ability to involve stakeholders in the various phases of research, in order to align the development of research with the real needs of the community. In this regard, we refer to the provisions of the new European framework-programme for research, “Horizon Europe”, which highlight the centrality of an approach based on partnerships, interdisciplinarity and the Open Science policy, as conditions for affirming the social role of research and innovation.

**1.2.** The 2022 edition of the Polisocial Award is dedicated to “Local Development and Ecological Transition” and confirms the objective of strengthening the University's commitment to the processes of inclusion and cooperation in contexts in which there is such a need, through the activation of polytechnical competences on an interdisciplinary basis.

The 2022 Polisocial Award competition is therefore aimed at multidisciplinary and partnership-based research projects seeking to generate, consolidate and sustain effective action for autonomous, fair and sustainable local development, with particular but not exclusive reference to contexts in the Global South. The projects must be committed to promoting and accompanying – including through such action – the ecological transition and innovation processes, in technological, social and organisational terms, while pointing towards concrete results and taking a long-term perspective.

For projects aimed at the international context, the partnership's attention must also be focussed on a "Science Diplomacy" dimension. This approach recognises science's ability to build the public's confidence and interest in science itself, while tackling disinformation, and to use the results of research to benefit humanity and resolve global challenges through evidence-based policies. By doing this, it promotes new paradigms for international cooperation in research and technological innovation, in support of foreign policy and international relations.

Beyond its operational context, the inclusive nature of the financed research must also encompass actions that can be classified as "Public Engagement", or the active involvement of representatives from civil society, communities and beneficiaries affected by the initiative, and the public in general, in one or several phases of the project, including: research design or parts of it; the research activity itself; sharing and validation of the knowledge produced, through appropriate forms of consultation; public reporting of intermediate and final results, encouraging interactive and innovative dissemination methods.

With regard to the issues of ecological development and transition, this call for proposals is associated with guidance on the topic that has been formulated in the Italian and international contexts, and specifically:

- At the global level, the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at harmonising the sustainable development and management of resources.
- At the European level, the combination of initiatives included in the Green Deal, aimed at building a sustainable, efficient and competitive economy as the basis for fighting climate change and environmental degradation.
- At the national level, the missions identified by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), understood in terms of the aspects that are of relevance for embarking on innovative pathways that favour sustainable development and ecological transition.

Alignment with these and other programmes, projects and policies deemed to be relevant for the issues being faced will constitute a valuable element of the research proposals participating in the competition.

**1.3.** Specifically, candidate proposals must identify multidisciplinary lines of research on issues linked to natural, human, social and cultural resources and their role in local development processes, with a view to equality and sustainability. For example, one or several of the following dimensions may be addressed:



- Technological innovation in products and/or processes, including social innovation, to promote models for a green economy and access to resources among disadvantaged categories or in disadvantaged areas.
- Support for local or regional policies for responding to the need for development and, at the same time, the challenges posed by climate change, favouring broad participation in the management of the local area and the prioritisation of people and the planet.
- Embarking on shared research/action pathways, to be developed jointly with actors from the local area, in order to identify and build local conditions for autonomous, fair, inclusive and sustainable development.

The lines of research to be identified, formulated and implemented may overlap with one or several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular regard to those of interest to the University, as specified in the *SDGs@Polimi* 2021 report, which can be grouped into two main categories:

- Management of resources to safeguard the planet ("Planet"): SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)
- Development of the person ("People"): SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality).

All proposals must promote projects based on solid research partnerships, action and co-planning, becoming conduits of the Politecnico di Milano's more general contribution to SDG 17 "Partnerships for the Goals".

It is fundamental that the social nature of the projects must be explained and justified in the proposal phase. Projects must explicitly indicate, as their reference target, one or several categories of disadvantaged individuals, groups or contexts.

**1.4** The competition is open to proposals that have specific local, regional or national contexts as their scope of reference, with particular but not exclusive reference to areas of the "Global South".

The competition seeks to promote multidisciplinary research able to create synergies among research groups at Politecnico di Milano, paying particular attention to integration between Architecture, Design and Engineering.

Effective and lasting forms of collaboration with local actors and external stakeholders are promoted through the involvement of one or several entities as partners. The partnership must include at least one organisation (public, private or non-profit) with



expertise in the relevant sphere of action. Particular attention must be paid to the development of relationships with universities or research bodies present in the relevant context, especially in cases of projects involving foreign countries, and to the creation of capacity building opportunities that allow local stakeholders to build their own research capacities and ability to take action on the issues addressed by the project.

The projects may be integrated with objectives of an educational nature, involving students in the research and/or other actions through appropriate forms of accreditation, including the activation of degree theses.

**1.5.** The expected outcome is research of evident scientific value, which must also see the implementation of pilot and/or experimental actions within the territories and contexts of action, to be carried out in collaboration with external partners. At the end of the working phase, the investigations and actions carried out will be reported on in a research report.

In order to give value to the contribution made by the Polisocial Award financing in terms of seed funding, the final report must include a multi-year plan for collaboration with one or several partners and/or any stakeholders from the area of action, associated with the adopted line of research. The pilot and/or experimental actions carried out during the working phase shall be understood as a partial implementation of the collaboration plan.

## 2. Eligible applicants and external support

**2.1.** All members of the applicants' group must belong to the Politecnico di Milano.

**2.2.** The applicants' group must include the following positions:

a. Scientific Coordinator (or Principal Investigator) responsible for the scientific value of the project and the management of the allocated funds. The role of the Scientific Coordinator can only be covered by Full Professors and Associate Professors, or non-tenured Researchers on contracts in effect on the Concept Note delivery date until the project's end date.

b. Project Manager, responsible for implementing the project and managing relations with the Organising Committee. The Project Manager role can be covered by Full



Professors Associate Professors, or non-tenured Researchers and Research fellows on contracts in effect on the Concept Note delivery date.

The group of applicants may also include PhD students and technical-administrative staff, provided that their contract is in effect on the Concept Note delivery date.

Each applicant's motivations, contribution, and forms of active participation in the project must be clearly stated in the proposal.

**2.3.** Applicants must guarantee that a contractual relationship between the Project Manager and Politecnico di Milano will remain in place for the entire duration of the project. If the person identified as the Project Manager has a contract which will expire before the end of the project, the availability of another applicant to cover the Project Manager role must be declared in the proposal phase, in case the original Project Manager's working relationship with Politecnico di Milano is not renewed.

**2.4.** In order to create interdisciplinary synergy within the University, only research proposals that include at least five members (including the Scientific Coordinator and Project Manager) from at least three departments of Politecnico di Milano in their group of applicants will be admitted to the selection procedure. Individuals can only take part in one group of applicants and submit one research proposal.

**2.5.** As of this edition, applicants who are already active in projects from the previous edition will not be admitted to the competition. Applicants already involved in research financed within the framework of the "2021 Polisocial Award - Recovery and Equity" initiative are therefore excluded from this call for proposals.

**2.6.** Participation in the project by external entities must be understood in terms of operational partnership and/or co-financing. Partners join the project by declaring their operational role in the development of the activities and/or their financial contribution as co-financers or sponsors. The presence of co-financing is highly valued but not essential for the purposes of the assessment according to criteria C2.2 and C2.3 under point 3.

**2.7.** The Polisocial Award grant is exclusively for individuals with an employment relationship with the Politecnico di Milano, in the forms specified in point 4.2. The person-hour contributions of staff already based at partner organisations cannot therefore constitute co-financing.

**2.8.** Partners and sponsors must demonstrate their support for the research project through a letter of support. Any other organisations which do not plan on participating



in the project operationally or financially can still express their own interest in it through an endorsement letter. The involvement of partners, sponsors and supporters must be communicated as of Selection Phase I, in the Concept Note. Support and endorsement letters must be attached to the Full Proposal and will be subject to assessment only in Selection Phase II, in accordance with Criteria C2.2 and C2.3, under point 3.

### 3. Selection procedure and assessment criteria

**3.1.** The selection procedure is made up of two phases: the Concept Note will be assessed in Phase I, and the Full Proposal will be assessed in Phase II.

**3.2. Selection Phase I:**

During Selection Phase I, the research proposals will be assessed by the Scientific Committee, which may take account of the advisory opinion of the Committee of Experts. Based on the following assessment table, every research proposal will receive a total score out of a maximum of 60 points.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA - PHASE I</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
C1.1. Scientific relevance of the expected results in relation to the purposes of the 2022 call and the type of research proposal.	<b>0-20</b>
C1.2. Social relevance of the research proposal and partnership in relation to the purposes of the 2022 call.	<b>0-20</b>
C1.3. The degree to which the proposal is consistent with the stated objectives and in relation to the reference context and its features.	<b>0-10</b>
C1.4. Added value resulting from the multidisciplinary nature of the research project.	<b>0-10</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>

The Scientific Committee will express its opinion on all the criteria, subject to agreement on a scale linking its opinions with a numerically expressed score.

The scores allocated individually by each member of the Scientific Committee during the individual analysis will be discussed collectively and, after due consultation, the proposals admitted to Selection Phase II will be classified by awarding a collective



score for each assessment criteria. The score will be proposed by the chair of the Scientific Committee as a summary of the debate and iteratively subject to the approval of the other members until agreement is reached.

The Scientific Committee may exercise its right to suggest any guidance in relation to the research proposals admitted to Selection Phase II.

The Selection Phase I report will be made public upon the publication of the ranking of the research proposals admitted to Selection Phase II.

**3.3.** Research proposals that have obtained at least 40 points will be permitted to submit their Full Proposal for Selection Phase II (final phase).

**3.4. Selection Phase II:**

Research proposals selected in Phase I which include the required documentation will be admitted to Selection Phase II.

Every research proposal admitted to Selection Phase II will be assessed by the Scientific Committee, which may take account of the advisory opinion of the Committee of Experts.

Based on the following assessment table, every research proposal will receive a total score out of a maximum of 100 points.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA - PHASE II</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
C2.1. Originality and multidisciplinary of the research proposal.	<b>0-20</b>
C2.2. Inclusion of partners and beneficiaries, the value given to their role and their ability to support the project with additional resources.	<b>0-25</b>
C2.3. Organisation of the proposed project, reasonableness of the necessary resources declared and feasibility of the project.	<b>0-25</b>
C2.4. Relevance of the expected social and cultural impact on the reference context.	<b>0-30</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

The Scientific Committee will also formulate an opinion on the basis of the presentations that will take place during the final event of the selection procedure. The Committee



will then meet in order to discuss the proposals presented and express an opinion on the basis of all criteria, after agreeing on the correspondence between their opinions and the numerically expressed scores.

The ranking of the research proposals admitted for 2022 Polisocial Award financing will be obtained by awarding a collective score for each assessment criteria. The score will be proposed by the chair of the Scientific Committee as a summary of the debate and iteratively subject to the approval of the other members until agreement is reached.

The Selection Phase II report will be made public.

#### 4. Assigned resources, eligible costs and project duration

**4.1.** The total resources dedicated to this initiative come to € 500,000.00. Each group of applicants can request maximum financing of € 100,000.00.

**4.2.** The following costs are eligible for financing:

a. costs of non-permanent staff (e.g., temporary research fellowships, co-financing for PhD scholarships, research contracts); b. research trips (within the limits provided for by the legislation in force); c. equipment; d. consumables; e. project dissemination and communication expenses. Costs are understood to be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.

Permanent staff costs are not eligible for financing.

**4.3.** The presence of co-financing made available by Departments or other University bodies will be highly valued but not essential for the purposes of the assessment of criteria C2.2 and C2.3 under point 3. The person-hour contributions of permanent staff cannot constitute co-financing.

**4.4.** The planned start date for projects is 23 January 2023.

**4.5.** Projects must have a duration of 18 months.



## 5. Assessment of proposals

**5.1.** The assessment of the proposals presented for the 2022 Polisocial Award will be structured into the following phases:

a. Concept Notes must be sent to the email address [polisocialaward@polimi.it](mailto:polisocialaward@polimi.it) by 12:00 CEST on 13 June 2022;

b. Selection Phase I: assessment of Concept Notes, all parts of which must have been completed. The Scientific Committee will identify the research proposals eligible for admission to Selection Phase II and may provide guidance for their further development in view of the next phase.

The list of proposals admitted to Selection Phase II will be published on the website [www.polisocial.polimi.it](http://www.polisocial.polimi.it) by 13 July 2022;

c. Full Proposals, all parts of which must have been completed, must be sent to the email address [polisocialaward@polimi.it](mailto:polisocialaward@polimi.it) by 12:00 CEST on 19 September 2022;

d. Selection Phase II (final phase): identification of the research proposals to be awarded financing.

The list of winning projects will be published on the website [www.polisocial.polimi.it](http://www.polisocial.polimi.it) by 15 October 2022.

These dates are indicative and may be subject to change for organisational reasons. Any changes will be communicated on the website [www.polisocial.polimi.it](http://www.polisocial.polimi.it).

Concept Notes and Full Proposals will be understood to be received on the date and at the time that they are sent by email by one of the applicants to the address [polisocialaward@polimi.it](mailto:polisocialaward@polimi.it). Any documents received after the indicated date and time will be excluded from assessment.

**5.2.** Applicants for projects admitted to Selection Phase II will be invited to a live presentation session, held as part of the selection process itself, in order to illustrate and discuss their proposals.

**5.3.** During that event, the Scientific Committee will draw up the final ranking. The assessment will take account of all criteria, considered as a whole. The winning research proposals will be selected on the basis of the final ranking until all available resources have been exhausted, with the potentially being adjusted by an amount of no more than 10% of the financing originally requested.



## 6. Paperwork, disbursement of grants and monitoring

**6.1.** Applications to participate and the related documentation must be sent to the email address [polisocialaward@polimi.it](mailto:polisocialaward@polimi.it) and must be prepared in accordance with the templates attached to this Call for Proposals, which can also be downloaded from the website [www.polisocial.polimi.it](http://www.polisocial.polimi.it), in the section dedicated to the Competition: a. template "Concept Note" for Selection Phase I; b. template "Full Proposal" for Selection Phase II.

**6.2.** The financial contribution for the completion of the project will be made available to the Department to which the Scientific Representative belongs, on a date prior to the start of the project itself.

**6.3.** The project monitoring process is broken down into the periodic collection of an operational report and an administrative report by the Organising Committee. At the end of the working phase, research groups must report the final results achieved and account for the activities carried out and the expenses incurred. The format of the reports and the delivery dates will be provided to the Scientific Representative and Project Manager at the start of the projects.

Projects that are not in line with the approved schedule will be called to a meeting with the Scientific Committee. The results obtained will be presented to the Scientific Committee at the end of the project.

## 7. Bodies and responsibilities

**7.1.** An Organising Committee, a Scientific Committee and a Committee of Experts are established to safeguard the purposes of the Competition, the regulation thereof and the procedures outlined in this call for proposals.

a. Organising Committee - This is made up of staff belonging to the Social Responsibility Projects Unit within the Public Engagement and Communication division (APEC) and is responsible for the organisational, managerial and supporting activities necessary for the correct functioning of the competition.

This Committee has the task of organising one or several informative meetings on the issues addressed by the initiative, formally verifying the documentation produced by candidates, providing technical support to the Scientific Committee in all project selection phases and, in collaboration with other APEC Services, disseminating



information concerning the competition and its results, both within and outside of the University.

b. Scientific Committee - This is made up of the Rector of Politecnico di Milano or a delegate thereof, three Delegates of the Rector who will operate in the context of actions promoted by the University pertaining to the 2022 Polisocial Award initiative, three Academic Senators elected to represent permanent teaching staff and one member of clear renown external to the Politecnico di Milano, with expertise in sectors of interest to the initiative.

This Committee has the task of assessing and selecting research proposals, drawing up the ranking of those admitted to Selection Phase II and the final ranking of proposals admitted for financing, based on the criteria included in point 3. The Scientific Committee also has the power to restructure the grants allocated to every project awarded financing. The Scientific Committee informs the Academic Senate of the outcomes of the projects. The Scientific Committee's reports will be published on the University's INTRANET and on the website [www.polisocial.polimi.it](http://www.polisocial.polimi.it).

c. Committee of Experts - This is made up of members of clear renown, external to the Politecnico di Milano, or delegates thereof, from institutions, bodies or organisations operating in the sectors of interest to the initiative. This Committee contributes to the assessment and selection of research proposals on an advisory basis.

**7.2.** The Call for Proposals and the paperwork to be completed in order to participate in the Competition can be downloaded from the website [www.polisocial.polimi.it](http://www.polisocial.polimi.it).