



EUTOPIA Young Leaders Academy

Call for applications and programme description

Call opening 10 Partners and 2 Global Partners: 28/03/2024

Call closing: 28/05/2024 12:00 CET

1. Background and overview

The EUTOPIA Alliance is pleased to announce the launch of the third call of the *EUTOPIA Young Leaders Academy (YLA)*, involving the 10 EUTOPIA Partners and 2 Global Partners.

The [EUTOPIA Alliance](#) is a network of European universities that has been enlarged from six to ten members within the framework of the ERAMUS + EUTOPIA MORE project starting in December 2022. The [EUTOPIA Alliance](#) gathers the [Vrije Universiteit Brussel](#), [CY Cergy Paris University](#), [University of Gothenburg](#), [University of Ljubljana](#), [Pompeu Fabra University](#), [University of Warwick](#), [Babes Bolyai University](#), [University Ca'Foscari of Venice](#), [TU Dresden University of Technology](#), and [NOVA University Lisbon](#).

The EUTOPIA Alliance was first awarded an Erasmus+ 'European Universities' pilot project in 2019 and officially launched in December 2019 with six initial partners: [Vrije Universiteit Brussel](#), [CY Cergy Paris University](#), [University of Gothenburg](#), [University of Ljubljana](#), [Pompeu Fabra University](#) and [University of Warwick](#). The alliance was also awarded a second project under Horizon 2020 EUTOPIA TRAIN (Transformation of Research and Innovation) starting in January 2021.

The EUTOPIA Alliance has established long-term connections with universities in Australia ([Monash University](#)), Morocco ([International University of Rabat](#)), South Korea ([Kyungpook National University](#)) and South Africa ([Stellenbosch University](#)). In 2024, we are welcoming two new Global Partners from Columbia ([Universidad De los Andes](#)) and the United States of America ([Arizona State University](#)). These universities constitute the current 6 EUTOPIA Alliance Global Partners and have been invited to join the 2024 YLA program: for this current call, Stellenbosch and Monash Universities will participate.

The core mission of the EUTOPIA Alliance is to promote a connected and inclusive academic community, addressing global and local challenges, advancing excellence and inclusion, geared towards impact, and fostering European economic development and innovation through a deep engagement of the Alliance with its local and regional ecosystems. The promotion of scientific excellence, research collaboration and mobility of academics among the partner universities is a core objective of EUTOPIA.

The ambition of the EUTOPIA YLA is to support research exchanges between high-potential, early to mid-career researchers, coming from all EUTOPIA partner universities and to support their career development. Members of the EUTOPIA YLA will constitute a community of promising independent research leaders at the scale of EUTOPIA, sharing and promoting European values and the EUTOPIA vision of an interconnected academic environment.

2. Objectives of the programme

The main objectives of the YLA are:

1. To contribute to the broader objectives of the EUTOPIA Alliance **acting as EUTOPIA ambassadors** in their research groups and beyond, to promote a student-shaped, research and challenge-driven integrated academic community;
2. To promote **research excellence in all academic fields** – Through dedicated training programmes, the YLA will offer its fellows the opportunity to reinforce their scientific leadership and project management skills and enhance their research network. It will also offer them a platform to enhance their research projects and results within the *EUTOPIA Alliance* and beyond;
3. To develop **scientific exchange and research collaborations** among YLA fellows and with the larger EUTOPIA research community. By organizing dedicated scientific events, as well as networking and training sessions, the YLA facilitates the emergence of an integrated cohort of promising researchers actively contributing to the dynamic of the EUTOPIA Alliance and catalysing collaborative research projects between EUTOPIA partners;
4. To advance an **interdisciplinary and challenge-driven research** agenda allowing YLA fellows to address the major scientific and societal issues of our time, in accordance with EUTOPIA's central mission to promote a connected and inclusive academic community, addressing global and local challenges and geared towards impact. The YLA is open to all disciplines and promotes, *inter alia*, research addressing six key research areas and societal issues: (a) Welfare and Inclusion, (b) Materials Engineering, (c) Data and Intelligence, (d) Health, (e) Sustainability, (f) Culture and Heritage;
5. To **bridge the gap between science and society** by encouraging fellows to endorse Open Science principles and to engage external stakeholders, citizens, as well as local and regional ecosystems.

The YLA has drawn on similar initiatives developed in different contexts¹. In comparison with other programmes, the EUTOPIA YLA offers two distinctive features: the two-fold objective of offering leadership training as well as promoting scientific exchange and collaboration; and the promotion of the programme at the scale of the EUTOPIA Alliance, rather than in a single university.

¹ Examples of similar initiatives can be found at [UK Young Academy](#), [The Young Academy](#), the [Global Young Academy](#) or the [Tuks Young Research Leadership Programme](#).

EUTOPIA YLA fellows will be given the opportunity to:

- develop their research leadership skills through a dedicated training programme;
- take part in interdisciplinary scholarly exchange and research networking activities, among fellows and with the broader EUTOPIA research community;
- initiate research collaborations within the EUTOPIA Alliance;
- contribute to the development of a challenge-based and student-shaped curriculum, through the development of research-led learning units open to undergraduate and graduate students;
- act as EUTOPIA ambassadors (see definition below in 4) contributing to the Alliance's activities and fostering the emergence of an integrated research community at the EUTOPIA scale.

3. Programme activities

a. Overview

The EUTOPIA YLA will offer the following activities:

- skill development and training activities;
- scientific exchange and networking activities;
- visits aimed at acquainting the fellows with the research environment of the universities of the EUTOPIA Alliance;
- participation in EUTOPIA week, a global meeting for researchers, students and staff of the alliance taking place every six months in one of the partners universities.

The detailed programme of activities will be defined by the YLA Steering Committee, composed of academic leads from each of the partner universities of the EUTOPIA Alliance, with the active participation of YLA fellows.

b. Skill development and training activities

The skill development and training activities will focus on tools and methods that are directly and individually applicable by YLA fellows in their role as research leaders (maximum of 8 training session over 2 years). The programme will consider fellows' needs and topic suggestions such as:

- Skills in scientific and scholarly leadership;
- Team and research project management (such as PhD supervision);
- Grant applications;
- Innovation and impact, including IP management;
- Open Science and Fair data;
- Ethics and integrity in research.

c. Scientific exchange and networking activities

The YLA Steering Committee will propose scientific exchange and networking activities to the YLA fellows that could include:

- **Dedicated YLA meetings**
These meetings will offer a forum for exchanges amongst fellows and with the broader EUTOPIA scholarly community and will promote interdisciplinary approaches to key challenges of our time through open research presentations and themed sessions. With the core

participation of YLA fellows, these meetings may also be open to other researchers from the EUTOPIA scientific community, in connection with the EUTOPIA week and other EUTOPIA activities. For example:

- The kick off meeting of the cohort selected in 2024 will take place during the EUTOPIA week at CY University, Cergy (November 2024)
- YLA Breakfast Series is an opportunity to attend optional morning (CET time zone) sessions approximately every 2 months, where topics of fellow's interest will be presented.

For applicants not residing in Europe, please note that time differences *may* result in online events being scheduled outside of your traditional work hours.

In addition to these activities, fellows will be offered the possibility to undertake **individual research visits to other universities of the EUTOPIA Alliance**, related to their individual research project, **through a dedicated allowance of up to 5 000 € per fellow**. The YLA fellows' individual allowance is strictly limited to the following scientific activities:

- Academic mobility of the fellow to another EUTOPIA partner or global partner (travel and subsistence costs);
- The reception of scientific colleagues from a EUTOPIA partner or global partner in the fellows' home university;
- The organization of a scientific event during an academic mobility of the fellow in a EUTOPIA partner or global partner or in the fellow's home university if the event includes the participation of a colleague from a EUTOPIA partner or global partner.

The YLA fellows' allowance can only be spent during the two-year appointment of the fellows in the YLA and only for academic and scientific exchange or research collaboration purposes.

The YLA fellows will be invited to attend two EUTOPIA Weeks during their fellowship, travel costs and subsistence will be provided by each partner university under EUTOPIA MORE budget.

4. YLA fellows' conditions of appointment

- The EUTOPIA YLA will enrol a third cohort of 20 fellows (2 per university), starting in November 2024.
- An additional YLA fellow for each of the 6 Global Partners can be added to the 2024 cohort, pending the Global Partner's confirmation: Stellenbosch University and Monash University have confirmed they will participate and support a fellow in the third YLA cohort.
- Duration of appointment:
 - YLA fellows are appointed for a period of 2 years.
- Conditions of appointment:
 - Fellows are offered dedicated leadership training and high-level networking opportunities.
 - Fellows are offered a dedicated allowance of 5 000€ for the duration of their appointment. The fellows' allowance may be supplemented by additional contributions from their home university. Fellows are also funded for their participation in YLA activities (attendance at 2 EUTOPIA weeks).
 - At the discretion of their home university, fellows may be eligible for additional, local benefits.

- In the development of their research funding application and innovation projects, fellows can receive support from the EUTOPIA Grants, Legal, and Innovation Office (GLENN)² as well as from the supporting structures of their home institution.
- Commitments: Fellows agree to:
 - attend YLA training sessions (maximum of 8 training session over 2 years);
 - attend and contribute to networking and scientific events (minimum of 2 events over the 2 years, i.e. contributing brief presentations to the kick-off and organising the symposium (with logistics support from the coordination team));
 - contribute to the development of collaborative research projects, joint proposals, common publications, scientific events organization with other YLA fellows and/or other researchers from the EUTOPIA Alliance;
 - contribute to the development of EUTOPIA research-led learning programme;
 - extensively represent the EUTOPIA Alliance, aims and achievements in internal and external EUTOPIA community-building events and act as EUTOPIA ambassadors (see definition below);
 - act as a user group for other EUTOPIA initiatives such as the design of GLENN offices;
 - share their newly acquired leadership skills and experience of YLA with the EUTOPIA community and the next YLA cohort;
 - Deliver an annual activity report to the YLA coordination (short report describing collaborations and joint productions).

The YLA fellows are expected to act as EUTOPIA ambassadors:

The fellows represent the EUTOPIA Alliance as members of the YLA and highly promising early-stage researchers in events, meetings, or scientific activities at a local level in their laboratories and faculties as well as at an international level within the alliance and outside the alliance. The fellows' ambassador role is designed to ensure the visibility of EUTOPIA at a local and external level. Each fellow will be provided with an 'Ambassador Toolkit' to facilitate this commitment.

5. Application and selection process

a. Eligible applicants

- Applicants must be formally appointed with one of the Universities of the EUTOPIA Alliance or within a Global Partner, and hold a tenured or tenure-track position or major research fellowship including staff responsibility;
- Application to the YLA is open to early to mid-career researchers, preferably between 2 to 12 years after PhD completion³;
- Career breaks will be considered for the extension of the eligibility window in the case of parental leave, long- term illness and national service after PhD award;
- Applicants are expected to demonstrate leadership potential as attested by their academic track record (incl. research management, coordination, and supervision) and ambitious academic career development plan.

² The EUTOPIA Grants, Legal, and Innovation Office (GLENN) is developed under the EUTOPIA-TRAIN project.

³ This corresponds to ERC Starting and Consolidator levels

b. Application procedure

- Candidates shall submit a full application, composed of:
 - The YLA application form, which can be downloaded on the programme's main page (link below) and which includes:
 - A summary of past research achievements and on-going research agenda.
 - **A discussion of the motivation for joining the YLA**, including training expectations, planned research collaborations, **expected contribution to the YLA and the EUTOPIA Alliance** (workshop organization, possible contribution to learning units, role of EUTOPIA Ambassador, etc.).
 - A detailed academic CV.
 - Support letters from direct hierarchy (the Head of Department, Head of Research group of the applicant, Vice rector for research ...).
- Applications must be sent by email before **28/05/2024** to the Local Programme Manager of the applicant's home university (see the list of programme managers below).

c. Selection procedure

- Each EUTOPIA Partner University and Global Partner pre-selects 3 to 5, or 2 to 3 candidates respectively, for consideration as fellow of the EUTOPIA YLA, under the present call. The YLA Steering Committee will then finalize the selection of 2 or 1 candidate(s) from each EUTOPIA Partner University or Global Partner, respectively.
- The selection procedure will be implemented in a decentralized manner, using common evaluation criteria emphasizing the suitability of the YLA appointment for (i) the fellow, (ii) the YLA, (iii) the EUTOPIA Alliance. The composition of the selection committee will be decided internally by each university.
- The selection will aim for gender parity and a diversity of research domains, seniority, and backgrounds.

6. Contact and information

Local programme managers of the EUTOPIA YLA, in charge of the application and selection procedure and practical questions about the programme, are:

EUTOPIA Partner Universities

- Vrije Universiteit Brussel: Tania Van Loon, rfe@vub.be
- CY Cergy Paris University: Clare Desmet, clare.desmet@cyu.fr
- University of Gothenburg: Andreea Maris, andreea.maris@gu.se and Henrik Lindskog, henrik.lindskog@gu.se
- University of Ljubljana: Iris Ivanis, Iris.Ivanis@uni-lj.si
- Pompeu Fabra University: Mireia Calm, mireia.calm@upf.edu
- University of Warwick: Katie Reynolds, Katie.Reynolds@warwick.ac.uk
- Babes Bolyai University: Romana Cramarenco, romana.cramarenco@ubbcluj.ro
- University Ca' Foscari of Venice: Fiorella Giacometti, fgiacometti@unive.it
- TU Dresden University of Technology: Barbara Könczöl, barbara.koenczoel@tu-dresden.de
- Nova University Lisbon: Rita Rua Ferreira, rita.ferreira@unl.pt

Global Partners

- Stellenbosch University: Lidia du Plessis, lidia@sun.ac.za
- Monash University: Narelle McAuliffe, narelle.mcauliffe@monash.edu

Additional information, including updates and application material can be found online on the Young Leaders Academy Programme webpage:

<https://eutopia-university.eu/young-leaders-academy/>