



Call for Ethics Experts

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Introduction

[IMPACT EdTech](#) is launching a call for Independent Ethics Experts to support the IMPACT EdTech Ethics Committee in its aim of ensuring the start-ups/SMEs selected for the programme apply the ethical standards and guidelines of Horizon 2020.

The Committee will be in charge of verifying that ethical issues that affect the selected proposals if any, are properly identified and dealt with by the participating companies, and everyone involved in the pilots.

With this call, IMPACT EdTech is looking to appoint 4 independent ethics experts who will be appointed as temporary members of the Ethics Committee and be involved in the ethical review of the selected proposals during each selection process following the three IMPACT EdTech Open Calls.

Selected ethics experts will play a unique role in ensuring that cutting edge technological solutions to be implemented in schools and to be used by general learners give appropriate consideration to the ethics of EdTech.

The aim of this document is to provide candidates an overview of the IMPACT EdTech project in general, the composition and the function of the Ethics Committee, the role of the independent ethics experts, and information about the selection process.

General information about IMPACT EdTech

IMPACT EdTech is a start-up incubator-accelerator implemented by the IMPACT EdTech consortium within the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Commission (EC), under Grant Agreement number 871275.

As technology being developed today has a tremendous capacity for positive change, IMPACT EdTech will create a start-up incubator-accelerator that will help European disruptors to bring their digital learning innovations into the market, focusing on those solutions that can contribute to extend personalised and inclusive educational models that revolutionize education, turning it into a custom, flexible and widely accessible tool that promotes, teaches, and rewards the skills that are actually needed in today's world. IMPACT EdTech aims to contribute to digital transformation of education by creating a vehicle for disruptive education technology, a catalyst designed to help usher in a new era of human-centered digital education.

The IMPACT EdTech consortium is led by European Schoolnet and brings together three partners with complementary expertise:



- [European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, providing [Future Classroom Lab](#) validation methodology for the new ICT solutions targeting school education.
- [FundingBox Accelerator \(FBA\)](#) manages the open calls and cascade funding. FundingBox is the European leader in managing Financial Support to Third Parties (cascade funding) and provides tools for community creation, to help innovators meet, interact and collaborate to build growth connections.
- [ISDI](#) is the recognised European accelerator helping Entrepreneurs, Enterprises & Institutions in their transformation to become competitive in the Digital Era.

Throughout its programme, IMPACT EdTech will support up to **43 European start-ups/SMEs** with more than **€5.5M equity-free funding plus acceleration and mentoring services** to bring their digital education innovations into the market, focusing on solutions that can contribute to extend personalised, inclusive educational models, support the development of the skills relevant in today's world, and support schools to implement remote schooling, through three Open Calls:

- IMPACT EdTech 1st Open Call, closed on June 30th 2020, from which up to 15 start-ups/SMEs will be selected to participate in a hybrid incubation-acceleration programme. The 1st Open Call targets EdTech solutions from Technology Readiness Level¹ 5 to 7 specifically focusing on solutions that can contribute to extending personalised, inclusive educational models and/or support the development of the skills relevant in today's world.
- IMPACT EdTech 'Remote Schooling' Open Call, open between July 3rd and September 3rd 2020 (13:00 CEST), from which up to 12 start-ups/SMEs will be selected to participate in a 5 months acceleration programme. The 'Remote Schooling' Open Call targets EdTech solutions from TRL 7 to TRL 8, specifically focusing on solutions that address common challenges faced by schools during the COVID19 crisis.
- IMPACT EdTech 2nd Open Call, opening in 2021, from which up to 16 start-ups will be selected to participate in a hybrid incubation-acceleration programme. The 2nd Open Call targets EdTech solutions from TRL 5 to TRL 7 specifically focusing on solutions that can contribute to extending personalised, inclusive educational models and/or support the development of the skills relevant in today's world.

Start-ups/SMEs selected through two main IMPACT EdTech Open Calls will participate in

¹https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

an incubation-acceleration cycle that will last for 9 months and is divided in two main stages as described below, while the solutions selected through the extraordinary 'Remote Schooling' Open Call will have a direct access to the acceleration phase:

- **Stage 1 (Minimal Viable Products (MVP) Testing - Incubation):** up to 31 start-ups/SMEs will be selected for the 4-month incubation phase;
- **Stage 2 (Proof-of-Market - Acceleration):** from those participating in Stage 1, up to 15 will be shortlisted to advance into the 5-month acceleration phase. 12 start-ups/SMEs from the 'Remote Schooling' Open Call will be fast-tracked directly to this acceleration phase.

Ethics Committee

IMPACT EdTech will ensure that the projects selected through its Open Calls apply the ethical standards and guidelines of Horizon 2020 by establishing an Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee will be in charge of verifying that ethical issues raised by the selected proposals, if any, are properly identified and dealt with by the participating companies, and everyone involved in the pilots.

Composition

The Ethics Committee will be composed by a Chair, two permanent members and four temporary members:

- **Chair of the Ethics Committee**, appointed by EUN, will be responsible for the ethical issues during the incubation/acceleration period. The Chair will preside over the meetings of the Ethics Committee and advise the consortium and the EdTech companies when necessary on specific issues, regarding ethical aspects of the project.
- **Permanent members of the Ethics Committee** will be internal EUN experts with specific experience of running school pilots. Together with the Chair, they will ensure potential participants have identified and elaborated any potential ethical issues that the use of their solution might bring (with a particular focus on solutions designed for the use of minors or other vulnerable groups) and monitor the implementation of the Ethics Summary Reports (see below) throughout the project life.
- **Temporary members of the Ethics Committee:** Independent ethics experts, acting as the temporary members of the Ethics Committee, will conduct the ethical reviews of all EdTech start-ups/SMEs invited to join the IMPACT EdTech incubation/acceleration programme and prepare the Ethics Summary Reports

for each prototype. Temporary members will only participate in the approval meetings of the Ethics Summary Reports which will take place after each selection of the prototypes which will participate in the IMPACT EdTech incubation/acceleration programme.

Four independent ethics experts will be selected via this call and appointed as the temporary members of the Ethics Committee. In addition, four relevant profiles will also be included in a reserve list to be called upon if specific ethics expertise is needed during the evaluation process.

Independent Ethics Experts tasks and engagement

Main tasks

Independent Ethics Experts, temporary members of the Ethics Committee, will be involved in the following tasks:

1) Ethics evaluation of solutions and production of the Ethics Summary Reports.

Independent Ethics Experts will be asked to participate in the evaluation of the ethical issues that may be posed by the EdTech trials selected to participate in the IMPACT EdTech incubation/acceleration phase and in the preparation of the Ethics Summary Reports for each EdTech trial.

For each solution, the evaluation will be based on:

- the 'Ethical Self-Assessment' section that each applicant was required to fill in at the application stage, including provisions related to the involvement of humans (including of children and vulnerable groups), personal data protection, data security and other issues.
- Any ethical issues raised by the External Evaluators, in their initial assessment of the proposals

The Ethics Summary Reports will be produced using a template provided by EUN.

2) Participation in the Ethics Committee approval meetings taking place after each selection process of the three Open Calls

The Ethics Committee will convene after each selection process and completion of the Ethics Summary Reports, and before the signing contractual agreements with the

selected beneficiaries of each open call, to approve or amend the Ethics Summary Reports and identify any particular issues that need attention. During this process, the Committee Chair will use all reasonable endeavours to reach a consensus. If that is not possible, then decisions will be taken with two third (2/3) majority, meaning that at least five out of seven members should vote in favour, including the Chair. If the Ethics Summary Reports result in recommendations for the selected prototypes, these recommendations will be included in the contractual agreements with IMPACT EdTech selected beneficiaries, who must follow the provisions described in the Summary Report throughout their participation in the IMPACT EdTech incubation/acceleration programme. Specific issues on ethics arising during the start-ups/SME's participation in the IMPACT EdTech programme will be tackled by the permanent members of the Ethics Committee and the Chair - when necessary.

Timeline and estimation of the engagement

The following timeline is foreseen for the engagement of the Independent Ethics Experts in IMPACT EdTech activities:

Date	Type	Description
4 September 2020	Action	Appointment of the 4 temporary members of the Ethics Committee and the reserve list of experts
14 - 30 September 2020	Action	Independent Ethics Experts will perform the Ethics review of the 1st IMPACT EdTech Open Call proposals and produce the Ethics Summary Reports
7 October 2020	Meeting	Ethics Committee Meeting for the approval of the Ethics summary reports (1st IMPACT EdTech Open Call)
12-23 October 2020	Action	Independent Ethics Experts will perform the Ethics review of the 'Remote Schooling' Open Call proposals and produce the Ethics Summary reports
27 October 2020	Meeting	Ethics Committee Meeting for the approval of the Ethics Summary Reports ('Remote Schooling' Open Call)
September 2021 [exact dates to be confirmed]	Action	Independent Ethics Experts will perform the Ethics review of the 2nd IMPACT EdTech Open Call proposals and produce the Ethics Summary Reports

Date	Type	Description
September-October 2021 [exact date to be confirmed]	Meeting	Ethics Committee Meeting for the approval of the Ethics Summary Reports (2nd IMPACT EdTech Open Call)

Number of proposals that will undergo the ethical review:

- 1st IMPACT EdTech Open Call: Up to 16 (4 per expert)
- 'Remote Schooling' Open Call: Up to 13 (3-4 per experts)
- 2nd IMPACT EdTech Open Call: Up to 17 (4-5 per expert)

Budget and payment

Each expert will be paid at the fixed rate of a maximum of 110€ per Ethics Summary Report for each proposal. This amount includes participation in the virtual Ethics Committee approval meetings. The payment will be made once all the tasks outlined in the contract have been finalised.

Other benefits of participation as an Ethics Expert

- Involvement in a high-profile project aiming to improve and modernise education systems
- Significant insight into the EdTech market
- Professional development and valuable experience
- Opportunity to collaborate with other ethics experts

Selection criteria

IMPACT EdTech is looking to identify up to eight ethics experts (4 to be appointed as temporary members of the Ethics Committee plus 4 reserves) who will be selected based on the following criteria:

Essential:

- 1) Knowledge and experience of EU Research Programmes ethics and compliance procedures (FP7 and Horizon 2020)
- 2) Knowledge and experience of EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- 3) Experience in drafting ethics reports
- 4) Excellent spoken and written English

- 5) The expert should be based in European Union countries or any [Horizon 2020 associated countries](#)

Desirable:

- 1) Demonstrated understanding of issues relating to the use of personal data and other ethical issues (rights of children and vulnerable groups)
- 2) Skills relevant to the objectives of the IMPACT EdTech project (experience/background in education and/or business)
- 3) Knowledge of and experience with ethical issues raised by the use of technology in schools and general education (lifelong learning)

Exclusion Criteria:

Applicants will be automatically excluded for selection if it falls within one of the situations listed below:

- 1) They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations.
- 2) They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata.
- 3) They have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of, social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established.
- 4) They have made false declarations in supplying information required by any public organization as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or grant award procedure or fail to supply this information.
- 5) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which can be justified.

At any time during the selection process and before a contract is signed, the applicant(s) may be requested to provide proof in the format to be specified by EUN, that they do not fall under any of the above exclusion criteria.

How to apply?

Interested candidates are invited to send their applications including CV and a short motivation letter in English expressing their interest, expertise and the confirmation of

their availability to perform the tasks mentioned above by email to Antonija Grizelj at antonija.grizelj@eun.org and John Stringer at john.stringer@eun.org with Adina Nistor at adina.nistor@eun.org in the copy of the email. The deadline for receipt of applications is 31 August 2020 at 12:00 CET. Successful (appointed) candidates will sign a contractual agreement with FundingBox Accelerator (FBA), partner in charge of managing three IMPACT EdTech Open Calls, outlining their tasks and responsibilities. Ethics experts will have to sign the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Confidentiality and confirm the absence of any conflict of interest with the companies undergoing the ethical review.

In our endeavors to ensure the gender balance of the IMPACT EdTech Ethics Committee, we strongly encourage female candidates to apply.

Interviews

EUN may, at its entire discretion, decide to call the highest scoring candidates for an online interview in order for them to present their qualifications directly to the EUN and to resolve any outstanding issues or questions.

Notification of the Results

Upon completion of the process of evaluation, the results of the evaluation will be communicated to all the applicants: whether appointed, included on the reserve list or unsuccessful (expected date: 4 September 2020). No obligation towards the successful applicant will arise until a contractual agreement has been signed between both parties, the applicant, and FundingBox Accelerator (FBA). Please note that the selection decision of EUN is final and is not subject to appeal. EUN will not enter into detailed discussions or exchanges with any applicant as to why their application was not successful.