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LUKE

Linking Ukraine to the European Research Area Joint Funding and Capacity Building Platform for enhanced Research and Innovation Cooperation

Research and Innovation cooperation with added value

Dear Readers and Partners,

The LUKE project has started in January 2025. Now, close to the end of the year, we see the culmination of several project activities that have been started over the last months and first achievements can be seen. We are happy to present to you already the second LUKE newsletter in this month! It is devoted to the 'LUKE Joint Call', one of the central objectives of the LUKE project.

Establishing a 'European joint funding initiative for R&I projects' is in itself already a challenging task. The efforts needed for this are energy-intensive, but also very rewarding and creating added value – both on the side of the participating Funding Parties as well as for the multilateral R&I projects that will eventually be funded.



LUKE Special Newsletter December 2025
Grant Agreement 101188315



Core LUKE coordination team. From left to right: Henriette Kirch, Jörn Grünewald, Petra Schumann

Establishing a multilateral R&I call that focuses on an important European country that is in the fourth year of open war is different. There are many more practical difficulties that need to be overcome. But there are also many more things to learn from our partners in Ukraine: How to mobilise resources, how to be resilient and how to remain human whilst being faced with multiple forms of violence.

We are very much honored to present this newsletter focused on the LUKE Joint Call. It reflects the process of work and what we have achieved so far. And it features a pre-announcement of the LUKE Joint Call.

Wishing you a pleasant read and peaceful season's greetings!

Jörn Grünewald,
Project Coordinator,
DLR Project Management Agency, Germany

We support the European Research Area aimed at creating a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology in the EU.



Supporting the
European Research Area

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CO-CREATING THE LUKE JOINT CALL: A JOINT EUROPEAN EFFORT

One of the main objectives of the LUKE project is to establish a European joint funding initiative for research and innovation (R&I) projects with Ukraine as the central partner. To prepare for the launch of the LUKE Joint Call on 30 January 2026, the project's WP1 team has been working closely with the Group of Funding Parties, which currently comprises 15 funding organisations from twelve countries. Together, the partners have been discussing and developing an Implementation Agreement, defining the collaboration within the Group of Funding Parties, as well as the Terms of Reference for the LUKE Joint Call since spring 2025.

The Terms of Reference include all necessary information about the call for potential applicants, future evaluators, as well as the Group of Funding Parties itself. While the main sections of the document had already been close to final since the summer 2025, information on the R&I topics to be funded was completed by early November this year. This was due to the specific and relatively time-consuming process of defining the topics. The final list of topics and the topic descriptions were then included in the Terms of Reference for the LUKE Joint Call.

On 16 December, the Group of Funding Parties held another online meeting. During the meeting, remaining practical questions related to the upcoming launch of the LUKE Joint Call were discussed and clarified.

“The launch of the LUKE Joint Call is preceded by intensive collaborative efforts made by the LUKE Project coordinator and the Group of Funding Parties. Apart from identifying the call topics, this preparatory stage involves a lot of negotiations on the call documents and thorough elaboration of the National Rules of the Funders involved in alignment with the aim and main provisions of the Joint Call. Thus, the LUKE Project provides us with a unique experience in designing the multilateral joint endeavour.

Olga Polotska, Executive Director of
the National Research Foundation of
Ukraine



LUKE kick-off meeting, February 2025



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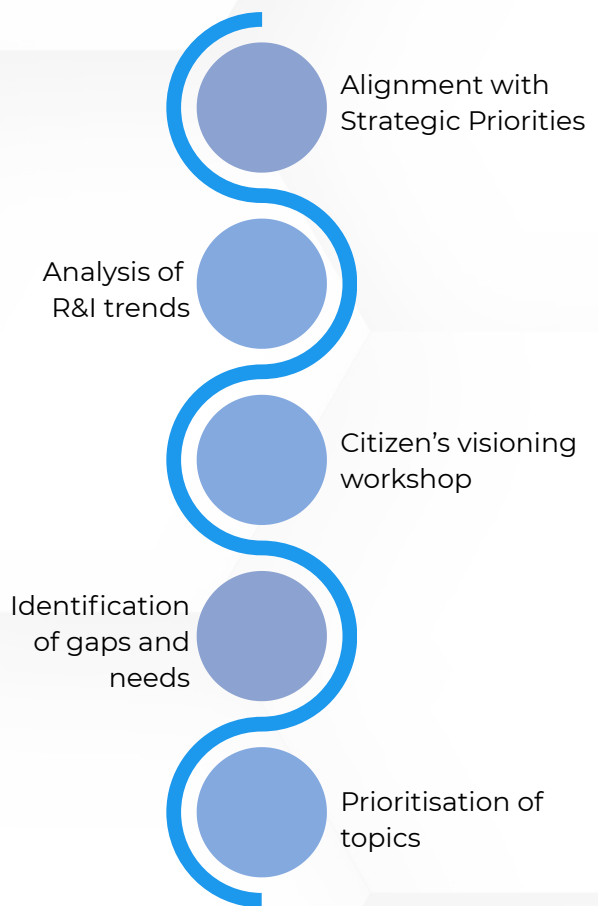


IDENTIFYING TOPICS FOR THE LUKE JOINT CALL

3

The definition of the R&I topics to be funded followed a structured and participatory approach. This elaborated process started with an alignment of the strategic priorities of the EU, Ukraine, and the other countries represented in the LUKE Joint Call. An analysis of R&I trends was followed by a visioning workshop involving Ukrainian citizens. In consultation with the funding organisations represented in the Group of Funding Parties, overarching thematic areas were defined (energy, IT, health, and social sciences and humanities), and potential specific topics were proposed over the summer.

In September and October 2025, these general topics were further refined and complemented with detailed topic descriptions through participatory expert workshops involving researchers and innovation actors nominated by the Group of Funding Parties for each of the four thematic areas.



Five-step process for Call topic definition

[Citizen's visioning workshop report](#)



WPI core team at the National Research Foundation of Ukraine. Photo credit: Tetiana Machulina

From left to right:

Andrii Kuznetsov, Olga Polotska, Volodymyr Zaitsev, Oleksandra Kyselova, Tetiana Berehova, Roman Palii



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WORKSHOPS FOR SPECIFYING THE LUKE JOINT CALL TOPICS

4

In the course of October 2025, a series of four participatory expert workshops were held, which served to specifying the exact topics for the LUKE Joint Call. The workshops covered the four fields selected for the call: Energy, IT & Cybersecurity, Health and Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). The workshops were organised and moderated by LUKE partner Centre for Social Innovation, ZSI, Austria and supported by partners DLR Project Management Agency, Germany and Institute for Economics and Forecasting, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, IEF NASU.

A key role played the Group of Funding Parties: they nominated the researchers and innovators who participated in the workshops and who elaborated jointly the specific call topics. Each workshop involved at least two Ukrainian experts and up to 7 experts from the other countries which have joined the LUKE Joint Call. This approach ensured that the interests of Ukraine and all other countries were represented and balanced. It was highlighted in the workshops that topics should cover both basic and applied research and facilitate interdisciplinarity.

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[Read description of the topics here](#)

IDENTIFIED TOPICS:

Energy: Sustainable and renewable energy, energy security

Cybersecurity: Cyber resilience of critical infrastructures and adaptive cybersecurity systems

Medical and health research:
telemedicine, biomedical research

Adoption of telemedicine for remote healthcare solutions

Innovative research on cellular signaling pathways for biomedical applications

Social sciences and humanities: Social reconciliation, sustainable social development, and human capital restoration



Igor Yegorov



Yuliya Ryzhkova



Vitalii Gryga

WP1 LUKE team at the Institute for Economics and Forecasting, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (IEF NASU)

© IEF Team



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PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT: LUKE JOINT CALL

Introduction

On 18 December 2025, the pre-announcement of the upcoming LUKE Joint Call was published.

This call will support basic and/or applied research, development, and innovation projects, fostering cross-border research collaboration.

The Call aims to build research and innovation partnerships, with Ukraine as the central partner. It is jointly implemented by 15 Funding Parties actively involved in the LUKE project, ensuring participation of more than ten countries.

**DO NOT WAIT —
START YOUR
PARTNER
SEARCH TODAY!**

SAVE THE DATE

**30/01/2026
THE CALL
LAUNCH**

Indicative calendar

Publication of the LUKE Joint Call: 30 January 2026
Deadline for proposal submission: 30 April 2026
Tentative date for starting the projects January 2027
Tentative end date of the projects December 2028

Who can apply and how consortia should be organised?

The call is open to legal entities, including institutions, organisations and enterprises, registered in one of the following countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia*, Germany, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Türkiye or Ukraine.

We encourage the formation of consortia involving different types of organisations in research, innovation and business. However, partner eligibility varies depending on the National Rules of the Funding Parties. Please find more information about the participating Funding Parties and preliminary eligibility criteria on pages 6–8 of this newsletter.

A project consortium must include eligible partners from at least three countries, with one partner based in Ukraine. The Lead Partner is nominated within the consortium.

* Confirmation is still pending

SCAN ME



[Further information
and updates about the
LUKE Joint Call are
available here](#)



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP OF THE FUNDING PARTIES I



AUSTRIA

The [Austrian Research Promotion Agency](#), FFG is the national funding agency for **applied research** (industrial research and experimental development). All FFG activities aim to strengthen Austria as a research and innovation centre on the global market. The purpose of the FFG is to promote research, technology, development, infrastructure and innovation for the benefit of Austria. [Eligible for funding are companies of all sizes, universities, and research institutions as well as R&D intermediaries.](#)



The [Austrian Science Fund](#), FWF funds and supports outstanding researchers and their teams in their work at the cutting edge of **basic research**. Within the LUKE Joint Call, FWF funds research projects in the area of basic research. [All Austrian research institutions are eligible to apply if they are registered in the FWF's research institution portal. Principle investigators must meet the FWF eligibility criteria as stated in the FWF guidelines for "Principle Investigator Projects".](#)



CZECH REPUBLIC

The [Technology Agency of the Czech Republic](#), TA CR is a state funding body that has been providing funding to excellent R&D projects since its establishment in 2009. [In Luke Joint Call TA CR will provide funding up to 80 % to eligible Czech applicants - research organisations/universities, SMEs or large companies, performing **applied research**.](#)



ESTONIA

The [Estonian Research Council](#), ETAG is a national funding and coordination organisation for research and development in Estonia. It promotes high-quality and internationally competitive research, contributes to the development and implementation of national research and innovation policy and strengthens international cooperation. Within the LUKE Joint Call, ETAG funds both **basic and applied research** projects. ETAG provides funding for innovation activities up to TRL 7. [Eligible applicants typically include Estonian universities and higher education institutions, public and private research and development organisations, as well as other legal entities established in Estonia that are capable of conducting research and meeting the national eligibility requirements defined for participation in multilateral transnational partnerships.](#)



FINLAND

The [Research Council of Finland](#), RCF is a research funding agency that primarily focuses on funding **basic research** across all scientific disciplines, while also **supporting applied research**. RCF aims to foster excellence, innovation and societal impact through competitive funding. [Applicants must hold a doctoral degree, demonstrate significant scientific merits \(typically at professor or docent level\), and have a strong connection to Finland to enable a multi-year project. Funding is awarded to Finnish entities, mainly universities and research institutes, and decisions follow the "Principles of RCF funding decisions."](#)



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP OF THE FUNDING PARTIES II

7

GERMANY

The [Federal Ministry for Research, Technology and Space](#), BMFTR is largely responsible for shaping Germany's research and innovation policy. It funds basic and applied research, supports technology development, and coordinates the country's space activities. The BMFTR has a long history of cooperation with Ukraine. Within the LUKE Joint Call, BMFTR funds both **basic and application oriented projects**. [Research proposals may be submitted by German universities / higher education institutions, non-university research institutions, commercial enterprises, in particular SMEs, as well as local authorities and other institutions in Germany that provide research contributions.](#)



Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology
and Space

LATVIA

The [Latvian Council of Science](#), LZP as an institution of direct administration under supervision of the Minister of Education and Science implements the state science and technology development policy. Main activities of LZP are providing scientific expertise of research projects, implementation of national grant programs, supervision of national research programs and projects financed from the state budget, as well as from the European Union's structural funds and other financial instruments, promotion, and coordination of international cooperation in science and technology development. Within the LUKE Joint Call, LZP funds both **basic and applied research** projects. [Research proposals may be submitted by Latvian universities/higher education institutions, state research institutes, research centres as well as enterprises, in particular SMEs.](#)



Latvian Council of Science

MOLDOVA

The [National Agency for Research and Development](#), NARD is the national authority responsible for coordinating, evaluating and funding research and innovation activities, covering both **basic and applied research**. The Agency's mission is to ensure excellence and high performance in achieving the national priorities in research, innovation and development by fostering a competitive, transparent and impact-oriented research environment. [Eligible applicants include public research organizations, universities, accredited laboratories, alone or in partnership with private organisations engaged in research and innovation activities \(SMEs, NGOs etc.\).](#)



POLAND

The [National Science Centre](#), NCN is a government agency supervised by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It was established in 2011 to support exclusively **basic research**, defined as empirical or theoretical work aimed at generating new knowledge of fundamental phenomena and observable facts, without a direct commercial objective. [Within the call under the LUKE Joint Call, researchers holding at least a PhD will be eligible to apply for funding through a broad range of research-conducting institutions recognised under Polish Law, including universities, federations of higher-education institutions, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institutes and centres within research networks such as Łukasiewicz, among many others.](#)



NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE
POLAND



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP OF THE FUNDING PARTIES III



ROMANIA

The [Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding](#), UEFISCDI is a public entity of the central administration under the ultimate authority of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research. UEFISCDI acts as Romania's central public agency for financing higher education, research, development and innovation. As a funding agency, it supports **exploratory and applied research**, innovation and technology transfer and manages Romania's participation in major collaborative frameworks. [Legal entities established in Romania are eligible to get funding, i.e. public and private accredited universities, national R&D institutes, other research organisations, SMEs, large industrial enterprises with R&D activity within their domains.](#) UEFISCDI can fund only Romanian research teams. For universities, public institutions, R&D national institutions funding is 100%, and for SMEs and Large companies, financing is under the permit OMCID no. 21.324/02.11.2023 approving the scheme of State aid for Program 5.8: European and international cooperation.



TÜBİTAK

TÜRKİYE

The [Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye](#), TÜBİTAK is the leading national agency responsible for the development, coordination, and implementation of science, technology, and innovation policies in Türkiye. TÜBİTAK supports both **basic and applied research**, manages national R&D funding programmes, and conducts strategic research through its research institutes. The Council promotes collaboration between academia, industry, and public stakeholders, with a strong emphasis on international scientific cooperation. [Within the LUKE Joint Call the proposals may be submitted by universities and higher education institutions, public and private research organizations, and private sector companies, including SMEs, established in Türkiye.](#)



UKRAINE

The [National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine](#), NASU is responsible for organising and implementation the basic and applied research, as well as experimental development according to the priority fields of science and technology, needs of national economics. Moreover, [NASU provides wide participation of it's research entities in the international cooperation](#) via exploring and using the experience of the EU Member States. Within the LUKE Joint Call, NASU will fund both **basic and applied research projects**.



The [National Research Foundation of Ukraine](#), NRFU is a key public funding institution supporting research and development in Ukraine. Within the LUKE Joint Call, projects to be carried out with the support of the NRFU may be **basic/applied research (developments) projects only**. [Eligible applicants are Ukrainian partner organisations that are legal entities registered and operating in Ukraine in accordance with national legislation.](#) Such organisations may include institutions of higher education, as defined by the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education", or research institutions, as defined by the Law of Ukraine "On Scientific and Scientific-Technical Activities", regardless of their legal form or form of ownership.



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PROJECT PARTNERS



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Project coordinator



DLR Projektträger

Germany

Responsible for implementation of the capacity building

ZENTRUM FÜR SOCIALE INNOVATION
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION



Austria

DEMOCRACY X
TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY & SUSTAINABILITY

Denmark

civitta

Ukraine
Lithuania

Ministries



**MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION AND
SCIENCE OF UKRAINE**

Ukraine



**Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology
and Space**

Germany



Romania



Latvian Council of Science

Latvia



Czechia

FWF Austrian
Science Fund

Austria



Austria



**Estonian
Research Council**

Estonia



Romania



Moldova



Georgia



TÜBİTAK
Türkiye

R&I Funding Agencies



Ukraine



**NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE
POLAND**

Poland

Associated partners:



DFG Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
German Research Foundation

Germany



**Swiss National
Science Foundation**

Switzerland



**Research Council
of Finland**

Finland



**GEORGIA'S INNOVATION &
TECHNOLOGY AGENCY**

Georgia



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