

Small Grants Scheme – Call for Proposals

Erasmus School of Law - Sector Plan

The sector plan small grants scheme intends to strengthen all areas of law, criminology and taxation at Erasmus School of Law beyond those appointed on sector plan funding. In the previous four rounds 140,000 have been awarded for different research initiatives spanning from data analysis to impact-oriented workshops. With this last call for the 2019-2026 sector plan small grants scheme, the management team of the sector plan thus call upon all researchers of Erasmus School of Law to express their interest in contributing to the objectives of the sector plan. For this last round of small grants 125,000 are available.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Deadline for submission of proposals: October 15 2025

Communication of decision by the sector plan management team: November 15 2025.

Start of spending: 1 January 2026.

Deadline for implementation of the awarded funds: October 31 2026.

CONTEXT OF THE SECTOR PLAN

The Dutch sector plan for Law (2019-2026)¹, funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, intends to foster the rebalancing of the study of law in its economic and social context. Developments like globalization, digitalization and privatization and the environmental, public health and financial crises, require that the legal system and legal interests are re-evaluated and recalibrated. This requires strong faculties of law with excellent scholars equipped to deal with these societal challenges. To this end, the Dutch Faculties of Law cooperate on four thematic and one methodological research line funded by the sector plan. Erasmus School of Law participates in one thematic and one methodological research line of the Dutch sector plan:

- ***Rebalancing of public interests in private relationships*** brings scholars of *Erasmus School of Law* of Erasmus University Rotterdam (coordinator) and the *Faculty of Law of Groningen University* together. This sector plan research line aims to make an innovative contribution with research on the role of law in its economic and social context. This addresses questions about how public interests can be safeguarded by private actors, within private relationships and within public-private partnerships, and on the interaction between the emergence of public and private interests in relation to contemporary societal challenges.
<https://www.eur.nl/en/esl/research/current-research/research-initiatives/rebalancing-public-private-interests>
- ***Empirical Legal Studies*** focuses on the ways in which doctrinal legal research can be supplemented by qualitative and quantitative empirical legal research. Empirically grounded studies are essential to the development of legal frameworks in response to emerging societal

¹ Samen Sterker. Beeld van het SSH domein. Available at: https://www.sectorplan-ssh.nl/sites/sectorplan_ssh/files/media-files/Samen%2BSterker.%2BBeeld%2Bvan%2Bhet%2BSSH-domein%2Bversie%2B2019.05.24.pdf <https://www.sectorplan-ssh.nl/> (in Dutch, Law from p. 55 onwards). The Dutch sector plan for Law, was originally designed until 2024, but additional funds have been guaranteed at least until the end of 2026.

challenges. This focuses on the normative assumptions that lie at the basis of laws, on the way in which normative legal frameworks are translated to policy implementation and on how that implementation effects society and in turn influences legal developments (Sectorplan Rechtsgeleerdheid, 2018, p. 65). ELS also connects legal scholars with other disciplines. The Erasmus Centre of Empirical Legal Studies (ECELS) has been established to stimulate and support empirical legal research at ESL

<https://www.eur.nl/esl/research/current-research/research-initiatives/erasmus-centre-empirical-legal-studies>

OBJECTIVES

The sector plan small grants are intended to help Erasmus School of Law researchers in their ambitions to strengthen their CV's, establish (inter-)national research networks, applying for external research funding, collecting data, as well as increase impact-oriented activities, while at the same time contributing to the objectives of the sector plan.²

We invite applications to undertake research activities at the intersection of public and private, of doctrinal and empirical research on a topic that relates to the objectives and topics of the sector plan, within the research profile of Erasmus of Law.

Funding of up to 10,000 Euros (incl. VAT) is available to:

- facilitate community building activities of relevance to the sector plan at Erasmus School of Law;
- facilitate impact activities related to research (e.g. visualization of research findings, knowledge transfer and utilization);
- support the direct costs of research (e.g., hiring of a research assistant, costs of fieldwork, collection of data);
- facilitate initial project planning and development (e.g., the writing of a grant proposal);
- enable the advancement of research through the organization of workshops or conferences;
- educational activities related to the sector plan, including but not limited to the following: guest lectures/workshop about a specific topic for which a lecturer is invited paying travel expenses and hotel, catering for that day); support to update courses to include sector plan themes, initial support to apply for educational funding; organisation of workshops/events which are relevant for students. **Note: a total of 40,000 euro [out of the total of 125.000] is reserved for educational activities.**
- other activities that fit with the objectives of the sector plan.

Proposals are welcomed on any topic of relevance to the sector plan research lines 'Rebalancing public interests in private relationships' and 'Empirical legal studies'. More information can be found on the websites of the research platform [Rebalancing Public & Private Interests](#) and the [Erasmus Centre of Empirical Legal Studies](#)

² The key performance indicators as identified in the sector plan for Law are:

- The Netherlands is a leading country and/or has a leading role in the field of the focus areas
- A coherent Research Group is building developed
- The Faculties lead the way in the societal debate
- A structural (interdisciplinary) cooperation with national and international actors is being developed
- In the education curriculum of the faculties involved, substantial attention is paid to all focus areas in both the bachelor and master programmes.

ELIGIBILITY

Applications can be submitted by academic staff (lecturers, PhD researchers, postdocs, UD, UHD, professors) with a permanent or temporary position at Erasmus School of Law. The applicant must be in possession of an appointment at Erasmus School of Law throughout the entire period for which the grant is requested.

Applications to the small grants scheme should meet the following criteria:

- Applications should demonstrate a clear link with one or both of the sector plan's research lines. Hence, the proposal should either connect to the broader theme of rebalancing of public interests in private relationships including any of the identified subthemes (see website), or be of an empirical nature; Applications which combine both research lines are particularly welcomed;
- Applications should ensure that funds are sought for a clearly defined, discrete activity or piece of research, which will have an identifiable output upon completion;
- The final objective and demonstrable achievements for the activity/ies for which the application is submitted must be clearly defined in the proposal;
- It needs to be clearly indicated for what reasons financing is requested from the sector plan small grants scheme;
- Involving more than one (legal) discipline is a plus as the sector plan is meant to bring researchers together. Interdepartmental cooperation is strongly encouraged.
- **Applicants must credibly demonstrate that the funding requested will be spent before the end of October 2026.**

The small grants scheme is not intended for:

- individual conference visits or travel by staff (staff may turn for such funding to their own departments);
- the continuation or promotion of research already funded through other grants.

CONDITIONS OF THE SMALL GRANTS

Applicants may seek support for any combination of eligible activities and costs **up to** the overall limit of **€10,000 (including VAT)**.

Funding must be spent before the end of October 2026.

Please note also that grants are not provided as a *lump sum*. Any application should provide a realistic estimation of concrete activities to be undertaken, accounting for VAT. Grants will be paid based on real costs (e.g. invoices). In the absence of an invoice, departments or individual researchers will have to pre-finance the costs.

The **deliverables** vary depending on the type of activity financed:

- Funded research requires:
 - o a working paper and
 - o a presentation for the PPI-ELS community at ESL;
- Deliverables of organized activities (e.g., conferences, workshops) are the events themselves;
- Funding for the purpose of preparing a grant application will be conditioned on actual application;
- Deliverables for other funded applications will be adjusted to the nature of the application.

The timing of the deliverables will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

All successful applicants are required to submit a **short report** ultimately one month after the end of the project containing a statement of original objectives, a brief account of expenditure, project outputs, expected impact, and future plans including the dissemination of findings to relevant networks.

ASSESSMENT

All applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Quality of the proposal:** clear objective(s), innovative character, clearly identified expected result(s), logical correspondence between the project proposal and the expected result(s) of the project;
- **Fit with the sector plan:** alignment with the topics and objectives of the sector plan 'rebalancing public interests in private relationships' or 'empirical legal studies' (see website);
- **Quality of the applicant:** fit of the proposal with the track record or career stage of the applicant
- **Budget:** the amount requested is proportionate to the intended output.

Applications will be assessed equally on their merits, based on the criteria listed above.

Applicants are assumed to have informed their supervisor that they planned to submit a small grants proposal.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

For 2025-2026, 125.000 euro is available for the small grants funding, to be awarded in 1 round.

The call **closes on 15 October 2025**. All applications will be assessed after the closing date and decisions will be communicated via e-mail by mid-November 2025. Spending of the awarded small grants can start 1 January 2026 (not earlier). The decision for funding will be made by the Management Team of the sector plan.

Applications should be submitted to: sectorplan@law.eur.nl

If you have any queries or would like to discuss a project idea, please use the sectorplan@law.eur.nl email address.