



Maria Nowak Research Fellowship 2024

Call for Proposals to EMN Members

The Maria Nowak Research Fellowship is a research initiative led by the European Microfinance Network, with financial support from the European Commission and the European Investment Fund.

Crafted as the next evolution of EMN's Research Award, which has seen 16 successful editions, the Maria Nowak Research Fellowship will run its first edition in 2024.

The initiative is aimed at **influencing and promoting research on the inclusive finance sector in Europe, while also benefiting EMN's membership.**

As part of this initiative, a chosen EMN member will receive free consultancy support to tackle a research assignment. A designated researcher, commissioned in agreement with the selected member, will undertake an assignment based on the member's needs for a period of up to 1 year. EMN will cover the assignment costs of up to 10,000 euros, encompassing both the research assignment and travel and accommodation expenses for visits to the organisation (if necessary).

Moreover, the initiative seeks to contribute to the broader academic landscape of microfinance in Europe. The data collected during the assignment will be utilised by the researcher to draft an academic paper. As part of this initiative, EMN members are expected to grant the researcher permission to use the collected data for this purpose.

EMN members are encouraged to submit their proposals, with proposed research topics intended to contribute to building evidence and insights on the impact of their activities on target groups facing barriers to financial inclusion and/or entrepreneurship, such as women, migrants and refugees, youth, and rural populations. The research can also serve as a foundation for designing new activities relevant to the above-mentioned target groups.

Examples of assignments that can be undertaken include, but are not limited to, impact studies, data analysis, managerial insights for the development of new products/tools, cross-country benchmarking of existing practices and market assessments.

The call is open to all EMN members: practitioners, national networks, social networks, support organisations, and investors. Joint proposals from more than 1 member are also accepted (no budget increase).



Process & deadlines :

- **6th May 2024:** deadline for submission of research proposals by EMN members. Proposals will be assessed by the EMN Research Committee. Clarifications might be requested in order to make the selection.
- **31st May 2024:** results are communicated to EMN members. Selected member will be announced at the EMN Conference in Bucharest (20-21 June 2024).
- **July/August 2024:** EMN will issue a call for proposal for a research project addressed to academia/research centres with a deadline of the end of September. Selected member will contribute to the preparation of the Terms of Reference.
- **September/October 2024:** One researcher/pool of researchers is selected.
- **October 2024/May 2025:** Researcher conducts the research assignment and prepares a preliminary draft for the academic paper
- **June 2025:** Researcher presents the results of their work during the EMN Annual Conference

How to apply:

To apply for this year's edition, please **complete the application form by 6th May 2024** and send it to n.benaglio@european-microfinance.org and f.preve@european-microfinance.org

The EMN Research Committee will select the member who will receive the assignment based on:

- **Research question:** Is the research need clear (scope clearly defined)? Are the research questions clearly formulated and coherent?
- **Relevance:** Is the proposal tackling the call main topic (underserved population)?
- **Feasibility:** Is the research proposal feasible in terms of timeline and budget planned? What type of in-kind support will be provided to the researcher (e.g., staff dedicated to support the researcher, access to data and clients/staff/relevant stakeholders, etc.)
- **Impact for the organisation:** Which use would the organisation make of the results? What will change for the organisation? Would the organisation have conducted this research also without this grant?

In instances where proposals receive similar scores, priority will be given to the one whose findings would benefit the broader sector.

For any questions on the initiative please reach out to n.benaglio@european-microfinance.org and/or f.preve@european-microfinance.org