

# Call for Proposals Seed Grants 2025

## Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience

### UvA Strategic Theme Responsible Digital Transformations

#### 1. Purpose and Scope

The University of Amsterdam (UvA) encourages interdisciplinary collaboration to tackle complex and urgent societal issues, as outlined in the UvA Strategic Plan 'Inspiring Generations' 2021-2026. To achieve this ambition, the UvA has launched the theme Responsible Digital Transformations (RDT). The RDT theme showcases, assembles and deepens research on digital transformations conducted across the UvA community and in close cooperation with societal partners. The theme focuses on digital technologies and the intertwined ethical, legal and societal questions that arise with the increasing use of these digital systems, algorithms and platforms.

It is our core belief that the digital technologies should be developed and used to enhance individual and societal wellbeing, must safeguard human rights and therefore need to be developed in an inclusive way. Our goals are to

- Understand, analyse and critically assess digital transformations in society.
- Map, test, and experiment with modes and mechanisms of responsibility that address the exclusionary effects of digital transformations.
- Contribute to better practices in developing (data -driven) technology/ products / environments and the appropriate regulations.

To read more about the aims and goals of our theme, please visit the [RDT webpage](#).

Responsible Digital Transformations invites interdisciplinary Seed Grant proposals that critically analyse the legal, societal, behavioural, ethical, cultural, economic, ecological and health impacts of the datafication of warfare, conflict and security, and contribute to resilient societies. These proposals build cross-faculty collaboration to study a specific aspect of this broad domain, with an indication concerning next steps (for example a larger project or proposal).

Seed Grants range from €15.000 to €50.00 for a duration of 6 to 12 months. Depending on the number of submissions and the requested budgets, 3 to 4 grants will be awarded in this call.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **15 February 2026**, with the intention for projects to start as early as possible in 2026. A kick-off meeting will be held to officially launch the selected projects and facilitate connection between grant recipients.

#### 2. Thematic Frame for the Seed Grant Proposals

To enhance the effectiveness of the RDT theme, the steering group has decided to focus on campaigns centred around specific topics. For this call, we invite research groups to submit proposals that align with the topic of **Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience**. All submitted proposals must fit within this topic. Proposals that focus on other topics, even if they theoretically fall within the scope of the RDT theme, will not be considered eligible.

#### **Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience**

Contemporary warfare, conflict and security practices are profoundly shaped by digitisation and Artificial Intelligence. This is partly but not purely because warfare takes place in the realm of the digital, as in cyberwarfare and the online dissemination of disinformation. All aspects of conflict and warfare are increasingly datafied. A modern tank, for example, is not simply a military vehicle but is now a platform for battlefield information and situational awareness. In contemporary conflicts, data analytics play a crucial role in information gathering, target identification and military strategy. Artificial intelligence (AI) is deployed for automated targeting and battlefield simulation, among many other uses. Advances in AI have direct implications for the precision, speed, and autonomy of digital warfare systems, and raise substantial ethical questions. Moreover, funding for military use has become a main driving force of AI research. With the role of Big Tech companies and governments in data-driven battlefield targeting and experimentation, some even signal “a new regime of warfare.”<sup>1</sup>

This raises profound and urgent legal, societal, behavioural, ethical, cultural, economic, ecological and health questions that cut across all disciplines and faculties at UvA. For instance, we need to urgently discuss human rights in this context, as well as the ethics and law of automation of decision-making on the battlefield. Attention is also needed for the underlying technological layer that enables and amplifies these developments. Integrating perspectives is essential to ensure that technological innovation aligns with ethical, ecological and societal responsibility.

We invite proposals that map, understand, and analyse these developments from an interdisciplinary perspective, with a core focus on questions of digital responsibility. Collaborations can combine technical and non-technical disciplines—for example, between computer scientists, ethicists, legal scholars, and social scientists. The totality of different proposals will contribute to developing societal resilience around datafied warfare.

Topics for the seed grant call include for example:

- Legal and ethical aspects of automated targeting and datafied warfare analytics.
- (Case-driven) historical and cultural analysis of digital military developments, including datafied and digital target selection, visualisation, automation.
- Case studies of the impact of digital and AI applications in warfare on political decision making and citizen responses.
- Understanding and analysing the role of Big Tech and AI companies in warfare and security practices and their interplay with government agendas and international organisations.
- Understanding, mapping and developing counter interventions against online misinformation campaigns and cyberwarfare.
- Understanding the implications of algorithmic bias, explainability and accountability in AI-enabled military systems.
- Understanding the societal effects on populations of the digitization of warfare, conflict and security practices.
- Developing new frameworks to mitigate the ecological effects of the digitization of warfare, conflict and security practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Hoijtink M. ‘Prototype warfare’. *European Journal of International Security*. 2022;7(3):322-336.

### **3. Requirements for the Seed Grant Proposals**

The proposal must be written in English and should not exceed 1.000 words, excluding title, applicants and budget sheet.

The proposal needs to address the following points:

#### 1. Scope of the Seed Grant project:

Seed Grants are intended for small-scale projects that serve as a first step towards a longer-term initiative, if successful. Applicants need to clearly outline the long-term perspective of the project. The project can focus on innovative research, feasibility studies, proof of concept, new methods and methodology, or an innovative grant proposal.

Ideally, the proposed project should establish a new research initiative. It may build on existing collaborations if applicants can convincingly demonstrate the additional collaborative, interdisciplinary, methodological scope.

2. The proposal should clearly explain how the project contributes to the campaign topic *Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience* and fits within the scope of the Responsible Digital Transformations theme.

3. While collaboration with a non-academic partner is not mandatory, the societal relevance of the project should be clear.

4. The project should lead to a tangible output, such as a joint research paper, white paper, proof of concept, joint grant proposal, data model etc.

6. The research consortium must be an interdisciplinary team involving researchers from at least two UvA faculties, ideally more.

5. The proposal should clearly describe how the budget will be allocated, providing rough estimates of the amounts. Also include a timeline for the project with a starting and end date.

The project duration can range from 6 to 12 months.

### **4. Budget, Eligible Expenses & Duration**

Seed Grants can range from €15.000 to €50.000 for a period of 6 to 12 months.

The budget can be used to cover the following expenses:

- Data access and collection, data infrastructure,
- Research assistance (Note: Teaching buy-out for UvA-staff is not permitted).
- Conferences, research travel, or visitor proposals.

Based on the number of applications and the requested budgets, we expect to fund 3 to 4 grants in this call.

### **5. Who can Apply?**

The call is open to all tenure-track, assistant, associate, and full professors, as well as professors by special appointment from the UvA. Each proposal must include at least one co-applicant from a

different faculty, ensuring a minimum of two faculties involved. Participation of additional faculties is strongly encouraged.

Members of the steering committee can in principle submit a proposal but will not take part in assessment of these proposals.

## **6. Selection Procedure & Evaluation Criteria**

All submitted proposals will be reviewed to ensure compliance with requirements outlined in section 1.1 above. Proposals that do not meet these requirements will be excluded. Eligible proposals will be evaluated and selected by the RDT steering committee based on the following criteria:

1. Quality of the proposal & proposed outcome
  - Scientific & societal relevance of the proposal.
  - Novelty & originality of the proposal.
  - Quality of the expected output and potential for follow-up.
2. Fit with the campaign topic *Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience* and the RDT theme as a whole.
3. Quality of the Consortium.

Where proposals are considered equivalent, contribution to the campaign topic *Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience* will be the decisive factor.

## **7. More Information**

Carefully read the webpage of the RDT theme. Reach out to Christine Erb ([m.c.erb@uva.nl](mailto:m.c.erb@uva.nl)) to discuss how to best align your proposal with the focus of this call.

## **8. How to Apply?**

Please download the application form and the budget sheet from the [RDT webpage](#). Send both documents per email to Christine Erb, [m.c.erb@uva.nl](mailto:m.c.erb@uva.nl) before **15 February 2026**.

## **9. Timeline**

Submission Deadline	15 February -2026
Eligibility Check	18 February 2026
Announcement Results	Mid March2026
Kick-off meeting	ca. May 2026

## Appendix I: Seed Grant Application Form

Please download the Application Form and the Budget Sheet from the [RDT website](#). Send both documents to [m.c.erb@uva.nl](mailto:m.c.erb@uva.nl) no later than **15. February 2026**.

The proposal must be written in English.

The proposal should not be more than 1.000 words, excluding title, applicants and budget sheet.

The proposal needs to address the following points:

### 1. Title and applicants

### 2. Purpose of the Seed Grant

What do you want to achieve with this Seed Grant project? What should this project lead to in the longer run? Please specify:

- Scientific case / impact: Describe the scientific innovation of the project. What makes this project unique?
- Interfaculty collaboration: Explain how this project builds on collaboration between two or more UvA faculties.
- Relevance: How does this project align with the campaign topic *Datafied Warfare and Societal Resilience* and the RDT theme as a whole?
- Societal case / impact: What is the intended social impact of the project? While non-academic partners are not required, which external partners might be interested in this research?
- Expected output and success indicators: What are the expected deliverables of the project? By what indicators will the success of this project be measured?

### 3. Practical matters & potential for follow-up

- Staff, organization and institutional context: Describe how the project is organized. Specify how the project partners contribute to this project and for how much time?
- Briefly explain how you envision team collaboration and team activities.
- Budget (according to budgeting sheet format): Specify the amount of funding applied for (€15k-€50k)? What will the budget be spent on (e.g., staff, organization, support, etc.)? Use the budget sheet format available on the [RDT webpage](#).
- Potential Follow-up and Funding: Describe how this project could lead to potential follow-up funding? Explain why there is a reasonable possibility of acquiring additional external resources after the Seed Grant period.