

One-pager submission deadline: September 21st, 2026
Pitch video submission deadline: October 5th, 2026



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CHARM-DEN

Guidelines & Operations

2026





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CONTEXT & OBJECTIVE

The CHARM-DEN online pitch contest is organized within the CHARM-EU Alliance, specifically under Work Package 15, which aims to develop relationships and partnerships with non-academic stakeholders. This contest is part of the WP15.1 action, named "Incubator Hubs," which focuses on creating a CHARM-EU ecosystem to support startups, social innovation movements, and research and innovation projects, leveraging the expertise of partner universities.*

*The project will feature **one online pitch session per year** for students, PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers from member universities, alumni, and entrepreneurs and start-ups linked to one of the CHARM-EU universities or its regional innovation ecosystem. It aims to promote innovative projects from the Alliance's Universities and allows project leaders to present their ideas to a multidisciplinary jury of European experts. Each university will individually select and train candidates for pitching and will be responsible for forming a multidisciplinary jury, including representatives from incubators, technology transfer offices, and investors.*

This project experiments with the pitch methodology to create innovative uses of existing scientific content, aiming to strengthen scientific entrepreneurship in Europe, supported by the robust CHARM-EU network.

** The name CHARM-DEN is inspired by the popular television show "Dragon's Den", where aspiring entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas to a panel of investors. Similarly, CHARM-DEN is a stage for teams from the CHARM-EU Alliance to present innovative, sustainability-driven projects to a jury of experts. The name playfully reflects the dynamic and entrepreneurial spirit of the event while aligning with CHARM-EU's mission to foster challenge-based learning, creativity, and real-world impact.*

Organisational structure of the CHARM-DEN PITCH CONTEST

- **CHARM-DEN's targets:** Students, researchers, alumni, entrepreneurs, start-ups, innovation teams, academic spin-offs, regardless of the TRL (Technology Readiness Level) of the team.
- **Selection:** Projects are selected by an internal jury at each partner university
- **Topic:** Projects should contribute to Sustainability in a broad sense, including:
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Social sustainability
 - Economic sustainability
- **Two-Pagers Submission:** Each selected team will have to submit a two-page document summarizing the key points of their project. This will be shared with the jury members and other event stakeholders before the event. Find the template of the Two-pagers form in appendix 1.

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- **Training:** Each university will individually select and train candidates for pitching (via their incubators for example).
- **Pitch:** All participating teams must submit a 5-minute video pitch ahead of the event. This video should summarize their project, highlighting the project's impact on sustainability which will be played on the 20th October, followed by a 7-minute Q&A session with a jury of experts (the interview will be in **English**).
- **Jury Preparation:** Jury members will receive the two-pagers and the videos ahead of time to familiarize themselves with the teams and to create elaborate feedback. They will be briefed on the event's flow, scoring system, and expectations through a separate meeting a few weeks before the event. Please find an example of the evaluation sheet in appendix 2..
- **Announcement of Results:** Based on the jury's ratings, results are communicated at the end of the contest, and winners will receive a prize.
- **Post-Event:** Participants and the audience can request follow-up meetings with the teams for further discussion or questions. The event organizers will facilitate these meetings.
- **Written Feedback:** All teams will receive a comprehensive feedback document based on the jury's scoring and comments.

TARGETED GROUPS FOR PARTICIPATION

The contest is aimed at students, researchers, alumni, start-ups, innovation teams, academic spin-offs and entrepreneurs with projects/start-ups affiliated with one of the CHARM-EU partner universities, or one regional partner from the University's innovation ecosystem.

This event is open to all, and anyone interested is welcome to attend as an audience member. Communication about the event will be shared via social media and newsletters. Each CHARM-EU partner is encouraged to use their own communication channels, such as those targeting students or other relevant audiences, to promote the event.

SUBMISSION MODALITIES

- The Two Pagers must be submitted by **September 21st, 2026**
- The 5 minutes-videos must be submitted by **October 5th, 2026**



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ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

To be eligible, projects must:

- Be carried by members of the CHARM-EU partner universities (or by a regional actor from the University's innovation ecosystem)
- Offer impact for a more sustainable future
- Submit a pitch video in English (or in native language with subtitles in English) of no more than 5 minutes. Will follow a 7 minutes Q&A session in English.

EVALUATION MODALITIES & CRITERIA

Projects are evaluated by a jury composed of European experts according to the following criteria:

- Quality of the pitch (clear comprehension of the project, presentation material)
- Effectiveness and precision in addressing jury questions
- Business Idea
- Project feasibility & sustainability perspective

TIMELINE

The contest proceeds according to the following key dates:

- **Shortlisting of participating teams:** 28th of August, 2026
- **Final Team Selection:** 4th of September, 2026
- **Jury Selection:** 19th of September, 2026
- **Submission of Two-Pagers:** 21st of September, 2026
- **Submission of Pitch Videos:** 5th of October, 2026
- **Jury briefing:** Until 9th of October (to determine). Jury members will receive the two-pagers and the videos roughly two weeks beforehand the latest.
- **Contest Event:** 20th of October, 3 to 5:15PM (CET)

BENEFITS FOR THE WINNING TEAMS

For all selected teams:

- Each participant will receive a CHARM-EU Badge worth 1 ECTS credit.



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- Teams will be featured on the CHARM-EU website, providing valuable visibility and dissemination opportunities.
- Teams will receive a **Pitch Guide**, a practical resource outlining the key elements of an effective and impactful pitch.
- Teams will have the opportunity to engage with European experts and receive feedback on their projects.



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For the winning team:

The winning team will receive a dedicated marketing and public relations package designed to enhance the visibility and communication of their project, including:

- A dedicated feature article on the CHARM-EU website.
- A promotional campaign on LinkedIn.

CONTACT

For any questions, participants can contact:

One contact by partner university

UM: Clara Domeyne, clara.domeyne@umontpellier.fr

JMU: Fabian Rotter, fabian.rotter@uni-wuerzburg.de

TCD: Audrey Crosbie, acrosbie@tcd.ie

UU: Freeke Jansen, f.m.e.jansen@uu.nl

ELTE: Balázs Erdei, erdei.balazs@innovacio.elte.hu

ABO: Camilla Pelo, camilla.pelo@abo.fi

UB: Carme Verdaguer, cverdaguer@fbg.ub.edu

HRW: Ines Müller-Vogt, Ines.Mueller-Vogt@hs-ruhrwest.de





APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Two-Pager Template

Strand 1: Student Teams / Early Entrepreneurial Phase

Team Name: [Insert Team Name]

1. Overview:

- **Brief Description:** [Provide a concise summary of the project idea]
- **Industry/Sector:** [Specify the industry or sector the project falls into]
- **Target Market:** [Describe the primary audience or customers targeted by the project]

2. Problem Statement:

- [Clearly articulate the problem or need that the project addresses]

3. Proposed Solution:

- [Describe the proposed solution or product offered by the team, highlighting unique features or innovations]

4. Development Stage:

- **Current Status:** [Idea stage, early development, etc.]
- **Future Plans:** [Next steps for development and implementation]

5. Key Resources Needed:

- [List any resources or support needed to move the project forward (e.g., mentorship, funding, partnerships)]

6. Milestones and Achievements:

- [List any significant milestones or achievements reached by the team so far]

7. Team composition:

- [Member 1 Name] - [Role]
- [Member 2 Name] - [Role]
- [Member 3 Name] - [Role]
- [Member 4 Name] - [Role]

8. Contact Information:

- **Email:** [Insert contact email]
- **Phone:** [Insert contact phone number]

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Appendix 2: Evaluation sheet template

	CHARM-DEN					EVALUATION SHEET					Jury instructions To be completed Select via drop-down list Date : 20 October 2025	
	First name & LAST NAME of the jury member:											
	Name of the project										Team1	
	Project acronym (optional)										T1	
Criteria 1 : Business Idea						Rating					Comments	
						1	2	3	4	5		
						Very weak	Weak	Correct	Good	Excellent		
						5						
Criteria 2 : Project feasibility						Rating					Comments	
						1	2	3	4	5		
						Very weak	Weak	Correct	Good	Excellent		
						4						
Criteria 3 : Sustainability perspective (Social, Economic, Environmental)						Rating					Comments	
						1	2	3	4	5		
						Very weak	Weak	Correct	Good	Excellent		
						4						
Criteria 4 : Quality of the pitch						Rating					Comments	
						1	2	3	4	5		
						Very weak	Weak	Correct	Good	Excellent		
						5						
Criteria 5 : Effectiveness and precision in addressing jury questions						Rating					Comments	
						1	2	3	4	5		
						Very weak	Weak	Correct	Good	Excellent		
						3						
Overall score (out of 20)											21,00	