



EU- India Platform for the Social Sciences and Humanities

Call for collaborative research

Sustainability, equity, wellbeing and cultural connections

Thematic framework

This call invites proposals based on strong collaborations between researchers in India and their European counterparts contributing to broad notions of sustainability, equity, wellbeing and cultural connections. Projects should make creative use of the skills and perspectives of researchers located in India and in Europe and are expected to explicitly address the added value of the India-EU collaboration and build upon mutual European and Indian learning.

The thematic framework of this first EqUIP call outlined below has deliberately been left relatively open to allow space for excellent ideas to be developed, taking account of both contemporary and historical contexts relevant to India and Europe. Funding partners recognise that, whilst being broad, these concepts are intersecting rather than discrete and proposals are not required to address all of these, however addressing the cross cutting nature of these areas is encouraged. Funders strongly encourage inter-disciplinary approaches that cross the arts and humanities and social sciences and are potentially open to other areas of scientific enquiry, subject to national eligibility criteria.

Setting the scene

Despite strong economic growth in India, moving many out of absolute poverty, and declines in inequality in Europe, particularly in the second part of the twentieth century, we are currently witnessing a period of widening economic, social and cultural inequalities. At the same time, world regions are experiencing increasingly significant environmental challenges and rapid urbanisation, particularly in case of India, with implications for sustainability, prosperity, social and cultural cohesion, as well as impacts on people's life styles, their happiness and wellbeing. How these inequalities are shaping and have been shaped by discrimination and access to decent healthcare, education, employment, and understanding the role of cultural heritage are central to building a just and sustainable future based on appreciation of specific historic, cultural, political, economic and social contexts.

Attempts to interrogate, advocate for, and achieve equity and wellbeing in a sustainable way have occurred in different ways during all periods of history, and are reflected in and inspired by the arts, literature, media, education, legislation, political activism and economic

models and ideologies. Practices and interventions that address equity, wellbeing, sustainability and cultural connections in diverse socio-economic, political, cultural and ecological contexts are multiple and should be approached as such. They may manifest as new forms of governance and political participation, as projects for resource conservation, sustainable livelihoods and community health. They may appear as political expression through performance traditions and as alternative artistic visions of pasts, presents and futures. They may be evidenced in alternative living away from the city or movements for new urbanisms, and as cultural, social and frugal ‘Jugaad’¹ innovations.

To build equitable and sustainable futures based on economic, social and cultural connections, it is also imperative to understand how the reverse experiences of marginality, exclusion and isolation have shaped the individual and group character, architecture and fate of past and present movements and projects. These experiences have also influenced everyday culture. An understanding of these experiences, expressions and aspirations can be generated through analysis of multiple sources and perspectives. These include, for example, formal and informal institutions, statistics, media (traditional and new), public spaces, languages, education, heritage, philosophy and religions.

Potential areas

We invite excellent proposals addressing a variety of areas within the thematic framework outlined above, the series of symposia identified some examples of areas that might provide further guidance. These examples are indicative rather than prescriptive and applicants are not restricted to addressing topics illustrated through the examples below.

Projects submitted under this call could form comparisons across, or examine relations between different political, economic, cultural and social spaces, localities and regions, media and expressive genres, historical periods, and/or disciplinary perspectives and methodologies. We strongly encourage proposals addressing both Indian and European contexts and drawing comparisons, where appropriate, across a range of possible topics, for example:

- Current understandings of equity, growth and wellbeing in European and Indian contexts and how their relationships are projected onto the past and/or into the future.
- Roots/causes of inequalities and the ways in which inequalities inhibit individual and social prosperity.
- Relations between aspirations and practices, and future visions of sustainable wellbeing, in the context of limited resources and persisting inequalities.
- How knowledges, literatures and arts can and have contributed to the transformation of social, gender, educational and economic differences and/or inequities.
- How does tangible and intangible heritage help frame sustainable equitable futures, wellbeing and connections.
- How understandings or lack of understanding between and among linguistic and cultural communities in India and in Europe enhance or impede discourses of tolerance and justice, and how, if at all, these contribute to sustainability, wellbeing and cultural connections.

¹ Social innovations can be defined as ‘new practices of action to modify living and working conditions in parts or whole of a society, if adopted, successfully implemented and utilized by individuals, groups or organisations concerned’. “Jugaad” innovations: from the Hindi, meaning finding low-cost solutions to problems in an intelligent way. See [EqUIP Reflection Paper on Sustainable Prosperity, Well-being and Innovation](#).

- How social justice has been perceived, conceptualised and realised, particularly in relation to understandings of modernity and new forms and trajectories of liberalism and globalism.
- How knowledge of the past, of traditions, memories and heritages, can stimulate understandings of contemporary local, national, transnational and global issues pertaining to sustainability, equality and wellbeing (for example, through creative expression, and/or digital media).
- How do digital technologies and digitisation strengthen or hinder social and cultural connections and community engagement and political participation.
- Changing nature of gender and inter-generation relations and other axes of marginalisation in Indian and European economic and cultural contexts, past and present.
- The effectiveness of governance and innovations around the provision of public goods, such as education and health, to foster equity and wellbeing, for example, community health initiatives, and smart health governance (national and global).
- The origins, practices and impacts of both historical and current non-violent social movements advocating sustainability, equity and wellbeing.

This list is not exhaustive and funders acknowledge that there are other relevant areas that could be approached through inter-disciplinary perspective. We remain open to new ideas and methodologies to be proposed adding value to India-EU collaboration and building upon mutual European and Indian learning.