



## 2026 CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

Game in Lab is a program co-created by Asmodee, board games industry leader, and IF-Innovation Factory, a French non-profit association specialized in collective intelligence and innovation.

Game in Lab's mission is to support the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge, and the creation of a community of people passionate about board games. We facilitate a network of transdisciplinary scholars and game professionals, and provide funding to academic research projects.

Our mission is to promote board games as a source of societal value. We are convinced that academic research on board games and play can be an essential contributor to that end.

To know more about our actions, please consult our website:

<https://www.game-in-lab.org/en/310-2/>

**Applications are now open for the 2026 Game in Lab Research Grant. We invite scholars to submit their proposals for scientific research on board games.**

## SCOPE OF THE CALL

We invite international research teams to submit proposals for fundamental or applied research on any topic related to board games, broadly defined. Selected research teams will receive a grant from Game in Lab to support their work. We welcome projects from all academic disciplines, from sociology to the health sciences, and we particularly encourage interdisciplinary proposals.

This year, we are particularly interested in projects that explore the following areas:

- **Sustainability, Justice and Inclusion:** The role of tabletop games in addressing crises of environmental and social sustainability, and in promoting social justice and inclusion. Gathering and interpreting evidence about the role of games in promoting climate action and / or driving sustainable transitions in society, as well as in supporting social action on inclusion or in fostering accessibility and diversity through their mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics.
- **Health and well-being:** The potential of games to support healthy lives, therapeutic applications, and community health and resilience. Additionally, we are interested in research addressing the pleasures of play, and the role of games in helping players develop competencies to participate actively in social life.

**A central component of scientific inquiry is a prerequisite, supported by a strong research question.**

Proposals should provide a justification for the project's relevance to board game studies or the use of games in applied contexts. If relevant to the methodology, an annotated bibliography of the games involved is required.

Projects focused on game design, production, or commercial evaluation are ineligible for this grant. It excludes applied evaluation projects (e.g., assessing the effectiveness of a specific game or tool). We seek research that addresses broader scientific questions within the field of board game studies.

Proposals are assessed on their scientific robustness and their contribution to the field. In its selection process, the Committee seeks to maintain a diverse portfolio by ensuring a balance across various disciplines and research topics.

**Grants are available for projects of up to 24 months.** A single renewal is possible, depending on the project's progress and circumstances.

**The maximum allocation per project is €20,000, within a total budget of €45,000.** The number of selected projects will depend on the individual funding requirements of each proposal.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

This call for proposals is open to international research teams.

- **Affiliation:** at least one project leader should hold an active affiliation with a research institution (public or private) at the time of application and for the duration of the project.
- **Administration of the grant:** the host institution will sign a research agreement with Asmodee and will be responsible for receiving and administering the funds on behalf of the selected team. The institution must commit to allocating the full amount of the research funding to the project team.
- **Administrative fees:** any overhead or administrative fees required by the host institution must be explicitly included in the detailed budget. These fees cannot exceed 10% of the total requested amount.
- **Letters of commitment:** applications must include two official letters from the host institution:
  - A letter from the Head of Department or the institution's leadership, confirming support for the project leader's scientific activities
  - A letter from the Administrative or Finance Department confirming they will manage the grant
- Any administrative documents such as permits, ethics approvals, or authorizations required for fieldwork, archival research, or access to collections

While partnerships between diverse public and private organizations are encouraged, applications from public research institutions will be given special consideration.

## RESEARCH OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES

Applications must clearly specify the expected outcomes and deliverables of the project.

- **Knowledge sharing:** selected teams are expected to contribute to Game in Lab's scientific dissemination and public outreach. This may include articles (scholarly or general interest) published on the Game in Lab website, in academic journals, or through other media outlets.
- **Engagement:** project leaders will be invited to participate in events organized or supported by Game in Lab.
- **Reporting and timeline:** an editorial and reporting calendar outlining key milestones and communication deliverables will be established at the start of the project.
- A comprehensive **final report** detailing the research methodology, key findings, and final conclusions must be submitted at the end of the project. It should also include the Impact Plan (see below).

## IMPACT

This year, Game in Lab is introducing impact as a criterion in the assessment of proposals. We use "impact" to mean the potential benefit of research to people and communities beyond academia, including to society, culture, the economy, or policy more broadly.

All applicants are asked to include an **Impact Plan** as part of their proposal, addressing two questions:

- who, beyond the academic community, might benefit from this research;
- and how they might benefit.

Applicants should also describe any steps they plan to take to support this, such as through partnerships, engagement activities, or other forms of knowledge exchange with non-academic stakeholders.

Game in Lab's scientific committee will assess impact plans for credibility and specificity. Targeted and realistic accounts of potential benefit are expected.

Impact activities may be included in the budget where they constitute a genuine and necessary part of the research plan.

## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

**Personnel:** Salaries for full-time or tenured research staff are not eligible. However, the grant may be used to fund non-permanent staff, such as research assistants, interns, contractors, or technical experts.

If contractors are expected to carry out a significant portion of the research, the proposal must justify why this work cannot be performed by the Principal Investigator.

**Research Costs:** the grant can cover costs directly related to the project, including equipment, materials, fieldwork, and travel expenses.

**Co-funding:** proposals may include multiple funding sources in addition to the Game in Lab grant.

**Renewal:** Funding may be renewed once for an additional 12-month period, subject to approval.

### Ineligible Costs

- **Open Access fees:** costs associated with Article Processing Charges (APCs) for open access publication
- **Extensive Travel:** excessive travel or conference-related expenses that are not strictly necessary for core research activities, or that constitute the majority of the total budget
- **Permanent salaries:** as noted above, the grant cannot be used to pay tenured or permanent staff

**Only applications with an eligible and well-justified budget will be sent to the Selection Committee for review.**

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be [submitted through our online platform](#).

Supporting documents, appendices, and other relevant files may be uploaded to the online form either as a single ZIP archive or as individual files.

The application platform allows users to update or modify a submitted application at any time until the deadline.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

To be considered complete, your application must include the following attachments:

- **Project description:** a PDF document detailing the research project, objectives, methodology, risks assessment, ...
- **Impact Plan** (maximum 500 words): a description of the potential benefits of your research to people and communities beyond academia, including the demonstrable contribution research makes to society, culture, the economy, or policy
- **Curricula Vitae:** CVs for all project leaders, including a list of relevant publications
- **Estimated budget:** a detailed budget, including any institutional overhead / administrative fees where applicable.
- **Scientific bibliography:** a list of academic sources relevant to the study
- **Ludography:** a selection of the games used in the research protocol, including a justification for their selection
- **Institutional Letters of Commitment:**
  - one letter from the Head of Department or Institute confirming the project leader's affiliation and support for the research
  - one letter from the Administrative or Finance Department responsible for managing the grant
- Any administrative documents such as permits, ethics approvals, or authorizations required for fieldwork, archival research, or access to collections
- **Co-funding:** if applicable, formal letters of support from other funding institutions
- Any additional supporting documentation relevant to the proposal

**Only applications containing all required documents will be submitted to the selection committee for review.**

If certain administrative documents (such as permits, ethics approvals, or authorizations required for fieldwork, archival research, or access to collections) cannot be obtained by the application deadline, this should be explicitly identified as a risk in the risk assessment section of the project description.

Should the project be selected for funding, Game in Lab will follow up with the project team regarding the status of these authorizations. All required permits and authorizations must be

secured before the grant agreement is signed. Failure to obtain them may result in the grant being withheld.

## KEY DATES

- **Application deadline:** 25 September 2026 at noon (Paris time, GMT+2)
- **Publication of the list of selected projects:** December 2026
- **Appointed teams' formal acceptance:** January 2027
- **Administrative Finalization:** April 2027 (signing of agreements between Asmodee and Host Institution)