

Application Guidelines

Agustín Escobar Excellence Fellowship Program

Academic year 2026/2027

Program launch date:
May 28, 2026



Supported by

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Agustín Escobar Excellence Fellowship Program

An initiative by Sbayt in collaboration with the University of Castilla-La Mancha and backed by the region's most prominent technological ecosystem and local and regional entities.

1. Introduction and purpose

The Agustín Escobar Excellence Fellowships are driven and funded by Sbayt (Russula Corporation and Hydnum Steel), in collaboration with the University of Castilla-La Mancha. They are established with the backing of the regional technological ecosystem and leading public and private entities, including Siemens and the National Hydrogen Center, and with the support of the Puertollano City Council and the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha (Junta de Castilla-La Mancha), with a global projection.

1.1 Objective

To identify, guide, and empower high-potential young talent in the region who propose technological projects focused on real-world challenges, with direct business application and a positive social impact.

The program is built on a core conviction: technology is a driver for transformation when used with a clear purpose, tackling challenges that range from the responsible use of data to the application of artificial intelligence. To this end, tech-based initiatives addressing current challenges that can be transferred to real operational environments and bring tangible value to society will be promoted.

2. Organizer

The program is promoted by Sbayt, a technology company specializing in advanced analytics and artificial intelligence applied to industry. The company, headquartered in Puertollano, is backed by the same corporate group behind Russula and Hydnum Steel.

The program is developed in collaboration with the University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM).

3. Eligibility

The following profiles may apply for the Agustín Escobar Fellowships:

- Priority focus: Master's or Ph.D. students from the University of Castilla-La Mancha, as well as young graduates with an outstanding academic track record who are developing or wish to develop an innovative project within the priority focus areas of this program, and students or researchers with outstanding academic recognition who are part of active university research groups.
- Additional consideration: Final-year undergraduate students who demonstrate an outstanding profile and project may also be considered.

4. Priority focus areas

Preference will be given to the fields of Computer Science and Computing, Data Science and Analytics, Advanced Data Visualization, and Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the application process remains open to any innovative proposal with a solid technological foundation.

A holistic approach will be highly valued, with special recognition given to projects that incorporate an ethical and humanistic perspective as a differentiating value, as well as those with potential application in strategic sectors, ranging from industry and agrifood to the consumer goods sector.

5. Project tracks

The following types of projects may be submitted:

- Development of Master's theses (TFM) with an applied technological focus.
- Projects developed by students or researchers who are part of active university research groups.
- Projects that address a specific technological challenge or need defined by a company or organization.

The program is open to any proposal with a solid foundation, clear purpose, and real-world viability, beyond the specific project types indicated.

6. Funding and resources

Each fellowship provides funding of up to €20,000 intended to cover the expenses necessary for the development of the project. This funding may be applied to:

- Access to specialized software and hardware.
- Workspace within an active business environment.
- Travel and participation in conferences or other research-related activities directly tied to the target project of the fellowship.
- Development of core skills such as leadership, teamwork, innovation, and strategic thinking.

Expenses must be documented and justified on a monthly basis. Once verified, they will be reimbursed to the beneficiary by Sbayt.

7. Mentorship model

Mentorship is one of the central pillars of the Agustín Escobar Fellowships.

Each project will be paired with a senior mentor from the business world with real commercial experience, connecting the project with real market demands.

The mentorship model is structured as follows:

- Joint definition of the project's scope and objectives at the beginning of the program.
- Biweekly follow-up mentorship sessions throughout the entire development period.
- Evaluation of milestones and intermediate deliverables.
- Guidance toward applicable results that can be transferred to the productive environment.

The fellowships are compatible with academic university guidance, which is highly recommended and will be positively valued during the evaluation.

8. Final deliverable

At the end of the development period, each project must submit a final deliverable defined jointly with the mentors and the program management. This deliverable must:

- Outline the results of the work carried out during the fellowship period.
- Explain the developed project, its methodology, and the conclusions reached.
- Reflect the role that the fellowship program has played in the development of the project.
- Include measurable and applicable results to evaluate the real-world impact of the work.

9. Intellectual Property

In general, any intellectual property generated during the development of the projects will belong to the fellowship beneficiaries, in accordance with applicable regulations and, where appropriate, the policies of the university or entity where the project is developed.

The foregoing is understood without prejudice to any rights that may correspond to third parties within the framework of collaborations with companies, research groups, or other entities, as well as specific agreements that may be signed between the parties.

Sbayt and the collaborating entities will not acquire rights over the results derived from the projects by the mere fact of granting the fellowship, without prejudice to any collaboration agreements that may be voluntarily established between the parties.

10. Application and Documentation

Applications must be submitted through the official form available at: <https://forms.gle/yB789CBguKLfLYRD8> (Google Forms). The application window will be open from May 28, 2026, to September 30, 2026, inclusive.

The required documentation is as follows:

- Completed application form.
- Applicant's Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- Project Proposal: a document of up to 1,500 words describing the purpose of the project, its expected impact, and estimated execution timelines adjusted to the 2026/2027 academic year.
- Updated academic transcript.
- Cover letter in which the candidate outlines their profile, background, and the alignment of the project with the program's objectives.
- Supporting documentation of collaboration with other organizations, if any.

10.1. Language

Projects may be submitted in either Spanish or English.

11. Evaluation and Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated by an independent Evaluation Committee comprising Sbayt representatives and renowned experts from the technological, industrial, and academic fields.

The evaluation criteria will take into account relevant factors such as:

- Quality and innovation of the proposed project.
- Technical and economic feasibility, and potential for market transfer.
- Social and territorial impact, particularly in Castilla-La Mancha.
- Alignment with the mission, vision, and purpose of the program.
- Academic track record and candidate profile.
- University academic guidance and backing.

The Selection Committee may invite preselected candidates to a personal interview before issuing the final resolution.

12. Timeline

- **Applications Open:** May 28, 2026
- **Application Deadline:** September 30, 2026
- **Resolution and Results Announcement:** First half of October 2026
- **Program Start Date:** October 2026
- **Estimated Project Launch:** Aligned with the academic calendar. The development period will be adjusted to the newly started academic year and may be adapted based on the nature of each project.
- **Submission of Final Deliverables:** Before July 31, 2027

13. Acceptance of the Guidelines

Participation in this program implies full acceptance of these guidelines. Any situation not covered herein will be resolved by the Evaluation Committee, whose decision will be reasoned in accordance with the criteria of the program.

For any inquiries, candidates may write to: becasagustinescobar@sbayt.ai

14. Data protection

Personal data provided by participants will be processed by Sbayt, acting as the Data Controller, for the purpose of managing applications, evaluating candidacies, and, where applicable, formalizing and monitoring the fellowships.

Participation implies consent to the processing of data under the terms provided herein.

Data may be shared with collaborating entities exclusively for purposes related to the evaluation, management, and development of the program.

Furthermore, participation may involve the publication of the beneficiaries' first and last names, as well as references to their projects, on the communication channels of Sbayt and collaborating entities in connection with the program itself.

Participants may exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, objection, restriction of processing, and data portability by submitting a request to: becasagustinescobar@sbayt.ai