BE READY Joint Transnational Call 2026

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Applicants

Please note that the call text and the national guidelines are binding.

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1. General Scope & Objectives

What is the primary objective of this call?
The call aims to increase scientific understanding and evidence-based knowledge on emerging and re-emerging viral pathogens with pandemic potential and of host-pathogen interaction. The overall goal is to improve the capacity to anticipate, prevent, and respond to infectious health threats through a multinational, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approach.

Which SRIA priorities are addressed by this call?
The call primarily addresses SRIA Priority 1 "Accelerate knowledge in a coordinated and integrative manner", focusing on Action 1.1 (therapeutic targets on pathogens) and Action 1.2 (pathophysiology).

Will the excluded action points (e.g. 1.4) be included in future calls?
The focus of future calls will only be determined before each new call.

How many calls are published per year and do they relate to different topics?
It is planned to publish a joint transnational call each year targeting a specific topic.

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2. Scientific Scope & Eligible Topics

Which pathogens are included in the scope of the call?
Proposals must focus exclusively on one or multiple viruses belonging to the following families: *Arenaviridae, Coronaviridae, Filoviridae, Flaviviridae, Hantaviridae, Nairoviridae, Orthomyxoviridae, Paramyxoviridae, Phenuiviridae, Poxviridae, Togaviridae*, or adopt a "Pathogen X" approach. Proposals addressing global approaches towards a whole family of these pathogens are also feasible and highly welcome.

What does "pathogen X" mean, and can it refer to any virus, even one from a different family than those listed in the call text?
"Pathogen X" or "Disease X" is a placeholder term adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018. It is a concept representing a hypothetical, currently unknown/ unidentified pathogen capable of causing a severe epidemic or pandemic. The "pathogen X" approach, however is not meant to cover every possible virus. It is designed to generate transferable knowledge and tools that can be transferred to other threatening viruses of the same family as those listed in the call text.

Are any topics explicitly excluded from funding?
Yes, the following topics are excluded from this JTC: **(i)** antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) pathogens; **(ii)** research on environmental or social aspects of pathogen emergence (SRIA Action 1.3); **(iii)** transmission dynamics and epidemiology (SRIA Action 1.4); and **(iv)** clinical studies.

Are clinical studies or clinical trials allowed?
No, clinical studies, including clinical trials/ investigations/ cohorts and means, are explicitly excluded.
See the footnote on page 6 in the call text.

Are bacterial or fungal pathogens eligible?
No, the call exclusively supports research on selected viral pathogens with pandemic potential. See call text.

Can vaccine-related research be included?
Yes, development and improvement of vaccines against the selected viruses /virus families (see call text) is possible.

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3. Consortium Composition & Eligibility

Is interdisciplinarity mandatory in this call?
Yes, the composition of the consortium must be interdisciplinary. Proposals must include partners with expertise from different relevant disciplines (e.g. basic or pre-clinical research, clinical research, computational sciences, veterinary science, public health, or social and environmental sciences). Applicants must clearly demonstrate the added value of this interdisciplinary collaboration for addressing the proposed research questions.

How many partners are required to form a consortium?
A consortium must consist of at least three (3) eligible partners from at least three (3) different participating countries, with at least two (2) partners from EU Member States or Associated Countries.

What is meant by "associated countries"?
Associated countries are non-EU states that are formally associated to Horizon Europe giving their researchers and organizations full access to the programme's calls, funding, and collaborative network under the same conditions as EU Member States. In the context of this call, this applies to Republic of Moldova, New Zealand, Norway, and Turkey. All partners from other countries that are neither EU members nor associated countries fall under the category of external partners.

What is the maximum number of partners allowed?
Consortia may include up to six (6) partners. This limit increases to seven (7) partners if a company or a partner from an under-represented country (Hungary, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova, or Estonia) is included.

Companies can participate, but are they counted among the minimum of (3) three partners?
Yes, included companies are considered as full partners, whether they are financed or not. Please refer here to national guidelines (see Annex A of the call text) for more information.

Can more than one partner from the same country participate?
Generally, only one (1) partner per consortium may request funding from the same funding organization, unless national rules allow otherwise (see Annex A of the call text).

Can partners from non-participating countries be included?
Yes, one (1) external partner from a non-participating country may be included if they secure their own funding. Their own/in-kind budget must not exceed 20% of the total requested transnational project budget for the entire consortium, and they cannot serve as the project coordinator.

Are there limits on how many proposals a partner can join?
One partner, incl. external partners, may participate in a maximum of two (2) proposals in this call. A coordinator may coordinate only one (1) proposal and may participate as a partner in maximum one (1) other proposal.

Can a consortium be led by multiple coordinators?
No, each consortium may have only (1) one coordinator.

Does the coordinator have to have a specific profile?
No, this call does not stipulate a specific profile for the coordinator.

Can small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) act as coordinator?
If the national funding organisation supports companies (see Annex A of the call text), the consortium can be coordinated by a company partner. External partners are not allowed to coordinate.

Can one partner be led by multiple PIs?
No, each partner may only be represented by (1) one principal investigator.

Can different teams from the same institution be considered as (1) one partner in the consortium?
Yes, unless national rules claim otherwise. The partner must be represented by only one (1) principal investigator, who can apply for funding.

What happens if a partner or coordinator needs to be changed in an on-going grant?
Changes are considered exceptional and must be justified by circumstances beyond the consortium's control (scientific or administrative constraints). Any substantial change must be communicated to the joint call secretariat and requires approval from all relevant funding organisations.

What happens if a partner is found ineligible at national level?
If any partner is deemed ineligible by their national or regional funding organisation at any stage, the entire proposal may be rejected without further review.

Can European infrastructures be considered as consortium partners?
European infrastructures included in the project are considered as full partners, whether they are financed or not. Please refer here to national guidelines in Annex A of the call text for more information.

Is there any networking website facilitating search for additional partners in this call?
Yes, the partnering tool PartFinder is available for searching for consortium partners. Please find here the link to the tool: https://beready4pandemics.eu/joint-transnational-calls/

4. Application Procedure & Timeline

What is the submission procedure?
The call follows a two-stage procedure: pre-proposals must be submitted first, and only selected consortia will be invited to submit full proposals. All applications must be written in English and submitted via the PT-Outline electronic platform.

How many projects will be selected for stage 2?
That cannot be predicted; it depends on the proposal ranking by the reviewers, the final funder selection and the available budget.

What are the critical deadlines for the JTC in 2026?
- **Call Publication:** 19 January 2026.
- **Information Webinar:** 28 January 2026.
- **Pre-Proposal Deadline:** 13 April 2026, 13:00 CET.
- **Full proposal Deadline:** 20 August 2026, 13:00 CET.
- **Project Start**: Expected in the first or second quarter of 2027.

Where can I find the pre-proposal template and related formatting guidance?
On the JTC website, https://beready4pandemics.eu/joint-transnational-calls/, you can find the per-proposal template with precise guidelines. Please be aware that the guiding text can be displayed by selecting "Show all" (¶) in the Word menu "Home".

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5. Widening, Inclusiveness & Under-represented Countries

What is the widening process?
Between the pre-proposal and full-proposal stages, consortia may be allowed to add one (1) new partner if that partner is eligible for funding from an under-subscribed funding organisation. The maximum number of partners of six (6) [seven (7) if an underrepresented country or a company is included] cannot be exceeded. This is intended to ensure the use of committed resources and promote inclusiveness.

How are "under-subscribed funding organisations" identified for the widening process?
These are organizations that may not have enough applicants to allocate all their committed funds. Consortium coordinators of successful pre-proposals will be explicitly informed of these specific organizations in their invitation letter for full proposals to help them identify potential new partners.

Which countries are considered under-represented?
Under-represented countries include Hungary, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova, and Estonia. If the consortium includes an under-represented country or a company, the maximum number of project partners can be increased to seven (7) including the coordinator.

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6. Funding & Financial Modalities

How is funding allocated?
Funding is decentralised. Each partner is funded by its respective national or regional funding organisation according to national eligibility rules.

What is the maximum project duration?
The maximum project duration is **36 months**.

What is maximum funding per partner?
Each national funding organization defines their own maximum funding amount per partner. Please check Annex A of the call text and the national/regional guidelines.

Is there a maximum budget amount that cannot be exceeded within a consortium?
No, budget restrictions are set for each partner by their own national/regional funding organization.

Is it necessary to contact national funding organisations before applying?
Yes, it is strongly recommended, and for some countries/regions, it is mandatory. Applicants must ensure they meet both the joint transnational criteria and the specific national/regional eligibility requirements (see Annex A of the call text).

Can industry partners receive funding?
Yes, industry participation is encouraged, but eligibility and funding conditions depend on national/regional rules.

If an organization is not eligible to receive funding directly, is it still permitted to participate as a subcontractor or sub-grantee to a funded consortium partner?
Funding and subcontracting conditions depend on national/ regional rules, please consult your national contact person.

What is meant by double funding is not allowed?
A partner can receive funding from multiple (EU) funding initiatives, but the same research activity cannot be funded twice. This means that if a specific research task or project component is already receiving financial support from one (EU) funding initiative, it cannot be re-funded through another program.

7. Evaluation, Feedback & Redress

What are the main evaluation criteria?
Proposals are evaluated by independent experts based on three equally weighted criteria: Excellence, Impact, and Quality and Efficiency of Implementation. Each criterion must score at least 3 out of 5, and the overall score must be at least 10 out of 15.

Will applicants receive feedback?
Yes, coordinators will receive an evaluation summary report at both the pre-proposal and full proposal stages.

Is there a redress or appeal procedure?
If applicants suspect a breach in the implementation of evaluation and selection procedures, the consortium coordinator can submit an appeal via E-Mail (beready@dlr.de) to the joint call secretariat within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the notification. The appeal must demonstrate a procedural irregularity, factual error, misuse of powers, or conflict of interest. Note that a mere disagreement with the scientific or technical judgment of the experts is not grounds for appeal.

8. Open Science, Data Management & Infrastructures

What are the Open Science requirements?
Funded projects must fully embrace Open Science practices, including data sharing according to FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and publishing in Open Access formats.

Is there support for the costs of Open Access publishing?
While each national funder has different rules, all BE READY projects are eligible to publish on Open Research Europe (ORE), the European Commission's platform, at no cost.

Is a data management plan required?
A data management plan must be prepared by the coordinator within six months of the project start.

What is meant by European research infrastructures?
Research Infrastructures are facilities that provide resources and services for research communities to conduct research and foster innovation. See the call text, page 10, for more information.

Are applicants required to use European research infrastructures?
While not mandatory, applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage existing European research infrastructures, such as ESFRI-listed infrastructures or services developed under initiatives like ISIDORe.

9. Ethics, Safety & Compliance

Is consideration of sex, gender, and diversity mandatory?
Yes, proposals must explicitly consider sex and gender dimensions and/or diversity aspects in their research design.

Are animal studies and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) permitted?
Yes, provided all ethical, biosafety, and regulatory requirements are met and approvals are obtained before the start of relevant research activities.

Is an ethics self-assessment required?
Yes, an ethics self-assessment is mandatory at the full proposal stage, and all funded projects will undergo an ethics review.

What specific topics are covered in the ethics self-assessment?
At the full proposal stage, applicants must complete a checklist covering safety, animal studies, genetically modified organisms, environmental hazards, waste handling, and data management. Projects involving human subjects or animal research must have all necessary national/regional ethics approvals before the research activities begin.

10. Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality

Who is excluded from applying due to conflicts of interest?
Staff directly involved in the call implementation are ineligible to apply. Furthermore, all international experts involved in the evaluation must sign a declaration of confidentiality and COI; if a conflict is identified, the reviewer is withdrawn from evaluating that specific proposal.

Is a Consortium Agreement required?
Yes, partners of funded projects must sign a project consortium agreement to manage roles, responsibilities, intellectual property, and internal dispute handling. This should ideally be signed before the project starts, but no later than six months after the scientific project start date.

How is my personal data protected during the application process?
By submitting, applicants consent to the use, processing and retention of their personal data in accordance with article 6.1 (e) and (c) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2016/679).

Data may be shared with funding organizations and evaluators outside the European Economic Area (e.g., Türkiye or New Zealand), provided they adhere to equivalent data protection standards.

Who should be contacted for technical or procedural questions?
The **Joint Call Secretariat (JCS)**, hosted by **DLR Projektträger** in Germany, is the central point of contact for the submission and evaluation process.

• **E-mail:** beready@dlr.de

• **Phone:** +49-228-3821-2712.