



FUNDING SCHEME

«RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation of the Research and Innovation Foundation

Programme

European Partnerships – European Rare Diseases Research Alliance (ERDERA)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

EP/ERDERA/0126



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



Republic of Cyprus



RESEARCH
& INNOVATION
FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) announces the Call for Proposals for the «European Partnerships» Programme within the framework of the [RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period May 2022 – December 2026](#) and invites potential beneficiaries to submit relevant Project Proposals (Proposals).

The present **Call for Proposals** concerns the **participation of entities from Cyprus** in the **2nd Call for Proposals** of the European Partnership “**European Rare Diseases Research Alliance – ERDERA**”, entitled “**Resolving unsolved cases in rare genetic and non-genetic diseases.**”

The present Call will be co-financed by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in the frame of the Operational Programme «ΘΑΛΕΙΑ» 2021-2027 under Priority 1: «Competitive, Smart and Digital Economy» and the Specific Objective (1i): “Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies”.

GENERAL CALL INFORMATION

Pillar	Ι. ΕΞΥΠΝΗ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ
Programme	European Partnerships – ERDERA
Call Identifier	EP/ERDERA/0126
Call Budget	€2.141.760
Maximun Funding Per Project	€1,000.000
Publication Date	12 January 2026
Submission Deadline to ERDERA	<u>Stage 1:</u> Pre-Proposals 12 February 2026, 14.00 (CET) <u>Stage 2:</u> Full Proposals 8 July 2026, 14.00 (CET)
Submission Deadline to RIF	<u>Stage 1:</u> Pre-Proposals 19 February 2026, 13.00 (local time) <u>Stage 2:</u> Full Proposals 15 July 2026, 13:00 (local time)

The English version of the Call, even though an official translation endorsed by the Research and Innovation Foundation, is provided for information purposes only. Only the Greek version of the Call is legally binding and shall prevail in case of any divergence in interpretation.

OBJECTIVES

The «European Partnerships» Programme offers the opportunity to local organisations to participate in transnational research and innovation projects in sectors and thematic areas of high importance for Cyprus, which are implemented in the frame of Joint Programmes of European Partnerships under the EU “Horizon Europe” Programme, in which the country participates. Furthermore, the Programme promotes the extroversion of local enterprises and research organisations, and their collaboration and networking with foreign organisations through their participation in the transnational projects.

The participation in current the Call of Proposals aims to promote the networking and collaboration between Cypriot and foreign organisations through the participation in transnational industrial research and development projects.

DESCRIPTION

European Partnerships are initiatives where the EU, national authorities and/or the private sector jointly commit to support the development and implementation of a programme of research and innovation activities. Partnerships will:

- address complex challenges outlined in «Horizon Europe» Programme, such as accelerating the transitions towards a society and economy that are climate neutral and circular,
- support the achievement of EU priorities, such as the European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the digital age, an economy that works for people, and a stronger Europe in the world,
- be impact-driven by deploying a broad range of R&I activities, from concept to demonstration and validation, to those supporting market, regulatory and societal uptake, and contribute to a stronger European Research Area (ERA), by avoiding the duplication of efforts, creating critical scales of investment and enhancing synergies between programmes.

Research on rare diseases is needed to provide knowledge for prevention, diagnosis, better care and everyday life improvement for patients.

In this context, the European Rare Diseases Research Alliance (ERDERA) has been established to further help in coordinating the research efforts of European, Associated and non-European countries in the field of rare diseases and implement the objectives of the International Rare Disease Research Consortium (IRDiRC). These actions follow the five Joint Transnational Calls for rare diseases research projects launched previously by the European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases (EJP RD) since 2019.

Projects will focus on a group of rare diseases or, as second priority, on a single rare disease following the European definition i.e., a disease affecting not more than five in 10.000 persons in the European Community, EC associated states, and Canada.

Only a few rare diseases benefit from treatment options, but possible commonalities exist between groups of rare diseases (i.e., common disease biological pathways, clinical symptoms and/or clinical phenotypes and importantly the combination of those common features). Therefore, with the view of offering more options for more patients suffering from different rare diseases, applicants are strongly encouraged to work on groups of rare diseases with commonalities and assemble criteria of meaningful grouping of the rare diseases under study, based on state-of-the-art scientific discoveries and clinical practice.

Research studies on therapies using small molecules, small non-coding chemically synthesized nucleic acid-based therapies, repurposed drugs or biologicals (e.g., antibodies or proteins such as enzymes, immune modulators or growth factors etc.).

Proposals must cover at least two of the following areas:

1. Development of novel therapies in a pre-clinical setting through cell, organoid and animal disease model studies, and/or use of in silico or artificial intelligence models to accelerate the success rate of the pre-clinical stage.
2. Development of predictive and pharmacodynamics biomarkers correlated to the efficiency of the therapy in a preclinical setting that could serve as surrogate endpoints
Replication of pre-clinical studies in an independent lab to increase validity of exploratory findings.
3. Pre-clinical proof of concept studies for evidence of pharmacological activity in vitro and in vivo, pharmaco-kinetics and pharmaco-dynamics of the investigational drug (i.e., small molecule(s) and/or biologic) and first toxicology and safety data as well as studies to support readiness for initiating clinical trial authorization conforming to regulatory requirements.
4. Translatability into humans should be the key focus of the project, and applicants should demonstrate access to relevant scientific or regulatory expertise (e.g., through innovation task forces or competent national authorities).

The thematic priorities are listed in Chapter 4 of [the ERDERA Transnational Call for Proposals](#).

MANAGEMENT & EXPLOITATION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Ownership of background and foreground Intellectual Property (IP), as well as relevant conditions for the use of IP, shall be settled accordingly through bilateral or other agreements among Consortium Partners.

BENEFICIARIES

Research Organisations, Enterprises, Other Public or Private Sector Organisations.

SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation conditions and requirements for the International Consortium, are described in the relevant Transnational Call for Proposals of the ERDERA Partnership.

The Host Organisation (HO) of the Cypriot Consortium could be a Research Organisation, an Enterprise or an Other Organisation.

Research Organisations, Enterprises and Other Organisations can participate as Partner Organisations (in the Cypriot Consortium).

Maximum number of organisations in the Cypriot Consortium should be between one to three (1-3).

According to the ERDERA Transnational Call, up to 2 partners from the same country can participate in the Consortium. The number of the Cypriot Consortium in a Proposal can be between one and three (1-3), provided that the third organisation in the Cypriot Consortium is only a Patient Advocacy Organisation that fulfils the definition of a Patient Advocacy Organisation in the Transnational Call. In case the Cypriot Consortium does not include a Patient Advocacy Organisation then the maximum number of Cypriot Consortium must not exceed 2 partners in order the Consortium to be eligible according to ERDERA rules.

Participation of Large Enterprises (including Private Universities) is only permitted when an SME is also participating in the Cypriot Consortium, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

It is noted that Organisations from foreign countries are funded by their respective national funding organisations/agencies

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Projects can include Basic Research and/or, and/or Industrial Research and/or Experimental Development.

The Cypriot Consortium must be involved in Basic Research and/or Industrial Research and/or Experimental Development activities. In addition, Cypriot Consortium may be involved in dissemination and coordination activities of the transnational Consortium.

Projects must fall within Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 1-8¹.

¹ The Technology Readiness Levels adopted by the EU are the following:

DURATION OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Up to 36 Months

All projects receiving funding from the RIF must be completed by 31 July 2030 at the latest.

Budget

€ 2.141.760

MAXIMUM FUNDING PER PROJECT

€ 1.000.000

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Personnel costs, Instruments and Equipment Costs, Costs for External Services, Costs for Travelling Abroad, Consumables, Other Specific Costs, Overheads.

It is noted that dissemination activities are eligible only for entities falling under Category A (Research Organisations) and Category C2 (Other Public and Wider Public Sector Organisations).

It is noted that, all beneficiaries that have not previously participated in the RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, should make use of the simplified cost Method «Standard Scales of Unit Costs» for the calculation of personnel costs.

RESTART 2016-2020 WORK PROGRAMME

All general rules and procedures for the participation of organisations and individuals, the eligible activities and costs, as well as the specific information regarding the «Innovation Vouchers» Programme, as well as the other RESTART 2016-2020 Programmes, are included in the **RIF's Work Programme for the «RESTART 2016-2020» Programmes for Research, Technological Development and Innovation – Programmes for the Period 05/2022 – 12/2026,**

TRL 1 - basic principles observed,

TRL 2 - technology concept formulated,

TRL 3 - experimental proof of concept,

TRL 4 - technology validated in lab,

TRL 5 - technology validated in relevant environment,

TRL 6 - technology demonstrated in relevant environment,

TRL 7 - system prototype demonstration in operational environment,

TRL 8 - system complete and qualified,

TRL 9 - actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies)

which is the main reference document and an important information source for interested parties and can be found on the Research and Innovation Foundation's **IRIS (Innovation Research Information System) Portal** (<https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary>).

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

- All private law entities (Host Organisation and Partner Organisations) should submit to Competent National Registries updated data regarding their ultimate beneficial owners as per «The prevention and suppression of money laundering and terrorist financing Law of 2007 (188(I)/2007)». RIF reserves the right to carry out checks in the competent Registers and to request an official proof for the registration. Furthermore, during contract preparation, all private law entities are obliged to submit the Declaration of Beneficial Owners accompanied by the official proof of registration. In addition, all Private Law Entities applying for funding exceeding EUR 150.000 must also submit in the Declaration of Beneficiaries the details of their actual beneficiaries (Name, Identity Card/Passport Number and Date of Birth).
- Funded Projects should comply with the «Do No Significant Harm» principle, according to which they must not include or support activities that could cause significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives, as per Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2020/852, on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment.
- The budget of the proposal to be submitted to the RIF should be the same with the budget of the Cypriot participant(s) included in the transnational proposal budget. If the two budgets differ, during the contract preparation stage the RIF will accept as budget for each cost category, the amount included in the transnational proposal. In any case, requested funding in the Contract should not exceed: (a) the requested funding included in the transnational proposal, and (b) the maximum funding per project as defined in the national Call for Proposals.

SUBMISSION

The submission of a Proposal includes the submission of the required information and documents on both the ERDERA electronic submission system and the RIF's IRIS Portal.

More specifically, the Transnational Project Coordinator should submit the Proposal electronically (on-line application form) on the ERDERA electronic submission system.

Furthermore, the Coordinator of the Cypriot Consortium should also submit a Proposal on the RIF's IRIS Portal (<https://iris.research.org.cy>), not later than the deadline specified in the table "General Call Information" above.

It is noted that, the Project Coordinator and all local participating organizations of the Cypriot Consortium, should register in advance on the IRIS Portal.

Potential applicants are advised to read the “Guide for Applicants”, which contains guidelines and clarifications regarding the Submission procedure and the “IRIS Portal User Manual” which can be found on the IRIS Portal <https://iris.research.org.cy/#/documentlibrary>).

The Research and Innovation Foundation encourages in all its Calls for Proposals:

the participation of women as Project Coordinators, and a gender-balanced participation in Projects.

The Proposal submitted to the RIF includes only general information regarding the Transnational Proposal (Title, Acronym etc), the Coordinator of the Cypriot Consortium and the partner organisations of the Transnational Consortium (including the Cypriot organisations) as well as detailed budget for each partner participating in the Cypriot Consortium.

The Project Proposal consists of the following parts:

1. Part A – General Information & Budget (electronic form (fields) to be completed online through the IRIS Portal).

It is noted that, for Proposals with Cypriot partners which will be selected for funding, the Coordinator of the Cypriot Consortium will be asked to submit supplementary information and supporting documentation regarding the role and activities of the Cypriot Consortium, in the IRIS Portal, during the contract preparation phase.

PROJECT SELECTION

Evaluation Procedure

A Proposal Eligibility Check will be performed for every Proposal with Cypriot participants, as described in the RESTART 2016-2020 Work Programme. It is noted that in case a Proposal with Cypriot participants is not submitted on IRIS according to the procedure laid down, then it will be deemed ineligible.

The ERDERA Partnership applies its own central procedures and regulations for submission and evaluation of proposals and selection of projects, which are described in the Work Programme and relevant guidelines of the Programme. All documents are available in the Partnership’s website. Interested organisations are strongly advised to read thoroughly the aforementioned documents before submitting a Proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

Central evaluation criteria of the are described in the ERDERA Call Text.

Selection

The final funding decision is taken centrally by all the participating countries in the Partnership, based amongst others, on the results of the scientific evaluation and the availability of national budgets.

RIF will choose to fund eligible Proposals with Cypriot participation according to the list of successful proposals (ranking list) that is prepared by the Partnership until the budget is exhausted and if they are supported for funding by the other funding agencies.

INFORMATION – CONTACT DETAILS

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The Research and Innovation Foundation may at its discretion, proceed to the extension or revocation of the present Call by applying the same publication procedure.