



Preliminary Announcement

Call for Proposals for Research Projects on Mental Disorders

Disorders of the brain are major causes of morbidity, mortality and impaired quality of life. Around one billion people suffer from disorders of the central nervous system. To promote biomedical and health research in the field of disease related neuroscience, the 'Network of European Funding for Neuroscience Research' (NEURON) has been established under the ERA-NET scheme of the European Commission (EC). Using the ERA-NET mechanism, the following funding organisations together with the EC intend to launch a joint transnational call for funding multilateral research projects in the field of Mental Disorders.

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| • Austrian Science Fund (FWF) | Austria |
| • Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS) | Belgium |
| • Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) | Belgium |
| • Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS) (Québec) | Canada |
| • Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (CIHR-INMHA) | Canada |
| • French National Research Agency (ANR) | France |
| • Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) | Germany |
| • Chief Scientist Office, Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) | Israel |
| • Ministry of Health (MOH) | Italy |
| • State Education Development Agency (VIAA) | Latvia |
| • The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) | The Netherlands* |
| • The Research Council of Norway (RCN) | Norway |
| • National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) | Poland |
| • Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development & Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) | Romania |
| • Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) | Slovakia |
| • National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) | Spain |
| • Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (MINECO)/ State Research Agency (AEI) | Spain* |
| • Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) | Switzerland |
| • The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey(TUBITAK) | Turkey |

*Pending on decision

1. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to facilitate multinational, collaborative research projects that will address important questions related to mental health and mental disorders. These may include research on mood disorders (major depression, bipolar disorders), anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, autism spectrum disorders, substance use disorders, and other mental disorders.

Research questions may encompass the entire lifespan. Since many mental disorders develop during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood (< 25 years), it is a clear interest for society to find pharmacological, psychological therapies and brain stimulation therapies, besides new diagnostic strategies, to promote mental health in this focus group.

Research on dementia is excluded from the present call.

The call will accept novel and original research proposals within the breadth of research understanding basic mechanisms of disease to proof-of-concept clinical studies in humans.

The NEURON funding organizations particularly wish to promote multi-disciplinary work and translational research proposals that combine basic and clinical approaches. For many research questions, collaboration within a consortium of psychiatrists and neurologists is important and therefore encouraged, where appropriate, along with fundamental neuroscientists, and disciplines with specific expertise such as e.g. neuro-pediatricians.

Research proposals should cover at least one of the following areas:

- a) Fundamental research on the pathogenesis, aetiology and resilience mechanisms of mental disorders. This may include the development of innovative or shared resources and technologies. The relevance of the research to disease must be clearly indicated.
- b) Clinical research to develop novel strategies for prevention, (early) diagnosis, patient stratification, therapy, and/or rehabilitation procedures for mental disorders.

Proposals may include, among others, immuno-psychiatric approaches, studies on (epi)genetic causes of mental disorders, studies on social, environmental and biological risk and resilience factors. Innovative treatment approaches may include e.g. brain stimulation, use of mobile health applications, and combinations of cognitive and physical or psychosocial and pharmacological interventions.

The individual components of joint applications should be complementary and contain novel, ambitious ideas. There should be clear added value in funding the collaboration over the individual projects.

Clinical studies are eligible up to the point of proof of concept¹. Exploitation of existing clinical data sets is encouraged. Appropriate access to relevant, well-characterized patient populations or suitable biomaterial collections must be demonstrated. Pooling and synergistic usage of existing data, patient cohorts, and biomaterial or animal model collections are expected. Applicants should also demonstrate that they have the expertise and range of skills required to conduct the study or that appropriate collaborations are in place. Animal models or cell models used in the project should already be established and validated. The development of new animal or cell models is excluded from the scope of the call unless it is a marginal part of the proposal (i.e. as a strategy to strengthen the results or hypothesis in a project).

Research consortia are encouraged to meaningfully involve patients and carers. Applicants are expected to make every effort to include patient approaches, where appropriate, at each stage of the research process and/or specify plans for future involvement.

2. General conditions for application

Joint transnational research proposals may be submitted by research teams working in universities (or other higher education institutions), non-university public research institutes, hospitals, as well as in commercial companies, particularly small and medium-size enterprises. The eligibility of the afore-mentioned institutions, together with details of eligible costs (e.g. personnel, material, consumables, travel money, investments), are subject to the administrative requirements of individual funding organizations and will therefore differ. Please note that, for some funding organizations, commercial companies are not eligible or are only eligible under certain conditions (e.g. only in partnership with academic institutions in the consortium). Clarification should be obtained from the individual funding agencies (see contact details below).

Only transnational projects will be funded. Each consortium submitting a proposal must be comprised of a minimum of three research groups eligible for funding by organizations listed in this call text (see above). The eligible research groups must be from at least three different countries. The total number of research groups in a consortium is limited to five including partners participating by own expenses. Not more than two research groups can be from the same country.

The ERA-NET NEURON strives to strengthen the European Research Area by including as many partner countries as possible in its funding scheme. Therefore, consortia including partners from countries that are to date underrepresented in this funding scheme (Latvia, Romania and Slovakia) may increase the total number of partners to six.

¹ Eligibility and funding requirements for clinical trials vary between the partner countries. Clarification may be obtained from the individual funding agencies.

Research groups not eligible to their national funding organizations or from countries which are not involved in this call may participate in projects only if their participation clearly provides an added value to the consortium and if they present evidence on secured budget for their part in the project. In any case, the total number of research groups in one consortium must not exceed five, or six if one of the underrepresented countries listed above is comprised.

Each consortium should have the critical mass to achieve ambitious scientific goals and **should clearly demonstrate added value** from working together. Projects can be funded for a period of up to three years and according to the national/regional funding organizations' regulations.

There will be a **two-stage procedure** for joint applications: **pre-proposals** and **full proposals**. In both cases, one joint proposal document (in English) shall be prepared by the partners of a joint transnational proposal, and must be submitted to the Joint Call Secretariat by one spokesperson, the coordinator, through the electronic submitting system exclusively. A link to access to submission system as well as the proposal templates will be published together with the call text.

3. Timetable

The call is scheduled to open on **January 8, 2018**.

The deadline for submitting the **pre-proposals** is scheduled for **March 8, 2018, 14:00 CET**.

The pre-proposals will be reviewed in a written (remote) peer review process. By mid-May 2018 the coordinators of the top-ranked pre-proposals will be invited by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit a **full proposals** by **June 26, 2018, 14:00 CET**.

An international Peer Review Panel will evaluate the full proposals and establish a ranking list of the fundable proposals by scientific assessment. Based on this ranking list the Call Steering Committee will determine the projects to be funded. Based on these recommendations, final decisions will be made by the funding agencies and will be subject to budgetary considerations.

Funding is expected to start early in 2019.

4. How to obtain further information

Further information can be obtained by contacting the national contact person listed below and on the NEURON website: <http://www.neuron-eranet.eu/>.

Country (Region)	Contact person(s)	Links to national/regional calls mentioning particular requirements
Austria	Dr Herbert Mayer	Austrian Science Fund (FWF) herbert.mayer@fwf.ac.at Tel. +43-1-5056740-8212
Belgium (French Speaking Community)	Dr Arnaud Goolaerts Dr Florence Quist	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS) rue d'Egmont 5 1000 Bruxelles Tél. +32 (0)2 504 93 28 arnaud.goolaerts@frs-fnrs.be florence.quist@frs-fnrs.be +32(0)2 504 9351
Belgium (Flanders)	Dr Alain Deleener Toon Monbaliu	Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) Egmontstraat 5 1000 Brussel www.fwo.be eranet@fwo.be +32 2 550 15 70
Canada	Ms. Melody Sajedi	Canadian Institutes of Health Research Melody.sajedi@cihr-irsc.gc.ca 613-960-9475 www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca
Canada (Québec)	Dr Anne-Cécile Desfaits Maxime Beaudoin	Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS) AnneCecile.Desfaits@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-0463 Maxime.Beaudoin@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-2114 #1369 www.frqs.gouv.qc.ca
France	Dr Sheyla Mejia-Gervacio	French National Research Agency (ANR) Health & Biology Department NeuronCalls@agencerecherche.fr +33 178 09 80 14
Germany	Dr Sascha Helduser	Project Management Agency (DLR-PT) – Health, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) Sascha.Helduser@dlr.de +49 228 3821 1116 www.gesundheitsforschung-bmbf.de
Israel	Dr Ayelet Zamir	Chief Scientist Office - Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) http://www.health.gov.il/Subjects/research/International_cooperations/Pages/default.aspx ayelet.zamir@moh.gov.il +972-2-508-2168
Italy	Dr Gaetano Guglielmi	Ministero della Salute g.guglielmi@sanita.it www.ministerosalute.it/

Latvia	Dr Uldis Berkis	State Education Development Agency www.viaa.gov.lv Uldis.Berkis@viaa.gov.lv Office: +371-67785406 Mobile: +371-29472349
Netherlands	Dr Melanie Neijts	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) www.nwo.nl Dr. Melanie Neijts m.neijts@nwo.nl Tel: +31 70 3494033
Norway	Dr Alexandra Bjørk-Skaflestad	The Research Council of Norway (RCN) alb@rcn.no Tel.: +47 22 03 72 24
Poland	Dr Marcin Chmielewski	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) Section for International Programmes marcin.chmielewski@ncbr.gov.pl phone: + 48 22 39 07 109 fax.: +48 22 20 13 408 www.ncbr.pl
Romania	Mrs. Mihaela Manole	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) Mihaela.manole@uefiscdi.ro Tel: +4 021 30 23 863
Slovakia	Dr Jan Barancik Mrs. Katarina Bibova	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) Department for International Cooperation barancik@up.upsav.sk +421 2 5751 0137 bibova@up.upsav.sk +421 2 5751 0136 www.sav.sk
Spain	Mrs. Maria Druet	National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) SG de Programas Internacionales de Investigación y Relaciones Institucionales phone: +34 91 822 2530 mdruet@isciii.es
Spain	Dr Esther Chacón (representative) Dr Juan José Garrido (scientific issues) Mrs. Ana Barra (administrative and technical issues)	Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (MINECO) State Research Agency (AEI) neuron@aei.gob.es phone: +34 91 603 83 98
Switzerland	Dr Véronique Planchamp	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Division Biology and Medicine veronique.planchamp@snf.ch

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Turkey	Dr Recep Emrah Çevik	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) www.tubitak.gov.tr emrah.cevik@tubitak.gov.tr