



Call for Proposals for  
**‘European Research Projects on  
External Insults to the Nervous System’**

**Submission deadline for pre-proposals: March 14 2016, 14:00 CET**

**Electronic proposal submission**

For further information, please visit us on the web

**<http://www.neuron-eranet.eu>**

or contact

**Dr. Sascha Helduser**

NEURON Joint Call Secretariat

German Aerospace Center (DLR)  
Project Management Agency  
- Health Research -

Heinrich-Konen-Str. 1  
53227 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49-228-3821-1116  
E-Mail: [Sascha.Helduser@dlr.de](mailto:Sascha.Helduser@dlr.de)

## 1. Purpose

Maintenance, improvement and restoration of human health are of fundamental importance and worldwide priority. Biomedical and health research provide an important basis for the improvement of healthy living. 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. In Europe, disorders of the brain account for approximately one-third of the burden of all diseases. Therefore, neuroscience research and its translation into diagnostic and therapeutic outcomes are fundamental.

To address this, the 'Network of European Funding for Neuroscience Research' (NEURON) has been established under the ERA-NET scheme of the European Commission (<http://www.neuron-eranet.eu>). The aim of the ERA-NET NEURON is to co-ordinate research efforts and funding programmes of its partner countries in the field of disease related neuroscience.

Under the umbrella of NEURON, a joint transnational call (JTC-2016) is now launched together with the European Commission using the ERA-NET Cofund mechanism in the field of 'External In-sults to the Nervous System'. The following funding organizations have agreed to fund the joint call for multinational research projects in this scientific area. The call will be conducted simultaneously by the funding organizations in their respective countries and co-ordinated centrally by the Joint Call Secretariat.

- 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
- Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), The Netherlands
- The Research Council of Norway (RCN), Norway
- National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR), Poland
- Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal
- Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Romania
- Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), Slovakia
- National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII), Spain
- Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO), Spain
- Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Switzerland
- The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), Turkey
- Medical Research Council (MRC), United Kingdom

## 2. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to facilitate multinational, collaborative research projects that will address important questions relating to external insults to the central nervous system. These insults often cause permanent disability and constitute a heavy burden for patients and their families. The call will accept proposals ranging from understanding basic mechanisms of disease through proof-of-concept clinical studies in humans to neurorehabilitation. **The focus of the call is on primary physical insults to the central nervous system, i.e. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Spinal Cord Injury (SCI).** The call covers acute traumatic events over the entire lifespan.

Excluded from this call are research projects on haemorrhage and hypoxia. Moreover, research on psychological/mental consequences of insults, including stress related disorders (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder) is not part of the present call. Research on neurodegenerative disorders will not be eligible in the present call.

The ERA-NET NEURON funding organizations particularly wish to promote **multi-disciplinary work** and to encourage **translational research proposals** that combine basic and clinical approaches, for the benefit of the affected patients.

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

- a) Fundamental research investigating consequences of external insults to the central nervous system on a biological and functional level. This may include the development of innovative or shared resources, and new technologies for the prediction, prevention or therapy of disease.
- b) Clinical research, including the exploitation of novel and/or existing clinical data sets, to develop new strategies for diagnosis, therapy, and technology-driven neurorehabilitation (e.g. brain computer interfaces, EEG and neuroimaging approaches) for diseases after external insults to the central nervous system.

Only original and novel research projects will be funded. Applicants should align with existing international platforms and research programmes (e.g. [International Initiative for Traumatic Brain Injury Research, InTBIR](#)), where appropriate and proposals should build on research data and knowledge already available in the field, where relevant. The individual components of joint applications should be complementary and contain novel, ambitious ideas to answer key questions. There should be a clear added value in funding the collaboration over the individual projects.

Clinical studies up to the point of proof of concept are eligible for funding<sup>1</sup>.

---

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

### 3. Application

#### 3.1 Eligibility

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 research groups must be from at least three different countries. The total number of research groups in a consortium is limited to five. 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, Slovakia, and Turkey) may increase the total number of partners to six.

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. Each project must nominate a project co-ordinator who represents the consortium externally and is responsible for its internal management (e.g., the application procedure, the consortium agreement, reporting). It is mandatory that the co-ordinator of a consortium is eligible to be funded by one of the organizations listed in this call text.

Only projects that fulfil the legal and ethical international/EU and national and institutional standards will be funded. Funding for this kind of projects will be dependent on a positive vote from the responsible ethical and legal committee(s). All procedures involving human beings will conform to the Helsinki Declaration.

*Although applications must be submitted jointly by groups from several countries, the individual research groups will be funded by the individual NEURON funding organization(s) of their respective countries. Eligibility criteria are the matter of individual partner funding organizations. In the context of the ERA-NET Cofund mechanism, additional/new criteria may apply.*

***Therefore, applicants are strongly advised to follow the instructions contained in the country-specific eligibility tables which are published on the NEURON website and to contact their national/regional funding organization to confirm eligibility matters before submitting an application.***

### **3.2 Submission of joint transnational proposals**

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 co-ordinator.

Pre-proposals must be submitted in electronic format no later than **March 14, 2016** (14:00:00 CET) via the **electronic submission** system.

Any fundamental changes between the pre- and full proposals concerning the composition of the consortia, objectives of the project or requested budget will be accepted on permission of the Call Steering Committee, which may be granted in exceptional cases if detailed justification is provided to the Joint Call Secretariat.

**NOTE:** Full proposals will be accepted only from those applicants **explicitly invited** by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit them.

### **3.3 Further information**

For further details, please refer to the respective submission forms available through the NEURON web site. If you need additional information, please contact the Joint Call Secretariat, or the representative of your funding organization (see Annex for contact data).

## **4. Evaluation and decision**

The review process will be in two stages.

### **4.1 Formal check of proposals**

The Joint Call Secretariat will check the proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (e.g., date of submission; number of participating countries; inclusion of all necessary information

in English). The Joint Call Secretariat will also forward the proposals to the national/regional funding organizations, which will perform a formal and eligibility check of compliance with their respective regulations. Proposals not meeting the formal criteria will be rejected at this stage.

The Call Steering Committee may reject proposals if they are clearly outside the scope of the call.

Proposals passing these check points will be forwarded to the joint Peer Review Panel for evaluation.

## **4.2 Peer-review of proposals**

The reviewers will assess if the projects are within the scope of the call and carry out the evaluation according to specific evaluation criteria:

1. Excellence
  - Scientific quality of the approach and methodology
  - Novelty of the scientific concept/hypotheses
  - Competence and experience of participating research partners in the field(s) of the proposal (previous work in the field, specific technical expertise)
2. Impact
  - Potential impact of the expected results on clinical and other health related applications
  - Added-value of transnational collaboration
3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation
  - Feasibility of the project
  - Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, resources, time-frame and related risk analysis
  - Quality and added-value of collaborative and multi-disciplinary interactions within the consortium
  - Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures

## **4.3 Decision**

### **4.3.1 Pre-proposals**

Eligible pre-proposals will be reviewed using the above mentioned evaluation criteria via a written (remote) peer review process. Based on the scores in the written reviews a ranking list will be set up. Preferably, each pre-proposal will be reviewed by at least three reviewers. By mid May 2016,

the co-ordinators of the selected proposals will be invited by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit a full proposal **no later than June 30, 2016, 14:00 CET**.

#### **4.3.2 Full proposals**

The international Peer Review Panel will evaluate the full proposals based on the above mentioned evaluation criteria 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 in compliance with EU Cofund regulations, taking into account the national budgets available. Based on these recommendations, final decisions will be made by the funding agencies and will be subject to budgetary considerations.

### **5. Funding procedure / Responsibilities / Reporting requirements**

#### **5.1 Funding procedure**

Projects can be funded for a period of up to three years and according to funding organizations' regulations. Funding is expected to start **early in 2017**.

Successful research groups will be funded directly by the respective funding organizations.

Funding will be administered according to the terms and conditions of the responsible funding organizations, taking into account all other applicable regulations and legal requirements.

#### **5.2 Responsibilities**

Within a joint proposal, each group leader will be the contact person for the relevant national/regional funding organization. The co-ordinators of funded projects together with the respective funding organizations shall make every effort to seek a common start date for all research groups in the consortium.

After the evaluation and selection procedures are completed, each consortium selected to be funded is required to draft and sign a Consortium Agreement (CA) suitable to their own team. The CA will determine a common project start date, manage the delivery of project activities, finances and intellectual property rights (IPR), and avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project. All consortia are strongly encouraged to sign the CA before the official project start date; the CA must be signed within the first six months after the project start date.

#### **5.3 Reporting Requirements**

On behalf of the research consortium, the project co-ordinator will be required to submit a brief annual scientific progress report on the project and one final report in the end, to the Joint Call Secretariat. Group leaders may be required to submit reports separately to their national funding organization; reporting guidance will be forwarded by the relevant funding organization, as applicable.

Annual reports should be submitted by April-30 the following year. Annual reports do not need to be submitted if the project ends in the first three months of the following year (i.e. between January and March). In this case, the submission of a final report will suffice. However, instead of submitting the final report within the usual six month period (see below), the final report will be required within four months of project completion.

The deadline for submitting final reports is six months after the end of the project. It is the task of the co-ordinators to determine a formal end date for project completion. This is required, as partners may be granted extensions of differing duration. Co-ordinators will be informed about this procedure by the Joint Call Secretariat and will receive the report template in due course.

The co-ordinators will be asked to present a progress report during an intermediate status symposium. The attendance is obligatory for all co-ordinators and Principal Investigators (PIs). Accordingly, travel expenses to attend the symposium should be encumbered in the proposal budget plans. Early-career scientists working on the projects are welcome to join the status symposium together with the PIs.

Funding recipients must ensure that all outcomes (publications, etc.) of transnational NEURON projects include a proper acknowledgement of ERA-NET NEURON and the respective funding partner organizations, and are in line with the relevant publication requirements.

## Annex

Please note that country specific requirements might apply to this call. **Compliance with the national/regional regulations specified in the country specific information is mandatory. We strongly advise you to contact your national/regional representative prior to submitting a pre-proposal:**

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 (Wallonia)	Dr Arnaud Goolaerts	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS) rue d'Egmont 5 1000 Bruxelles Tél. +32 (0)2 504 93 28 arnaud.goolaerts@frs-fnrs.be
Belgium (Flanders)	Dr Olivier Boehme	Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) Egmontstraat 5 1000 Brussel www.fwo.be eranet@fwo.be
Canada	Dr Elizabeth Theriault  Melody Sajedi	Canadian Institutes of Health Research www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca Elizabeth.theriault@ubc.ca  Melody.Sajedi@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
Canada (Québec)	Dr Anne-Cécile Desfaits  Karine Genest	Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS) AnneCecile.Desfaits@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-0463  Karine.Genest@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-2114 #1275 www.frqs.gouv.qc.ca
France	Dr Sheyla Mejia-Gervacio	French National Research Agency (ANR) Health & Biology Department NeuronCalls@agencerecherche.fr Tél. +33 (0) 1 78 09 80 14
Germany	Dr Sascha Helduser	Project Management Agency (DLR-PT) – Health Research, 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 Benny Leshem	Chief Scientist Office - Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) bennyleshem@gmail.com www.health.gov.il/research-fund
Italy	Dr Gaetano Guglielmi	Ministero della Salute <a href="mailto:g.guglielmi@sanita.it">g.guglielmi@sanita.it</a> www.ministerosalute.it/
Latvia	Dr Uldis Berkis	State Education Development Agency <a href="http://www.viaa.gov.lv">www.viaa.gov.lv</a> <a href="mailto:Uldis.Berkis@viaa.gov.lv">Uldis.Berkis@viaa.gov.lv</a> Office: +371-67785406 Mobile: +371-29472349

Netherlands	Mrs. Moniek Lijster	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) www.nwo.nl m.lijster@nwo.nl Tel: +31 70 3440922
Norway	Dr Alexandra Bjørk-Skaflestad	The Research Council of Norway (RCN) <a href="mailto:alb@rcn.no">alb@rcn.no</a> Tel.: +47 22 03 72 24
Poland	Mr. Marcin Chmielewski	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) Section for Research Projects BIOMED <a href="mailto:marcin.chmielewski@ncbr.gov.pl">marcin.chmielewski@ncbr.gov.pl</a> phone: + 48 22 39 07 109 fax.: +48 22 20 13 408 www.ncbir.pl
Portugal	Dr Anabela Isidro  Dr Carlos Pereira	Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT) Departamento das Relações Europeias, Bilaterais e Multilaterais Anabela.Isidro@fct.pt phone: Tel:+351 21 391 15 52  Carlos.Pereira@fct.pt Tel:+351 21 392 4397 www.fct.pt
Romania	Mrs. Luciana Bratu  Mrs. Simona Cristina Stoian	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Develop- ment and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) luciana.bratu@uefiscdi.ro Tel: +40 21 307 19 35, Fax: +40 21 307 19 11  simona.stoian@uefiscdi.ro Tel: +4 021 30 23 893
Slovakia	Dr Jan Barancik	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) Department for International Cooperation <a href="mailto:barancik@up.upsav.sk">barancik@up.upsav.sk</a> +421 2 5751 0137 www.sav.sk
Spain	Mrs. Irene Sánchez García	National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) SG de Programas Internacionales de Investigación y Relaciones Institucionales phone: +34 91 822 24 88 isanchezgarcia@isciii.es
Spain	Dr David Gonzalez Martinez	Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (MINECO) Subdirección de Proyectos Internacionales <a href="mailto:neuron@mineco.es">neuron@mineco.es</a>
Switzerland	Dr Véronique Planchamp	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Division Biology and Medicine <a href="mailto:veronique.planchamp@snf.ch">veronique.planchamp@snf.ch</a> Tel: +41 31 308 22 22
Turkey	Dr Recep Emrah Çevik	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) www.tubitak.gov.tr emrah.cevik@tubitak.gov.tr
United King- dom	Dr Jacqui Oakley	Medical Research Council www.mrc.ac.uk jacqui.oakley@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

### Anticipated amount of funding provided by each partner

The intended contribution by each participating funding organization to be used for the joint trans-national call for research projects is listed below. In addition, The EC will contribute a 'top-up' funding of up to 5.77 million EUR.

Partner Country	Funding organization	Anticipated amount of funding (for 3 years)
Austria	Austrian Science Fund (FWF)	500,000 €
Belgium	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)	200,000 €
Belgium	Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO)	200,000 €
Canada (Québec)	Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS)	450,000 CAD (305,000 €)
Canada	Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (CIHR-INMHA)	450,000 CAD (305,000 €)
France	French National Research Agency (ANR)	2,000,000 €
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)	3,000,000 €
Israel	Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH)	200,000 €
Italy	Ministry of Health (MOH)	2,000,000 €
Latvia	State Education Development Agency (VIAA)	210,000 €
The Netherlands	The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)	750,000 €
Norway	The Research Council of Norway (RCN)	500,000 €
Poland	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR)	500,000 €
Portugal	Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)	400,000 €
Romania	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development & Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)	500,000 €
Slovakia	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)	210,000 €
Spain	National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)	500,000 €
Spain	Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO)	670,000 €
Switzerland	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)	1,000,000 CHF (923,000 €)
Turkey	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK)	800,000 €
United Kingdom	Medical Research Council (MRC)	1,000,000 €