

“FAQ” (Frequently Asked Questions)

Biodiversa+ 2024-2025 Call (BiodivTransform)

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1. Call text (themes, scope, methodological approach)

1.1 I have questions about the scope of the call. Who can I contact?

For reasons of fairness and equity, the Call Secretariat and the Funding Organisation contact points cannot answer questions related to the research themes of the proposals, i.e., whether these are in adequacy with the call text.

Applicants are strongly advised to take careful note of the aims and scope of the call and to assess the relevance of their proposed research against the thematic priorities as described in the [Announcement of Opportunity \(Call Document 1\)](#).

1.2 What is Transformative Change?

Although transformative change remains an emerging concept, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) defines transformative change as “Fundamental system-wide reorganisation across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values needed for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity” (IPBES 2019). A full section within the [Announcement of Opportunity \(Call Document 1\)](#) relates and discuss the concept of transformative change.

1.3 Why are there no different themes in the call text this year?

In contrast to previous Biodiversa+ calls (2008 – 2023), this call does not define sub-themes but is an opportunity for the best bottom-up proposals in the emerging research field of transformative change and biodiversity research. A prerequisite for being funded under this call is that the proposal demonstrates its potential to generate knowledge of high relevance to science and society. The starting point for such generation of knowledge is not defined; projects synthesising existing knowledge into new ground-breaking insights across disciplinary boundaries fall within the scope of this call, as well as projects generating knowledge from new data. The following list of foci and knowledge gaps can inspire on what projects might be relevant for this call. However, it is important to highlight that this call aims to fund projects that have a **holistic approach, with a clear view to societal transformation**.

1.4 Is the call oriented towards more basic/fundamental research or applied research? What is the TRL (Technology Readiness Level) expected?

We try to go beyond the linear model of research (basic vs. applied research) and there are no formal requirements in this sense. The call aims at funding excellent projects, which include

both academic excellence and innovative science on one hand and stakeholder engagement and the demonstration of a clear societal impact, including policy impact on the other hand. Transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral approaches are greatly encouraged.

1.5 What is meant by Stakeholder engagement?

Proposals are strongly encouraged to include non-academic stakeholders working together with researchers to co-produce new knowledge relevant for society. They should do so by considering the potential societal (including policy) impacts of their research (i.e., reflexive and introspective). Where relevant, stakeholders should be involved in different stages of the project, for example in the initial phase when defining research objectives and strategies, in implementing the project through data collection or analysis, to contribute to better dissemination of the knowledge gained, and/or to facilitate a systemic approach to a challenge.

However, this involvement must not be an end in itself, but should be designed to add clear value to the project. For guidance, please consult the Biodiversa+ handbooks on [Stakeholder engagement](#) and on [Citizen science](#) (all Biodiversa+ guiding documents can be found [here](#)). If the inclusion of relevant stakeholders within the project management is not feasible or useful, this should be explained including how the proposed work remains valuable in a societal context.

According to the Biodiversa+ evaluation criteria, proposals will be judged on both scientific excellence and their expected impact on society and policy, in addition to project implementation. Proposals should therefore focus on clear research questions with tractable and testable hypotheses and clearly explain expected societal and policy impact as well as their stakeholder engagement approach. In the proposal, applicants should detail how stakeholders will be engaged in the project: who may benefit from or make use of the research, how they might benefit from and/or make use of the research, and methods for engaging with stakeholders and exchanging / disseminating data/knowledge/skills in the most effective and appropriate manners.

1.6 What is meant by Stakeholders vs. end-users?

A stakeholder is a person or group or anyone who is affected by or has an interest or stake in a particular issue. Examples of stakeholders include policy makers, governments, business leaders and industry representatives, representatives from non-profit groups or other citizen organisations, and individuals from loosely defined user groups.

An end-user is defined as a person or group that makes use of the knowledge and/or tools in a position to apply the information or tools being generated by a research project in a way that is of direct consequence to the concerned issue.

All end-users could also be considered stakeholders, but not all stakeholders are end-users.

1.7 What is meant by Policy relevance?

Project proposals, in addition to being academically excellent, are expected to consider innovative ways to have better impact on policy, as the holistic approach of this call includes going beyond traditional biodiversity actions, actors, academic disciplines, and methodologies. Biodiversa+ developed a guide for policy relevance of research projects to help researchers understand what is meant by policy and societal relevance and how this is evaluated in proposals. This guide is [available online](#). We encourage you to use it when designing your project and preparing your proposal, although note that it is currently being updated.

While applicants are seeking to present policy relevant research and engage in science-policy interfacing in their proposals, they should make sure to include the four S.I.E.V. elements, as described in the guide: Statement (on the policy relevance of the proposed research), Identification (of relevant policies and stakeholders), Engagement (activities are planned and presented in the proposal) and Value (added by the transnational dimension of your proposal for policy-making).

1.8 What is the signification of Transnational Added Value?

Transnational added value is the value resulting from the transnational research project, which is additional to the value that would have resulted from research projects funded at national or regional level.

Evidence of transnational added value can either be found directly among the countries involved in the research, or through indirect value accrued as a result of their joint work. Such value could for example include relevance to international policy and management processes, linking expertise and efforts across international teams, or upscaling of downscaling of efforts, methodology and knowledge across countries and regions.

For this call, the transnational added value should be end-user oriented and benefit environmental and societal actors beyond researchers, generating insights on the way.

1.9 What is meant by transdisciplinarity vs. interdisciplinarity?

Transdisciplinarity refers to the **inclusion of non-academic stakeholders working together with researchers from multiple scientific disciplines at the different stages of the project to co-produce new knowledge relevant for society**. Where relevant, stakeholders should be involved in different stages of the project (e.g., initial phase when defining research objectives and strategies, in implementing the project through data collection or analysis, to contribute to better dissemination of the knowledge gained, and/or to facilitate a systemic approach to a challenge. However, this involvement must not be an end in itself, but should be designed to add clear value to the project.

Interdisciplinary science refers to the **involvement of multiple academic disciplines**. Research teams should therefore span all disciplines of relevance for their project, be it natural, social and technical sciences, humanities, and/or arts. Proposals should demonstrate how they will ensure the equitable and appropriate combination and inclusion of relevant academic disciplines, collaboratively integrating their approaches and skills.

Transdisciplinarity will be evaluated by policy/management experts, part of the assessment criterion “Impact”, while interdisciplinarity will be evaluated by scientific experts, part of the assessment criterion “Excellence”.

1.10 Does the focus of the research action have to be on the European ground? Does it go against the spirit of the call if the research target considers countries not eligible in the call?

The research is not geographically limited. The scope or scale of the proposed research should exceed a single country and the transnational (including European) added value should be clearly demonstrated.

1.11 Can the focus of research be on an ecosystem of one country in which researchers from different countries are interested?

The researchers from different countries may work on sites in a given country; but if the results are mostly relevant for one country only and hardly generalisable, the transnational added value might be insufficient.

1.12 Could you give example of titles of projects you would fund?

The Call Secretariat does not comment on the scientific content of individual proposals. This task will be performed by an independent Evaluation Committee at both steps as well as external reviewers (step 2). For the same reason we cannot provide examples of projects to be funded. Nevertheless, the applicants are encouraged to check the [projects previously funded by Biodiversa+](#).

1.13 Are there any other related European funding opportunities in 2024 and how to choose which one is the most relevant for my research project?

Be aware of all relevant European initiatives and choose wisely the one best suited for your project. For topics with a strong focus on water and circularity, the [Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call](#) recommended. For topics with a strong focus on circular urban economies transition pathways, the [DUT 2024 Joint Transnational Call](#) is recommended.

2. Eligibility (common eligibility criteria and Funding Organisations’ national / regional rules)

2.1 Who can apply?

The call is open to any eligible research organisations. National / regional eligibility criteria apply to research entities and for private sector organisations (profit and non-profit).

The main applicant (project coordinator) must be employed by an eligible organisation in one of the countries participating in the call.

We draw your attention on the fact that **compliance with Funding Organisations' eligibility criteria and rules (e.g. eligible budget items) is mandatory**; applicants are strongly advised to approach their respective Funding Organisation Contact Point to make sure they respect all the eligibility criteria and rules.

Only eligible pre-proposals and eligible full proposals will be evaluated.

All national / regional eligibility and rules and associated information including the Funding Organisation Contact Point are [available here on the Biodiversa+ website](#).

Instructions regarding general eligibility, submission, evaluation criteria and other relevant information are also published in [the official Call Announcement Documents](#).

2.2 Which countries/regions can participate in the BiodivTransform joint call?

The BiodivTransform joint call is open to Partners from countries / regions with a Funding Organisation financially participating in the call.

To access the most updated list of participating countries, please consult the following webpage: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform>

Each Funding Organisation participating in the call will fund its national / regional research teams. The detailed list of participating funding organisations and their associated reserved budget is available here: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform-participating-funding-organisations/>

2.3 What is the difference between the general eligibility call rules and the Funding Organisations' rules?

For a proposal to be considered eligible for funding, the research partners involved in the consortium need to comply with a set of general eligibility rules of the call (see the procedures, eligibility and selection criteria detailed in the [Call document 1](#)). In addition, each project partner must be eligible according to the rules and criteria of their Funding Organisation.

IMPORTANT: If one Partner is not eligible, the whole proposal will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated, unless the eligibility issue(s) can be fixed without changing the substance of the proposal.

2.4 My country is not participating in the Call. Can I apply?

Partners from any country can be associated in a project as self-financed Partners if they can bring a secured budget from their own source of funding.

At Step 2, they should upload a signed official letter of commitment from their Head of Department or Financial administrator (as appropriate) on the EPSS (.pdf) when submitting their full proposals. The letter of commitment should be maximum 1 page for each self-financed partner and should be written in English. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to compile the letters of all self-financed partners. The letters of commitment are only requested for self-financed partners. Any other letters of support WILL NOT be considered for the evaluation and WILL NOT be forwarded to the Evaluation Committee.

Alternatively, non-eligible partners may be sub-contracted by eligible partners if their Funding Organisation rules permit it.

Further information is available in the call documents.

However, please note that:

- The project coordinator must be employed by an eligible organisation according to the terms and conditions of the participating Funding Organisation from which he/she applies for support. If a Partner is not eligible, the whole proposal will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated, unless the eligibility issue(s) can be fixed without changing the substance of the proposal.
- Partners from countries not participating in the call are not counted in the minimum number of three different countries, including at least two different EU Member States of Associated in countries needed in a project to be eligible.

2.5 I am affiliated to different laboratories in different countries. Can I apply several times as Partner within one Project under my different affiliations?

An individual researcher affiliated to several organisations cannot request funding for more than one of its affiliated organisations. If participating in the call as part of more than one organisation, the individual researcher must declare which research partner within the consortium they represent. They will not be considered as two different partners within the consortium.

It is not forbidden to have a same researcher acting as researcher in charge for several Partners within one Project (except if otherwise defined by a Funding Organisation's specific rules).

Yet please note that in this case:

- This Partner cannot request funding from several Funding Organisations. They will thus have to choose one Funding Organisation to which funding is requested, and
- This Partner will not be counted as two different Partners for the eligibility check.

2.6 Are international organisations such as IUCN eligible to receive funds and to be part of a consortium?

One of the main eligibility principles is the eligibility of the applicants to one of the Funding Organisations in the countries participating in the call.

In case of IUCN (and other international organisations) it depends on the eligibility of the institution versus its location and the national funding rules of the corresponding Funding Organisation. If a delegation of IUCN is eligible for funding in their country, then they are eligible in the call. If not, they may join the consortium as a self-financed partner or via subcontracting through an eligible partner.

If it is eligible, it will count as a national partner towards the minimum number of eligible partners. If the institution is participating to the project on their own funds, it will not count in the minimum number of partners required.

2.7 How long should the project last?

The project duration is **3 years**. Projects are expected to act as transnational project and not as a mosaic of national projects; to this end, as far as possible Partners should participate in the project for its entire duration. However, as needed, position of some team members can be requested for only part of the project's duration, as long as at least one member of each Partner remains involved for the whole project duration.

3. Call process (call calendar, evaluation procedure and criteria)

3.1 How will my project be evaluated and according to which criteria?

A two-step evaluation process will be organised:

- (i) **The first step** will consist in an **eligibility check** and an **evaluation (peer-review) of pre-proposals** by an independent Evaluation Committee (EvC), made up of a scientific and a policy/management panel, against the following criteria: fit to the scope of the call, novelty of the research and impact.
The Call Steering Committee (CSC, i.e. all Funding Organisations) will decide on the number of projects to be invited to step 2, strictly following the evaluation made by the EvC. Only successful pre-proposals will be invited to submit full proposals.
- (ii) **The second step** will consist in an **eligibility check** and an **evaluation of full proposals by and independent EvC and external reviewers**. Both the scientific and policy-management panels of the EvC will convene to evaluate and make the final ranking of the submitted full proposals according to the following assessment

criteria: (scientific) excellence, quality and efficiency of the implementation and impact; and considering the reviews obtained from external reviewers.

The CSC will decide on which projects to recommend for funding, strictly following the order of the ranking list established by the EvC.

For more detailed information about the evaluation criteria, please consult the call documents (Document 6 - “Assessment criteria”).

4. Proposal submission platform

4.1 How do I apply for the call?

- (i) First, applicants have to submit **pre-proposals** (in English): they have to provide information about the project consortia, a 5-pages description of the project, and the required budget for each partner through the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) before **the 8th of November 2024, 15:00 CET (local time in Brussels)**. **Submission of pre-proposals is MANDATORY**; it is not possible to enter the procedure at a later stage.
- (ii) Then, applicants invited to Step 2 will have to submit their **full proposal** (in English) through the EPSS before **the 11th of April 2025, 15:00 CEST (local time in Brussels)**.

Please note that it is an **ONLINE SUBMISSION**. The Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) will be open to the applicants at least one month before each deadline. **The online form is the only format that will be accepted. NO application can be sent by email.**

4.2 In which language(s) can the pre-proposals and full proposals be written?

Proposals must be written in **English** only. Proposal written in any other language won't be evaluated.

4.3 How to choose a good acronym for your proposal?

You are free to choose any acronym you wish for your proposal as long as it respects the allowed format, i.e., maximum 20 characters including only letters, numbers and space; no special characters.

However, keep in mind that **a good acronym increases the impact of the selected research projects**, as a wider audience will be able to find the results and pay attention to the good work that is not always reaching full potential with poorly chosen acronym. This should be useful and efficient with respect to communication purposes if your project is selected. Therefore, it is important to think about a useful and efficient name that is:

- 1- Easy to remember
- 2- Easy to search for and find on internet (unique)
- 3- Providing some ideas regarding the topic of the project

4.4 Which documents should be submitted for pre-proposal and full proposal?

Pre-proposals and full proposals have to be submitted via the “Electronic Proposal Submission System” (EPSS).

- You can download a PDF file of the pre-proposal and full proposal application forms on the [Biodiversa+ website](#), for information purposes only. Please note that the format of these forms might be slightly modified to fit the EPSS, and that only proposals submitted through the EPSS will be considered for evaluation.

In the EPSS: for both pre-proposals and full proposals, please note that only one PDF file can be uploaded. If you upload more than one file, the first file uploaded will be erased and will not be evaluated. Other file's types than PDF are not accepted.

A pre-proposal or a full proposal can be declared as ineligible if formatting conditions are not respected.

Letters of support are not requested and won't be considered for the evaluation, except at Stape 2 for self-financed partner who have to provide evidence that their organisations will support their activities at the full proposal step – see question “My country is not participating in the Call. Can I apply?”.

4.5 What are PIC and NACE codes (requested in the application forms)?

A PIC (Participation identification code) is a 9-digit number serving as a unique identifier for organisations (legal entities) participating in EU funding programmes / procurements. A search tool for organisations and their PICs is available [here](#).

The NACE code is a Statistical Classification of Economic Activities of the organisation. You can find further information about NACE at [Eurostat website](#) and the classification can be downloaded [here](#).

4.6 Can I write my pre-proposal / full proposal gradually on the submission platform?

If the deadline for submission has not been reached yet, you can write your pre-proposal / full proposal gradually by saving your progress each time. Do not forget to save your progress. Once you are done with writing your pre-proposal / full proposal, do not forget to click on the 'Submit' button.

Please note that:

- The online platform will stay open 5 minutes after the official deadline. Any proposals that will not be correctly submitted at this moment will be declared ineligible and will therefore not be evaluated nor considered for funding.
- All completed proposals will be submitted automatically when the platform closes to avoid a situation where an applicant does not have time to click on the submit button. In this situation, the proposal will be evaluated as it stands.

4.7 Do I need to add all self-financed partners on the EPSS?

No, whether you declare a self-financed partner depends on the visibility you would like to give them in the project consortia. If the tasks and roles they execute are crucial to the objectives of the research proposal, it is highly recommended to add these partners on the EPSS as to have the proposal evaluated to its full extent.

4.8 Do I need to add all subcontractors on the EPSS?

No, whether you declare a subcontractor depends on the visibility you would like to give them in the project consortia and if you have already the administrative information. Subcontractors are subject to the terms and conditions of each Funding Organisation providing the subcontracting costs and need to comply with their rules. Generally speaking, subcontracting is understood as the externalization of the execution of a (minor) project task that research Partner(s) cannot execute.

5. Building a consortium and preparing an application

5.1 Are partners allowed to make changes in their application between pre-proposal and full proposal stage?

The information given in the pre-proposals regarding the research questions and objectives of a proposed project is binding. No change regarding the scientific content will be allowed by the Call Steering Committee (CSC) between the pre-proposals and full proposals. However, it is still possible to make minor changes to improve your proposal if the objectives remain unchanged (you will have to declare these changes in your full proposal). Regarding the administrative details, a limited number of changes may be allowed by the Funding Organisation Contact Point (FCP) and/or CSC, provided they are in line with the general rules of the call and the rules of the Funding Organisations:

- **Change of budget can be allowed by the relevant Funding Organisation.** The FCP can decide according to its own rules whether it needs a justification for it. There is **no need** to inform the Call Secretariat.
- **Changes in the consortium composition:**
 - **No change of project coordinator (person in charge) will be allowed**, except in case of force majeure. A request of change of project coordinator must be submitted to the Call Secretariat, at least one week before the deadline for

submitting full proposals and it will be discussed on a case-by-case basis by the CSC.

- **Changes in the consortium composition are allowed (maximum two changes of Partners), provided approval by the concerned Funding Organisations.** Please note that the following actions are considered as changes: **addition, removal or replacement of a Partner (incl. self-financed partners)**. Please note that the maximum number of changes applies to “Partner”; it does not apply to “team member” or “subcontractors”.
 - In case of a removal of a Partner, consortia have to make sure that their consortium still includes the minimum number of requested Partners (excluding self-financed partners). If this is not the case, the project will be declared ineligible and won’t be evaluated. All new Partners have to comply with their respective Funding Organisation’s rules. If a new Partner is declared ineligible at Step 2, the whole consortium will be declared ineligible and won’t be evaluated.

In terms of procedure: The eligibility of new research Partners must be confirmed at least one week before the full proposal submission deadline. Changes must be asked to the FCP, with the Call Secretariat in copy, who needs to check the eligibility of the new Partner and agree with the change, before being implemented into the EPSS.

Please note that the following cases are **not considered** as one of the maximum two changes but the procedure mentioned above remains the same:

- If the change is explicitly requested by a Funding Organisation after the eligibility decision at Step 1
 - If a researcher in charge (person) remains the same but changes the institutions (within the same country), provided the institution fulfils eligibility criteria of the same funding organisation.
 - Similarly, if the institution remains the same but the researcher in charge (person) changes, provided the researcher in charge fulfils eligibility criteria of the same funding organisation.
- **The change(s) should not affect the substance of the proposal.** Applicants will have to indicate in their full proposal the changes made as compared to the pre-proposals (for information for the EvC and the Call Secretariat).

Please indicate the acronym of your project when you contact the Call Secretariat and/or your Funding Organisation.

- Compliance with Funding Organisation eligibility criteria and rules (e.g. eligible budget items) is mandatory; it is thus strongly recommended that applicants approach their respective Funding Organisation Contact Point to make sure they respect all the eligibility criteria and rules (contact list and main Funding Organisations’ rules are available in the [list of Funding Organisation PDF file](#).)

If one Partner is not eligible, the whole proposal will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated, unless the eligibility issue(s) can be fixed without changing the substance of the proposal.

5.2 What is the widening option?

The widening option is a measure to encourage participation and success of countries / regions with small research communities and/or where research applications have been less successful at Step 1 (pre-proposals). It will be set-up between Step 1 and 2 of the evaluation process:

- ➔ On a voluntary basis, consortia invited to submit a full proposal in Step 2 will have the possibility to include one or several new research Partner(s) from undersubscribed funding organisations between Step 1 and 2. The inclusion of one or several new research Partner(s) should be relevant for the proposal, and new research Partners should be well integrated in the consortium.
- ➔ The addition of a Partner from undersubscribed funding organisations is not considered as one of the maximum two changes allowed but the eligibility procedure remains the same and funding organisation national/ regional rules must be respected.

For more details on how to implement the widening options into your consortia, please consult the [Call documents](#).

5.3 Is the budget allowed to be changed between pre-proposal and full proposal stage?

Change of budget can be allowed by the relevant Funding Organisation. The FCP can decide according to its own rules whether it needs a justification for it. There is **no need** to inform the Call Secretariat.

5.4 Can a researcher participate in several proposals submitted under the BiodivTransform call?

Apart from the position of coordinator, there are no rules at the level of the Call regarding the number of proposals in which a partner can be included:

- The project coordinator (person in charge) can only participate as coordinator in one proposal of this call.
- Other research partners can participate in several proposals as long as this is in line with their Funding Organisation's eligibility rules.

Regarding the last point, we insist on the fact that some Funding Organisations have specific rules for this aspect. Please make sure that each national / regional team follows its relevant Funding Organisation rules. Specific questions should be addressed to the Funding Organisation Contact Points. All information regarding national / regional rules and focal points can be found here: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform-participating-funding-organisations/>

5.5 What are parallel submissions of proposals and is it allowed under this call?

Parallel submissions refer to multiple submission of a similar proposal (as a whole or in parts) to other funding opportunities / initiatives with overlapping evaluation process timewise or to the same programme.

Applicants must provide details of any parallel submissions on the EPSS at both the pre-proposal and full proposal stage.

We remind you that duplication of funding is not allowed for the same (whole or part) research project.

Please note that some Funding Organisations have specific rules on the possibility to apply as applicant in different proposals. Make sure you comply with your Funding Organisations' rules.

In addition, we draw your attention on the fact that other relevant calls for research proposals are being launch in 2024 by European initiatives, which you may find under the “Are there any other related European funding opportunities in 2024 and how to choose which one is the most relevant for my research project?” of the FAQ

As duplication of funding for the same proposal is not allowed, make sure to carefully choose the best fit for your proposals based on the scope of each call (including BiodivTransfom) and their respective research priorities.

5.6 Is it necessary to provide a Consortium Agreement with the full proposal?

According to the Biodiversa+ 2024-2025 common rules, no Consortium Agreement must be submitted with the full proposal form. However, please note that after the evaluation process and project selection, some national Funding Organisations require the project partners selected for funding to establish a project consortium agreement. The requirement will thus apply to all the project partners, even if their respective Funding Organisation does not require a project consortium agreement. In this case, the consortium agreement will be mandatory to launch the administrative registration of the project before the beginning of the project. To know which funding organisation request a consortium agreement, please refer to the PDF document detailing the Funding Organisation rules available from [the Biodiversa+ website](#).

5.7 I am looking for a Partner for my project or a project to join. What should I do?

Biodiversa+ has developed a Partner Search Tool (PST) that allows you to look for a Partner for a Project you would like to submit; or look for a Project to join.

You simply have to fill in a Partner / Project Search form on the following platform:
<https://proposals.etag.ee/biodiversa/2024/partner-search>

Your form will then be visible on the platform, and you may be contacted. You have the possibility to search for partners or projects to join on the platform according to different criteria: country, discipline, keywords.

Concerning the widening option:

- a. Applicants from undersubscribed funding organisations can declare their interest to join a consortium invited to Step 2. To facilitate contact with the coordinator of the full

proposal, applicants are invited to include the acronym of the proposal they want to join when declaring their interest in the PST. They are also encouraged to check the PST for new offers of interest by successful consortia.

- b. The successful consortia may use the PST to look for new Partners from undersubscribed funding organisations, in case they would like to add expertise to their consortium. They will have the opportunity to post a detailed offer on the Biodiversa+ PST.

5.8 What is the minimum size of the Consortium?

The project must be a transnational project involving **eligible research Partners from minimum three different countries financially participating in the call** and requesting support from at least three different Funding Organisations (the detailed list and associated information are available here: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform-participating-funding-organisations/>) including eligible research Partners from **at least two different EU Member States** participating in the call. Note that not all EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries financially participates in this call. Please refer to the [list of Participating countries](#) to know which ones are eligible for funding.

5.9 Are research partners from any EU Associated Countries [listed here](#) eligible for funding under this call?

No, only research partners based in countries with national / regional funding organisation(s) that have confirmed their financial participation and reserved a budget for this call are eligible for funding. The list of eligible countries / regions and associated participating funding organisations is available here: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform-participating-funding-organisations/>

5.10 Should the project coordinator be a permanent staff?

According to the call's common rules, there are no rule regarding the duration of contract for each project team members. Members of the Evaluation Committee (EvC) will evaluate proposals following the criteria defined in the Call text. Thus, projects should not be disqualified by the EvC because of the work contract.

However, make sure your project stay in line with (1) the general rules regarding the consortium's size, composition and, (2) the specific [rules defined by national / regional Funding Organisations](#). National / regional restrictions about work contract / position may exist and research Partners will be ineligible if they do not follow their national / regional rules.

5.11 What are the key requirements for a consortium coordinator? Are all career stages, including early career researchers, welcome to coordinate? Is a PhD a requirement? Is the experience of the coordinator included in the evaluation criteria?

The call on a general level does not specify any restriction regarding the coordinator's experience or profile. There are two formal requirements for a coordinator: they need to be employed by an eligible institution and cannot change between Step 1 and 2. The rest is in the domain of the [Funding Organisations and their eligibility rules](#) – different countries may have different conditions and require a certain level of experience/profile for the coordinator.

Nevertheless, this is a highly competitive call and the competence and expertise of the consortium, including the leadership skills, will be assessed by the independent panel of experts.

5.12 What should be the size of a project (in terms of partners and resources)? Is there a maximum budget per project?

Apart from the obligation to form consortia of teams from a sufficient number of countries participating in the call, there is no pre-requisite regarding the size of the projects.

However, keep in mind that a transnational programme such as Biodiversa+ aims at supporting **medium size research projects** (average for Biodiversa+ funded projects: 5-7 partners per project from different countries) though this remains flexible.

There are no rules regarding a minimum or maximum budget per project at the level of the Call. Projects will be evaluated on their general coherence, and on the adequacy of the funding requested compared to the scientific objectives and activities planned. However, funding requirements for a given project should be reasonable as compared to total amount of funding planned for a given Funding Organisation. The aim of the call is to fund medium size projects (with a total budget of typically 1.0-1.3M€ on average; but note that this constitutes an indication rather than a formal limit). The requested funding should be justified and relevant with regards to the work planned within the project.

However, please note that some Funding Organisations have defined **minimum and/or maximum amount of fundings per partners or per project in their [Funding Organisations' rules](#)**. Please make sure to follow these rules. Specific questions should be addressed to the Funding Organisation Contact Points.

In case of a too high financial pressure on a participating country due to the high number of teams from this country in the submitted applications, the applicants may be asked to proceed budget cuts.

6. Open data

6.1 What is meant by Data management plan?

Applicants are required to produce and implement an open access data management plan to enable the sharing of research data. Data management plans are part of the full proposals and

are included in the evaluation as part of the criterion “quality and efficiency of the implementation”.

A data management workshop will be organised shortly after the start of the funded projects (back-to-back with the kick-off meeting) to exchange best practices related to data management, present hands-on advice, and work with the funded projects on how they can improve their data management plans (DMPs) and practices related to open data. The coordinator and/or the data manager (if different from the coordinator) of each funded projects are expected to participate to this workshop.

Biodiversa+ has developed a guide on data management, open data and the production of data management plan. This guide is available [here](#).

7. Contacts and access to information

7.1 Who can I contact if I have further question?

First and foremost, please read entirely all the information including the call documents provided on the Biodiversa+ website: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform>

Please also consult your Funding Organisations’ rules and, if needed, contact your Funding Organisation Contact Points (FCPs).

- **For specific questions related to the budget, criteria and rules of your Funding Organisation**, please consult your FCPs. You will find their contact detail(s) in the Funding Organisations Rules document to be downloaded from the following webpage: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/biodivtransform-participating-funding-organisations/>
- **For general information on the call**, please contact the Call Secretariat based at the French Agency for Research:
- **For technical questions regarding the EPSS**, please contact the EPSS technical helpdesk: Taavi Tiirik at epss.biodiversa@g.etag.ee
- **For GDPR questions**, please contact your FCP and biodiversa@fondationbiodiversite.fr. Please note that you can also consult the EPSS General Data Policy and the [Biodiversa+ Privacy and Data Policy](#).