

Document 1: Announcement of Opportunity

The Funding Organisations in Biodiversa+ Partnership have joined efforts to organise and fund an international call for transnational research proposals on

Novel ecosystems: biodiversity, socio-ecological consequences and future trajectories (BiodivFuture)

1. Introduction

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) published the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES, 2019) which provided unequivocal evidence that biodiversity is declining at a faster rate than at any other time in human history. Multiple anthropogenic direct and indirect drivers are implicated in the unprecedented and rapid change to our natural world. Major direct drivers of biodiversity loss are climate change, land- and sea-use change and intensification, pollution, invasive alien species and over-exploitation of natural resources. Key indirect drivers identified include demographic change, socio-cultural, economic and governance changes, and technological progress. The combined effects of these direct and indirect drivers are leading to detrimental consequences, including negative impacts on ecosystem functioning, water availability and quality, soil quality, food security and nutrition, human, plant and animal health, and resilience to the impacts of climate change (IPBES, 2025). Taken together, our planet and our societies are changing resulting in novel ecosystems (Hobbs et al. 2013; Box 1). Anticipating the future natural world and embedded human social systems create a major challenge for proactively supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services (Evers et al. 2018).

As a response to the global biodiversity crisis, the Convention on Biological Diversity sets out the global 2050 vision of ‘Living in harmony with nature’, also corresponding to the European Union (EU) vision that, by 2050, biodiversity and its benefits to people will be protected, valued, enhanced and restored (8th EU Environmental Action Programme, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030). To achieve these visions, 196 countries adopted in 2022 the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF, 2022). The framework defines four long-term goals for desirable and resilient socio-ecological systems: (A) to protect, enhance and restore ecosystems; (B) to prosper with nature; (C) to share benefits fairly; and (D) to invest and collaborate.

In this context, the European Biodiversity partnership - Biodiversa+ - is launching a joint research call to **support future-looking research and innovation projects that will address biodiversity and novel ecosystems** (see Box 1), **as well as their socio-ecological dynamics and consequences relating to the sustainability goals of the KM-GBF and associated future**

Box 1. Novel ecosystems - a conceptual framework to set the scene

Novel ecosystems have been defined by Hobbs et al. in 2013 as “*a system of abiotic, biotic and social components (and their interactions) that, by virtue of human influence, differ from those that prevailed historically, having a tendency to self-organise, and manifest novel qualities without intensive human management*”. Since the publication of this paper, the limits of this definition have been challenged by different disciplines and other definitions have emerged. Overall, the conceptual framework of novel ecosystems usually comprises of (1) new ecological communities (including species living outside their historical native ranges), (2) which present a suite of interactions and processes consistent with a self-organised, functioning ecosystem, and (3) are unlikely to revert to conditions preceding their emergence, with or without human intervention, due to significant biotic and abiotic changes. Building on this framework and acknowledging the plurality of views and definitions, proposals submitted to this call must demonstrate how they are addressing novel ecosystems.

pathways and trajectories of change.

Anthropogenic influences on nature are leading to far-reaching changes in ecosystems’ functions and species compositions, sometimes up to the emergence of novel ecosystems. In fact, only a very limited proportion of ecosystems can still be considered genuinely “natural” or under historically near-pristine conditions. Human-driven changes can have both negative and/or positive outcomes for certain species and ecosystem functions. This raises important questions for biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration, including how human influence can be adequately considered as a shaping factor, how restoration goals and baselines can be defined under changing conditions, and how ecosystem functions can be maintained or restored in highly modified environment. For example, the implementation of environmental legislation, conservation programmes and sustainable ecosystem management practices in recent decades has, in some contexts, contributed to improvements in the conservation status of species, biodiversity, and certain habitats (EEA, 2020). In any case, the pervasive and accelerating

human influence that defines the Anthropocene will continue to shape and structure novel ecosystems, with a wide range of possible outcomes, that inevitably include risks, opportunities, benefits, and trade-offs. Against this background, this call addresses the need to advance our fundamental understanding of novel ecosystems and their biodiversity, their complex socio-ecological dynamics under current and future trajectories of change, and their ecological, societal, economic and cultural implications, as a basis for a global transition towards ecological sustainability and societal security.

2. Objectives of the call

Moving beyond the traditional approach to biodiversity conservation, which focuses on species assemblage with reference to historical baselines, **this call focuses on understanding novel ecosystems, their evolution and associated (complex) socio-ecological (incl. biodiversity) dynamics along current and potential future trajectories of change.** Applicants should pay particular attention to the ecological functioning as well as the species composition and structure of novel ecosystems, including the present and future environmental, social, economic and political drivers that shape their emergence. They should investigate current trajectories of change and

explore future scenarios, encompassing biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and the socio-economic structures and processes that these ecosystems support and are shaped by. Accounting for the diverse world views, applicants should address the risks, opportunities and trade-offs related to novel ecosystems. Intensively managed systems that are highly simplified in their ecological community and processes compared with natural and semi natural ecosystems (e.g. monocultural agricultural systems, intensive aquaculture and plantation forestry) are out of scope. How novel ecosystems interact with and are impacted by these intensively managed systems could be in scope.

In the face of inevitable and potentially irreversible change, **knowledge generated under this call should ultimately lead to actions to achieve impacts that sustain resilient, interconnected, diverse and ecologically functioning ecosystems.** This could include critical reflection on what constitutes ecosystem states that best preserve or restore natural resources by taking multiple costs and benefits (trade-offs) into account and the diversity of contexts, scales, perspectives and world views. Well-functioning ecosystems should benefit people and protect nature at scales from local to global and emphasise biodiversity, trophic complexity, economic vitality, and societal well-being.

Research supported by this call should investigate the causes (drivers), effects (biological responses), and outcomes (including opportunities, risks and trade-offs) of current and future trajectories of change. It should bring to bear the best current understanding of ecosystem assembly rules, of ecosystem dynamics and test our current theories of how ecosystems respond to changes in drivers and composition. It should preferably explore the full range of options to address ongoing change (e.g., the Resist-Accept-Direct [RAD] framework) and identify potential pathways to resilient socio-ecological dynamics that could be supported in a cost-effective manner. The call seeks strategies to better understand and navigate irreversible ecosystem change, including pathways and actions to support resilient outcomes across different ecological and societal contexts. Such outcomes may include the enabling of transitions to new ecological states that are non-degraded, future-resilient ecosystems better adjusted to the new conditions, with halted or reversed biodiversity loss. Alongside this, it can also include approaches aiming to increase societal acceptance of ecological transitions. Additionally, projects should consider how adaptive management of novel ecosystems can ensure and enhance long-term societal acceptance and economic resilience through ongoing monitoring and adjustment of strategies to promote sustainable outcomes, and responsible use of natural resources in the face of uncertainty. It is critical that advances in knowledge consider, respect and account for diverse worldviews and recognise the plurality of nature’s values to human societies.

By doing so, projects are expected to support research, knowledge generation and innovation that will contribute to inform policy and interventions to support progress towards the 2050 sustainability goals adopted through the KM-GBF (2022), and to guide future frameworks for action beyond 2050.

3. Expectations of funded projects: excellence, impact and transnational added-value

Research supported under this call is expected to significantly improve our understanding of novel ecosystems and their related socio-ecological dynamics, based on strong empirical evidence and/or theoretical concepts and system modelling. Projects should provide sound scientific basis to develop

and implement concrete practical policy and management strategies leading to resilient futures. The projects are not intended to implement these strategies themselves, but to provide indications on how suggested measures might work in practice. This can be demonstrated by including experimentation and evaluation in the project design, from pilot tests, iterations and validations in real-world conditions up to demonstrating solutions in representative contexts (territorial, urban, rural, productive or sectoral). Also, approaches encompassing new technologies (remote sensing, eDNA, genomics, etc.) as well as qualitative and relational approaches for detecting, understanding, monitoring and predicting changes in ecosystems are welcome under this call. In this regard, the call builds upon the outcomes from research funded under previous Biodiversa+ thematic priorities. **The combination of novel, excellent research, high societal and political impact and significant transnational added-value** are core expectations of this call. Regardless of the geographical location of the ecosystems studied, proposals should clearly demonstrate how the findings and recommendations of the funded projects will be of broad relevance to Europe and/or at the global level, even when novel ecosystems outside Europe are included.

Projects are strongly encouraged to pursue inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, underpinned by effective communication, targeted outreach, and open science principles. This covers both blue skies fundamental and applied research, with an integrative perspective on novel ecosystems and socio-ecological dynamics, and underpinned by a clear and robust theoretical framework. Knowledge gaps on novel ecosystems and their emergence, functioning, and resilience should therefore be addressed by consortia comprising researchers from a range of relevant disciplines, which may consist of the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, environmental economics, policy studies and/or the arts. Engagement of experts and stakeholders outside academia¹ is encouraged while ensuring that such transdisciplinary collaborations adhere to the ethics and principles of responsible research. Collaborations may include local communities, indigenous peoples, managers, policy makers, local governments, and industry, etc.). The [Biodiversa+ Stakeholder Engagement Handbook](#) is a practical guide on how projects can be co-designed and co-produced with relevant stakeholders.

Projects are encouraged to develop research methods that can be used by different research communities to explore pathways of socio-ecological dynamics in the context of novel ecosystems. Of particular interest are interdisciplinary methods and tools to assess, monitor and forecast biodiversity status or changes/trends that can be applied across multiple spatial and time scales. Projects are expected to apply or develop approaches and indicators to evaluate the progress to resilient socio-ecological dynamics and to assess changes under different ecological and societal conditions.

¹Note however that Funders cannot endorse or support specific proposals during the evaluation phase, and can therefore not be engaged as stakeholders. Applicants may list government authorities or ministries—including organisations that are members of the partnership—as relevant stakeholders. Nevertheless, during the application process these bodies will not express institutional interest in a proposal's objectives or potential impact, nor can they provide any form of support to individual applications submitted to our joint Calls.

4. Research priorities

Research priorities to be addressed under this call have been structured into three themes mirroring the KM-GBF sustainability goals (2022). Projects are welcome to address one or several of these themes and may freely combine specific topics. The work plan must be realistic for 3-year projects.

THEME A – NOVEL ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONING

Under this theme, projects should focus on understanding the functioning of novel ecosystems and their links to socio-cultural and socio-economic dynamics, identifying mechanisms and developing approaches that can facilitate biodiversity gains. Specific topics that could be considered are (non-exhaustive list):

- Understanding novel ecosystem functioning, ecological integrity and trophic interactions, including how functional processes relate to biodiversity outcomes and ecosystem services under future conditions.
- Identifying when and how ecological changes become persistent, including changes in species composition, and determining when functional integrity can compensate for compositional change and how it effects ecosystem services.
- Assessing how novel ecosystems affect biodiversity, including extinction risk, species persistence and their potential recovery under different environmental and socio-ecological conditions.
- Evaluating genetic diversity, adaptive potential and the genetic consequences of rapid species turnover, including implications for resilience under climate change.
- Developing models and scenarios to analyse the functioning of novel ecosystems and their ecological and societal implications.
- Developing tools (e.g. social, economic, and environmental diagnostics, remote sensing and socio-ecological decision support systems) to map novel ecosystem conditions and prioritise conservation and restoration interventions, supported by transparent and replicable metrics and inclusive participatory processes.
- Evaluating and developing robust quantitative and qualitative indicators compatible with KM-GBF reporting frameworks on the health, quality and functionality of novel ecosystems, while accounting for the socio-ecological dimensions.

THEME B – PATHWAYS TO NOVEL ECOSYSTEMS

Under this theme, projects should focus on studying robust, plausible, and concrete pathways to novel ecosystems and associated socio-ecological dynamics to prosper under temporal asynchronies and uncertainties. Specific topics that projects could consider under this theme are (non-exhaustive list):

- Understanding ecosystem functions, services and disservices in changing socio-ecological systems, including trade-offs and context-specific outcomes across sectors (e.g. urban systems, food, climate)

- Developing and testing robust data- and/or model-driven scenarios to analyse drivers of ecosystem and biodiversity change leading to novelty, including future biodiversity trajectories.
- Examining broader drivers and implications of ecosystem change, including global interconnections, socio-economic factors, and issues of equity and distribution across regions and generations.
- Assessing how biodiversity and society respond to different trajectories, recognising temporal asynchronies between environmental change, biodiversity responses (e.g. extinction debts, and lags in recovery and dispersal), and societal and economic impacts, which may disproportionately affect future generations rather than those who initiated the change.
- Understanding uncertainties in trajectories of socio-ecological dynamics and how they can be better reflected and ideally reduced to improve forecasting, including investigating long-term stability and regime shifts: evaluating if novel ecosystems are alternative stable states and how to predict and anticipate successional trajectories.
- Studying socio-ecological pathways for embedding emerging nature in spatial planning: biodiversity responses and governance dynamics within land-use change processes.

THEME C – BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS AND EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NOVEL ECOSYSTEM

Under this theme, projects should focus on studying fair and equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits in the context of novel ecosystems, supported by inclusive, collaborative, and investment-oriented pathways for nature-positive socio-ecological transformation. Specific topics that projects could consider under this theme are (non-exhaustive list):

- Assessing costs, benefits and trade-offs in relation to novel ecosystems across different contexts, including implications for well-being, equity, and distribution of benefits focusing on the diversity of contexts, scales, perspectives and world views.
- Analysing governance, power relations, justice and equity perspectives to understand who benefits, who is affected, and how decisions on novel ecosystem management are shaped, considering intergenerational and international contexts.
- Understanding how global structures, processes and (geo-)political trends shape the emergence, functioning, and trajectories of novel ecosystems, including the ways in which biodiversity change is interconnected with global markets and inequalities, and how actions by consumers, policy makers, and other stakeholders across sectors and regions generate distant socio-ecological effects (telecoupling).
- Developing inclusive and participatory approaches for co-creation, knowledge exchange, and long-term stewardship, including and working with diverse knowledge systems and communities.
- Exploring the ethical aspects of whether management for ecological novelty conflicts with cultural or conservation values, whether it risks supporting economic exploitation, and the risks of normalising environmental degradation under the concept of novel ecosystems could be.
- Exploring how individuals and social groups (including stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities) understand, interpret, value, accept, resist and/or adapt to ecological novelty, and what

significance or influence this could or should have on socio-ecological transformation. This could include understanding local drivers and barriers of ecosystem stewardship and how ecosystem stewardship may be maintained over time.

- Conceiving novel ecosystems and trajectories of change that motivate people to contribute to the maintenance, enhancement, or restoration of the functional integrity, connectivity, and resilience of novel ecosystems over the long-term.
- Identifying pathways, decision-support tools and governance frameworks under deep uncertainties, as well as leveraging financial resources, capacity building and knowledge transfer to support fair, adaptive and sustainable management of novel ecosystems under changing conditions.

5. Procedures, eligibility and assessment criteria

5.1. Submission, deadlines and time schedule

Submission

A two-Step process will apply, with a mandatory submission of pre-proposals at Step 1 and submission of full proposals at Step 2. Pre-proposals and full proposals (in English) must be submitted electronically with the Electronic Proposal Submission System ([EPSS](#)). Instructions for electronic submission will be available on the Biodiversa+ website [at https://www.biodiversa.eu/BiodivFuture](https://www.biodiversa.eu/BiodivFuture) in September 2026.

Please note that:

- The online platform will stay open 5 minutes after the official deadline. Any proposals not correctly submitted at this moment will be declared ineligible.
- 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.

At Step 1, applicants have to submit pre-proposals: information (in English) on the project consortia, a 5-page description of the project and the required budget for each Partner must be submitted on the EPSS. **Submission of pre-proposals is mandatory**; it is not possible to enter the procedure at a later stage.

Only eligible pre-proposals can be invited to submit full proposals.

At Step 2, only invited applicants have to submit full proposals: information (in English) on the project consortia, a 16-page description of the project and the required budget for each Partner must be submitted on the EPSS.

The information submitted at Step 1 and Step 2 will be used to complete an eligibility check, to find appropriate evaluators, and to evaluate the pre- (Step 1) and full (Step 2) proposals.

In case very few proposals are received, the CSC can decide with absolute majority to invite all eligible consortia to submit a full proposal in Step 2 without organising an Evaluation Committee in Step 1. Note however that the eligibility check will still be done in Step 1.

Deadlines and time schedule

The selection procedure will consist in an eligibility check and an evaluation of pre-proposals at Step 1 and an eligibility check and an evaluation of full proposals at Step 2.

The call will go through the following processes and applicants must pay attention to the deadlines outlined below in the time schedule:

Step 1	9 June 2026	Pre-announcement of the call
	9 September 2026	Official launch of the call
	10 September 2026 at 13:00 CEST	General webinar of the Call
	10 November 2026, 12:00 CET	Deadline for submitting pre-proposal
	December 2026	First eligibility check completed by the Call Secretariat and Funding organisation Contact Points (FCPs)
	Late January / early February	First EvC Meeting
	Mid-February 2027	Results of the first Evaluation Committee (EvC) meeting ➤ Selected applicants are invited to submit full proposals. A general feedback from the Evaluation Committee will be communicated to all invited applicants. Note however that no individual feedbacks will be sent at this stage. ➤ Applicants that are not invited to submit a full proposal will receive feedbacks from the EvC regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their pre-proposals with respect to the assessment criteria used in Step 1 (see Document 6) tentatively in May 2027. No score nor rank will be communicated.
Step 2	16 April 2027, 12:00 CEST	Deadline for submitting full proposals
	May 2027	Second eligibility check completed by the Call Secretariat and FCPs
	June or July 2027:	Second EvC meeting <i>Ranked list of proposals established by the EvC</i>
	Late September 2027:	Recommendation for funding projects by the Call Steering Committee (CSC) ➤ Results communicated to applicants

		➤ Both selected and non-selected applicants will receive feedbacks from the EvC regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their full proposals with respect to the assessment criteria used in Step 2 (see Document 6) tentatively in October 2027. No score nor rank will be communicated.
	1 December 2027:	Earliest possible start of funded projects
	1 April 2028:	Latest possible start of funded projects

During the entire procedure, strict confidentiality will be maintained with respect to the identities of applicants and the contents of the proposals.

5.2. Eligibility of projects and Partners (Call criteria):

The call is open to proposals and research consortia that meet the following criteria:

- The international, scientific research projects are performed by eligible organisations. Funding Organisations eligibility criteria (see [Funding Organisations' rules](#)) apply to all Partners, including research entities and private sector (for- or non-profit) organisations;
- The Project Partner Coordinator (i.e., person in charge of the whole project, also referred to as Partner 1) must be eligible to be funded by one of the countries participating in the call and is eligible and employed by an eligible organisation according to the terms and conditions of the participating Funding Organisation to which they apply for support;
- The Project Partner Coordinator (i.e., person in charge of the whole project, also referred to as Partner 1) can only participate as Project Partner Coordinator in one proposal of this call. Otherwise, applicants can participate in several proposals (as long as this is in line with their Funding Organisation's eligibility rules);
- The project must be a transnational project involving **eligible Partners from at least three different countries participating in the call** and requesting support from at least three different Funding Organisations; including eligible Partners from at least two different EU Member States or Associated Countries² participating in the call.
- An individual researcher affiliated to several organisations cannot request funding for more than one of their affiliated organisations. The individual researcher must declare which Partner within the consortium they represent. They will not be considered as two different Partners within the consortium.
- To prevent any conflict of interest, researchers from an organisation under the same Participant Identification Code (PIC; i.e., 9-digits code identifying organisations registered under the [EU funding and tenders portal](#)) as a Biodiversa+ partner may not participate in a proposal submitted under this call, even if they are Self-financed.

²https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf NB: not all associated countries listed at this link participate in this call. Only researchers from countries that confirmed their participation and reserved a budget for this call can be eligible for funding. See TABLE 1: LIST OF FUNDING ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR FUNDING COMMITMENTS below to verify whether your country participates or not in this call.

- Proposals must be written in English;
- The submission of a pre-proposal is compulsory. Applicants cannot submit a full proposal at a later stage otherwise;
- Pre- and full proposals must be received before the deadlines set for the submission;
- Pre- and full proposals must meet all the formal criteria: submitted electronically on the EPSS (see Call Documents 2 and 3 for indicative pre- and full- proposals application forms respectively), respect page limits and the number/type of attachments allowed;
- 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 Partner Coordinator (person in charge) will be allowed**, except in case of force majeure. A request of change of Project Partner 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 three changes of Partners), provided approval by the concerned Funding Organisations. Please note that the following actions are considered as changes: addition or removal of a Partner (incl. self-financed Partners). Replacement of a Partner (i.e. removal of a Partner and addition of a new Partner) counts as two changes. 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. 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 Partners should be confirmed by the concerned Funding Organisation(s) at least one week before the full proposal submission deadline. Applicants are strongly advised to seek confirmation of the changes and the eligibility of new Partners from the FCP, who needs to check the national/regional eligibility of the new Partner and agree with the change, before it is implemented on the EPSS. The changes must be declared on the EPSS in the “disclosure of changes” box.

Please note that the following cases are not considered as one of the maximum three 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. This does not apply to the Project Partner Coordinator.
 - 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. This does not apply to the Project Partner Coordinator.
- **The change(s) should not change 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 call documents published on the Biodiversa+ website).

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.

Summary of allowed changes in consortium composition*

Modification Type	Counts as one of the limited changes in consortium composition	Conditions
Addition of partner (standard FO)	Yes	One of three changes allowed
Addition under widening option	No	Only if FO of newly added partner is undersubscribed
Removal of partner	Yes	One of three changes allowed
Replacement of partner	Yes	Counts as two changes (removal + addition)
Addition of team member	No	Same institution under same FO
WP restructuring	No	If it does not affect significantly the research questions and objectives

		or roles/tasks described in the pre-proposal
Budget redistribution within partner	No	If no structural impact

***IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** This is a summary of the changes allowed at the level of the Call (please make sure to carefully read the details), however eligibility rules of the concerned Funding Organisations still apply, which may not allow certain changes at the national / regional level. **Please make sure to confirm all changes with the concerned FO prior to the submission of full proposal.**

5.3. Project Duration

The project duration is 3 years. Projects are expected to act as transnational project and not as a mosaic of national or regional 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.

5.4. Evaluation and Selection

General information:

Potential applicants are advised to take careful note of the scope and objectives of the call as described above in the Announcement of Opportunity. Applicants are strongly advised to assess the relevance of their proposed research against the scope and objectives of the call set forth in the scientific text of the call; any project that does not fit this will not be recommended for funding, regardless of its quality.

Biodiversa+ aims at funding excellent scientific research projects that can demonstrate societal relevance, including policy relevance, and engage with stakeholders. Proposals will thus 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. Research projects should generate new knowledge and solutions based on the production of new primary data and/or by making use of available data.

Proposals from the natural sciences, technical sciences, and social sciences and humanities are welcome.

Evaluation process:

A two-Step evaluation process will be organised³.

³ In case very few proposals are received, the CSC can decide with absolute majority to invite all eligible consortia to submit a full proposal in Step 2 without organising an Evaluation Committee in Step 1. Note however that the eligibility check will still be done in Step 1.

1) Step 1:

An eligibility check will be performed by the Call Secretariat and Funding Organisation Contact Points (FCPs) as well as Step 1 evaluation of eligible pre-proposals by an independent Evaluation Committee (EvC) against the following criteria:

- (i) Fit to the scope of the call,
- (ii) Novelty of the research
- (iii) Impact

Only successful pre-proposals will be invited to submit full proposals.

2) Step 2:

An eligibility check of full proposals will be performed by the Call Secretariat and Funding Organisation Contact Points (FCPs).

Eligible full proposals will be evaluated by an independent Evaluation Committee (EvC) as well as by external reviewer(s) where deemed necessary by the EvC against the following criteria:

- (i) Excellence,
- (ii) Quality and efficiency of the implementation,
- (iii) Impact

The Call Steering Committee (CSC) will establish an EvC, comprising both scientific experts from natural sciences, technical sciences, social sciences and humanities, and policy/management experts relevant to the Call. The EvC composition should allow to cover, as far as possible, the range of topics within the scope of the call.

Members take part in the EvC as independent experts and do not represent any organisation nor can they send any replacements. This means that their work on this Committee does not represent any organisation or nation.

The EvC will assess the proposals according to the criteria defined (see “Assessment criteria” document in the call documents). At Step 2, where relevant (i.e. specifically requested by the EvC), the EvC will also moderate the assessments provided by the external reviewers.

The EvC will discuss the proposals and establish the final ranking of pre- and full proposals based on the set of assessment criteria defined.

After Step 1: The Call Steering Committee (CSC) will decide on which projects to invite to Step 2, following the eligibility check and the evaluation made by the EvC.

After Step 2: The CSC will decide on which projects to recommend for funding, and selection must be made strictly following the final ranking list established by the EvC.

Upon the final decision by the CSC, a list of funded projects will be published on the Biodiversa+ website.

Please note that **no appeal can be brought at the EvC and CSC levels to challenge the results of the selection procedure**. However, the decisions taken by the CSC do not take precedence over possible mandatory national, regional or organisational requirements for eligibility and appeal processes.

In case of funding failure, an equivalent re-evaluation procedure may be implemented. The exact process will be agreed on by the CSC in an ad hoc manner.

6. Funding

For this call a total amount of ca. 33 M€ has been provisionally reserved by the participating Funding Organisations (see the list in the table below).

The European Commission (EC) will also provide funding for the funded projects depending on the final total funding amount for research proposals committed by the participating Funding Organisations eligible for EC-funding.

The indicative total budget for this call is thus of over 40 M€, including the EC contribution.

Total indicative budget for each Funding Organisation is given below. Please note that Funding Organisation may have defined maximum requested budget per project. Each participant in a funded project will be preferentially funded by their Funding Organisation(s) participating in the call. The additional funding provided by the EC for the funded project will be distributed through the EC-eligible Funding Organisations.

The aim of the call is to fund medium size projects (with a total budget of typically 1.2-1.5M€ 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.

TABLE 1: LIST OF FUNDING ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR FUNDING COMMITMENTS^{*,}**

^{*}The full up-to-date list of participating funding organisations joining this Call and their reserved budget is available on the Biodiversa+ website: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/research-funding/open-call/participating-funding-organisations/>

^{**}The Funding Organisations marked by “#” have defined maximum allowed budget per project and/or per Partner. Please consult the Funding Organisations’ rules and contact your Funding Organisation Contact Point for more information.

Country	Funding organisation	Acronym	Reserved budget
Austria	Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung	FWF [#]	2,000,000.00 EUR
Belgium	Belgian Science Policy Office	Belspo	<i>Pending</i>
Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels)	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique	FNRS [#]	<i>Pending</i>
Belgium (Flanders)	Fonds Voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen	FWO [#]	<i>Pending</i>
Brazil	Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies	CONFAP [#]	100,000.00 (tbc) EUR
Bulgaria	Bulgarian National Science Fund	BNSF [#]	900,000.00 EUR
Czech Republic	Technology Agency of the Czech Republic	TA CR [#]	1,000,000.00 EUR

Country	Funding organisation	Acronym	Reserved budget
Denmark	Innovation Fund Denmark	IFD [#]	2,000,000.00 EUR
Estonia	Estonian Research Council	ETAg	300,000.00 EUR
Estonia	Ministry of Climate	MoC	150,000.00 EUR
Faroe Islands	The Faroese Research Council	RCFI [#]	100,000.00 EUR
Finland	Research Council of Finland	RCF / AKA	850,000.00 EUR
France	Agence Nationale de la Recherche	ANR [#]	2,000,000.00 EUR
Germany	German Research Foundation	DFG [#]	1,500,000.00 EUR
Germany	Forschungszentrum Juelich GmbH (on behalf of BMFTR)	FZJ-PTJ (on behalf of BMFTR)	2,000,000.00 EUR
Hungary	National Research Development and Innovation Office	NKFIH [#]	<i>Pending</i>
Israel	Ministry of Environmental Protection	MoEP [#]	120,000.00 EUR
Italy - Bolzano	Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen	BOZEN [#]	450,000.00 EUR
Latvia	Latvian Council of Science	LZP/LCS [#]	600,000.000 EUR
Lithuania	Lietuvos mokslo taryba	LMT [#]	300,000.00 EUR
Moldova	National Agency for Research and Development	NARD	100,000.00 EUR
Netherlands (the)	Dutch Research Council	NWO [#]	3,000,000.00 EUR
Norway	Research Council of Norway	RCN [#]	2,270,000.00 EUR
Poland	Narodowe Centrum Nauki	NCN [#]	1,000,000.00 EUR
Romania	The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding	UEFISCDI [#]	500,000.00 EUR
Slovakia	Slovak Academy of Sciences	SAS [#]	360,000.00 EUR
Slovakia	Centrum vedecko-technických informácií Slovenskej republiky	CVTI SR	800,000.00 EUR
Slovenia	Ministry of Education, Science and Youth	MIZM [#]	900,000.00 EUR <i>Pending</i>

Country	Funding organisation	Acronym	Reserved budget
Spain	Agencia Estatal de Investigación	AEI [#]	<i>Pending</i>
Spain	Fundación Biodiversidad	FB [#]	<i>Pending</i>
Switzerland	Swiss National Science Foundation	SNSF [#]	2,600,000.00 CHF*
Taiwan	National Science and Technology Council	NSTC [#]	810,000.00 EUR
Tunisia	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	MHESR [#]	500,000.00 EUR
Türkiye	Türkiye Bilimsel Ve Teknolojik Arastırma Kurumu	TÜBİTAK [#]	350,000.00 EUR <i>Pending</i>
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Research and Innovation	UKRI [#]	3,000,000.00 £*

*The exact amount in EUR will depend on the exchange rate at the time of funding.

Please note that all Funding Organisations have defined [specific rules](#) – including restrictions with regards to the environments they support. Carefully read the Funding Organisations’ rules and contact your Funding Organisation Contact Point in case of any questions or doubts regarding these rules.

7. Programme structure and management

Programme activities

The funded projects are considered to form part of an international research programme for which joint activities will be organised, in particular:

- A **kick-off meeting** at the beginning of the funding period
- A **mid-term meeting** to present and discuss the mid-term reports,
- A **final meeting** to present and discuss the final reports; and disseminate the project results at the end of the funding period.

These events will be possibly organised back-to-back with other workshops (such as clustering workshops, data management workshops, synthesis workshops, etc.)

At least the Project Partner Coordinator of each funded consortium should participate in these joint activities. **The costs for attendance to two physical meetings should be included in the budgets of their proposals (at least one event will be done remotely).**

Project management and reporting

Funded projects will be requested to submit via the Project Partner Coordinator a **mid-term report and a final report** on research and activity progress. Some Funding Organisations may request additional specific reports.

8. Eligible budget items

Eligible costs and the maximum allowed requested budget per project and/or per Partner are governed by Funding Organisations’ specific rules. Specific questions should be addressed to the Funding Organisation Contact Points (updated list available on the Biodiversa+ website).

In case of a significant financial pressure on a Funding Organisation due to the high number of teams requesting budget from this Funding Organisation in the submitted applications, the applicants may be asked to adjust downward their budget.

9. 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)

A “widening option” 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 Partner(s) from undersubscribed funding organisations between Step 1 and 2. The inclusion of one or several new Partner(s) should be **relevant for the proposal**, and new 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 three changes allowed but the eligibility procedure remains the same and funding organisation national/ regional rules must be respected**.

On the Biodiversa+ website:

- a) An updated list of undersubscribed funding organisations will be made public
- b) The acronym, title and keywords of the pre-proposals invited to Step 2 will be published

On the Partner Search Tool (PST):

- 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.

Please note that the Evaluation Committee will assesses the overall quality of the proposal solely according to the assessment criteria defined in Document 6, regardless of whether a new Partner has joined the consortium via the Widening Option or by other means.

10. Further information

General management of the Call, including information on the call secretariat vs. funding organisation at a national or regional level:

The Call Secretariat is responsible for organising the call implementation procedure and for all communication with applicants related to joint aspects of the call and procedure.

However, for Funding Organisation eligibility criteria, the Funding Organisations’ documented rules must be consulted and Funding Organisation Contact Points should be approached (the information are published and updated on [the Biodiversa+ website](#)), in particular with regard to eligibility of Partner, eligible costs and other country-specific aspects of the call. The compliance with Funding Organisations’ rules is mandatory, and relevant Funding Organisation Contact Points should be contacted to obtain further information if needed.

According to their respective rules, the Funding Organisations may require that the project members selected for funding establish a project consortium agreement to release the funds. The requirement will thus apply to all the project members, even if their respective Funding Organisation does not require a project consortium agreement.

Use of generative artificial intelligence in application preparation

This section sets out the responsibilities of individuals involved in the preparation of research proposals to be submitted under this call.

Applicants must apply caution when entering information into generative AI tools to develop their application(s). Sensitive or personal data of others must never be input into a generative AI tool without formal consent from the concerned individual(s).

They should also consider the risk of bias when using outputs from the generative AI tool or model and consider mitigation.

Applicants must apply caution when using outputs from generative AI tools to develop their application(s). They must ensure this does not contain any information that is:

- confidential and used without consent
- falsified
- fabricated
- plagiarised
- misrepresented

All applications must comply with relevant intellectual property and data protection legislation.⁴

⁴ [Regulation - EU - 2024/1689 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) and https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/2b6cf7e5-36ac-41cb-aab5-0d32050143dc_en?filename=ec_rtd_ai-guidelines.pdf

In line with current sector good practice, applicants and applications are expected to be transparent where they have used generative AI tools in the development of an application. This information will not affect the evaluation process.

Data Management

Applicants' attention must be drawn to the fact that they will be requested to produce data management plans and regularly update them in the course of your project (data management plan should indeed be seen as living documents). Biodiversa+ strongly encourages applicants to make available publicly the new databases, with metadata that they will produce within their project. Please note that the respective Funding Organisation may also have specific requirements in terms of open access to data. Applicants are thus strongly encouraged to plan resources to ensure data open access and comply with the requirements of their Funding Organisations (if any). For more information, please refer to the “Open Science and Fair Data” ([Document 5](#) in the call documents) and Biodiversa Guidance document on data management, open data, and the production of [Data Management Plans](#).

Applicants' attention must be drawn to the fact that if they plan to use genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources in their project, they will have to ascertain towards the competent authorities and focal point that these used genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources have been accessed in accordance with applicable access and benefit-sharing legislation or regulatory requirements, and that benefits are fairly and equitably shared upon mutually decided terms, in accordance with any applicable legislation or regulatory requirements.⁵ Please refer to the competent authorities for more information.

Contractual requirements

In this call for proposals, being co-funded by the European Union, Partners are considered as third parties of Funding Organisations. All Partners commit to the following articles of the Horizon Europe Annotated Grant Agreement⁶ and related regulations of Annex 5:

- Conflicts of interest (Article 12)
- Confidentiality and security (Article 13)
- Ethics and values (Article 14)
- Visibility (Article 17)
- Specific rules for carrying out the action (Article 18)
- Information obligations (Article 19)
- Record-keeping (Article 20)

Moreover, the bodies mentioned in Article 25 (e.g. granting authority, the European Court of Auditors (ECA), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)) have the right to carry out checks, reviews, audits and

⁵ Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity and REGULATION (EU) No 511/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on compliance measures for users from the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation in the Union and related implementing acts.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf

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investigations on the Partners, and in particular to audit the payments received. If access is denied by the project partners, the costs will be rejected.

Additional resources

Biodiversa+ regularly publishes guides that can help in the application process and development of a project, see at <https://www.biodiversa.eu/library/#1>. Where relevant, applicants and grant holders are notably encouraged to consult the following material:

- The Stakeholder Engagement Handbook
- The Guide on Policy Relevance of Research
- The Citizen Science Toolkit
- The Guidance Document on Open Science and Data Management

Main contact points:

- For technical questions regarding submission, please contact the Call Secretariat: biodiversa.cs@agencerecherche.fr
- For technical questions regarding the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS), please contact the EPSS technical helpdesk: Taavi Tiirik: epss.biodiversa@g.etag.ee
- For budgetary questions and other national/ regional issues, please contact the relevant Funding Organisation Contact Point (FCP) - who are listed and updated at www.biodiversa.eu/research-funding/open-call/participating-funding-organisations.

Funding organisations' rules are also advertised and updated on the Biodiversa+ website and are mandatory. Should you have any question on these aspects, please contact the relevant FCP.