

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 “Biodiversity and transformative change “Biodiversity and Transformative Change (BiodivTransform)”.

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE CALL

Humanity is currently facing the coinciding and interdependent worldwide crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution, which have some shared underlying anthropogenic root causes: changes in land and sea use, overexploitation of organisms, and invasive alien species (IPBES 2019). These direct drivers result from more indirect ones, such as production and consumption trends and patterns, economic growth imperatives, resource extraction patterns, and non-sustainable practices in agriculture, forestry and energy production (UNEP 2021). The ability to identify, understand, and address the shared root causes is essential for overcoming these crises and achieving long-term sustainability. Recognising that these crises are highly interlinked, with an urgent need to understand trade-offs and cross-linkages both in terms of drivers and effects, **this joint research call solicits interdisciplinary projects to identify, analyse, and comprehend transformation processes that may halt and reverse biodiversity decline.**

Significant knowledge gaps remain concerning biodiversity and its interdependence with society, and even when there is good evidence of what could be done to halt biodiversity loss, this is often not incorporated into policy and management (IPBES 2019). Moreover, many current policies, plans and actions aiming at mitigating challenges related to biodiversity and ecosystems have proven ineffective or even counter-productive, resulting in further environmental damage or exacerbation of socio-economic disparities and injustices that are themselves intensifying key drivers of biodiversity loss (Chan *et al.* 2007, Koplow and Steenblik 2022). As a consequence, there is growing recognition of an urgent need for catalysing rapid, significant, and coordinated transformative change (CBD 2022, European Commission 2021, IPBES 2019) by accounting for environmental, anthropological (social, cultural, behavioural), economic, political, health, and justice dimensions of sustainability. Holistic approaches that integrate goals across societal sectors are essential to further explore synergies and trade-offs between policies and projects at national, regional, and global levels. They are also key to strengthen collaborations between research communities, decision-makers, and social justice initiatives. Reversing the curve of biodiversity loss will only be possible if actions are implemented rapidly and decisively, and in an integrated manner (Leadley *et al.* 2022).

1.1 Biodiversity and socio-ecological systems

Biodiversity is defined by Díaz *et al.* (2015) as “the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they

are a part. This includes variation in genetic, phenotypic, phylogenetic, and functional attributes, as well as changes in abundance and distribution over time and space within and among species, biological communities and ecosystems”. In order to meet the objectives of this call, both ecological and socio-economic components of the world’s ecosystems must be considered, including nature’s diverse contributions to people and societies, as well as the diverse ways through which humans relate to nature and quality of life. Such studies require interdisciplinary approaches from the social sciences and humanities as well as the natural sciences for a holistic understanding of how biodiversity responds to current (in-)direct drivers and future transformation pathways.

1.2 Transformative change

Although transformative change remains an emerging concept (Fedele et al. 2019, Schmeller and Bridgewater 2023), guidance and conceptualisation are available in several science-policy publications (e.g. IPBES 2019, IPBES 2022). The upcoming Assessment on transformative change by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) will also provide authoritative and target-oriented guidance and principles (December 2024; see <https://www.ipbes.net/transformative-change>). 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). This goes beyond approaches that aim to tweak business as usual, or scale up existing solutions, seeking instead to transform root causes and to change structures of society.

Transformative change should generate new levels of ambition and enable new agents of change to engage. At the same time, it should ensure that integrated actions for biodiversity, clean environment and climate enable equitable and sustainable outcomes for society. Integrated action should ensure the recognition of rights and responsibilities, incorporate the plurality of values, paradigms and knowledge systems that need to be considered in decision-making, and avoid or mitigate perceived trade-offs between crises (Pörtner et al. 2023).

Based on the conclusions of the IPBES, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Environment Agency (EEA), and others, it is crucial to identify how the transformative change levers can be used to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD 2022) to achieve a positive impact on biodiversity and society through concrete actions, goals, targets and pathways (Abson et al. 2017; Bulkeley et al. 2020; Chan et al. 2020; European Commission 2020).

Integrating pluralistic values and general principles such as human rights, inter- and intragenerational justice, anti-discrimination (race, gender, class, abilities, etc.), and personal and political freedom, into conceptualisations and representations of biodiversity is necessary for research, decision-making, governance, and programme design. This integration involves methods for negotiating inclusion, recognising the social and cultural complexity of valuing nature (i.e., biocultural diversity), integrating the gender dimension, and learning from as well as integrating Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ knowledge and visions (Pascual et al. 2021).

2. SCOPE OF THE CALL AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS FUNDED PROJECTS

2.1 General objectives of Biodiversa+ and of this call

One of the strategic objectives of the European Biodiversity Partnership, [Biodiversa+](#), is to **produce actionable (i.e., practically usable) knowledge for transformative change to halt and reverse biodiversity decline** (Biodiversa+ Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda - Eggermont et al. 2021). To achieve this, a series of actions including this research call are embedded in the [Flagship Programme](#) “Supporting societal transformation for the sustainable use and management of biodiversity”.

In this context, Biodiversa+, co-funded by the European Commission, launches this joint call for research proposals on “Biodiversity and transformative change”, referred to as BiodivTransform.

The call aims for interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and/or cross-sectoral research and innovation projects demonstrating **academic excellence**, with potential for local, regional and/or global **societal and policy impact** regarding biodiversity, aiming to connect science, society, policy, and practices for transformative change. It is expected that applicants will explicitly make clear the **novelty of their research** and how it builds upon and adds to the existing knowledge base, including previously funded or on-going international, European and national projects. Redundancy must be avoided, yet complementary research (for example with existing Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe efforts) is possible, as long as the added value of the proposal is clearly explained. Projects are expected to explain how they intend to deliver a significant contribution to scientific knowledge production, and the proposed means and manner to use this knowledge towards the achievement of safeguarding biodiversity in the context of transformative change.

The dual objective of supporting excellent research projects which also propose the most promising approaches for uptake of their research results in society and policy, is clearly reflected in the assessment criteria of the call. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the [Call Document #6](#) for detailed information regarding the assessment criteria that will be used during the evaluation process. Please note that each funding organisation has rules regarding research partners eligibility and it is critical that applicants consult the [national/ regional rules](#) for each partner of their consortium.

2.2 Interdisciplinarity

To meet the transformative goals of this call, projects are expected to be interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinary science refers to the involvement of multiple academic disciplines. Research teams should therefore span all disciplines of relevance for their project, be it from 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.

2.3 Transdisciplinarity and impact

Proposals are strongly encouraged to be transdisciplinary 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. Proposals are welcome to address the gender dimension of transformative change. We also welcome research in partnership with, and for, potentially under-represented and/or vulnerable groups of actors often omitted from academic studies in this context (e.g. traditional knowledge holders, indigenous and local communities, young, marginalised demographic groups, etc.). We also welcome projects which 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. The integration of various actors and sectors should be carried out in an equitable, respectful and just manner. Transformative change often also involves technological factors. To achieve true potential for societal impact, projects are therefore encouraged to adopt a holistic approach and where relevant engage businesses and industries as partners in their proposal, to encompass a complete innovation ecosystem¹.

2.4 Global scope

33 countries are contributing to the funding of this joint call (see the updated list of countries and participating Funding Organisations on our website: <https://www.biodiversa.eu/research-funding/participating-funding-organisations/>).

The call covers research on biodiversity and transformative change in all parts of the world, in all types of ecosystems and habitats, and in all types of societies, cultures and economic models. Research and innovation projects can thus include study sites, modelling or data collection globally, beyond the countries participating in the call. Note that researchers and stakeholders which cannot be funded directly from the call are welcome to participate on their own funds as in-kind research partners, or (if applicable) contracted by the applicants (see the section 1.2. “Eligibility of projects and partners in Call Criteria, below”).

The call is not restricted in terms of specific environments nor geographic areas, encompassing all realms (terrestrial, marine, coastal and freshwater) and ecosystems experiencing various levels and

¹ Please consult the relevant national/ regional rules regarding partners' eligibility.

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;
Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

sources of disturbances, including transition zones and interfaces (coastal, wetlands, urban–rural, forest–agriculture, etc.) and in integrated land/seascapes. Research proposed under this call is expected to demonstrate significant transnational added value in comparison to the value that would result from research and innovation projects funded at national level only. 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 or downscaling of efforts, methodology and knowledge across countries and regions.

Furthermore, the transnational added value should be end-user oriented and benefit environmental and societal actors beyond researchers, generating insights on the way. These end-users/stakeholders can be “proximate”, that is, those who directly benefit from the project, or more “ultimate”, i.e., those that may indirectly benefit from the outcomes in a broader geographical scope or longer term. When relevant, projects should for example ensure to have adequate budget for inclusion, capacity building, and exchange also with marginalised rights-owners and stakeholders at events and meetings.

3. RESEARCH PRIORITIES AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

The BiodivTransform call aims at supporting projects that will generate knowledge to help to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems, and the benefits these may provide to people, through transformative change to mitigate and reverse biodiversity threats. Proposals should focus on actual and actionable solutions to remove barriers to nature-positive transformative change, dealing with both direct and indirect drivers of its decline.

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**.

With a focus on reversing biodiversity decline, this call should help to:

- Improve our understanding of the impact of transformative change on biodiversity and the reciprocal dependencies between them,
- Generate and identify knowledge, and translate it into actions and practices which result in transformational positive outcomes for biodiversity and socio-ecological systems,

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;
Document 1 Announcement of Opportunity

- Understand entire socio-ecological systems, encapsulating ecosystem services, plural values and worldviews, including the reciprocal relationships of biodiversity with human behaviour and attitudes,
- Improve our understanding of the linkage of justice, power and economic relationships with natural resources including sustainable use and consumption patterns,
- Raise the potential of technological and digital innovations for biodiversity and transformative change,
- Improve our understanding of the consequences of demographic change, and aspects of political and human ecology, and bio-cultural diversity and heritage,
- Co-development among societal actors of nature-positive visions and goals, and multiple pathways and actions towards these, with inclusion of both major and marginalised actors and stakeholders, and addressing gender issues,
- Expand transformative actions to multiple and new areas and across all sectors of economy and society, including innovative community science approaches as well as strengthening of socio-ecological literacy in decision-making and among citizens,
- Identify incentives for private businesses and finance to invest in biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- Define ways to overcome barriers and transform economic sectors for delivering on biodiversity,
- Identify how transformative change levers can be used in the implementation of international policies, such as the European Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and/or in national biodiversity strategies.

Knowledge gaps covered under this call include, but are not limited to:

- Multi-scalar and multi-sectoral understanding of key drivers, root causes, and indirect causes of biodiversity loss,
- Systems approach and analysis of what is required for transformative change for biodiversity-positive outcomes to occur, in terms of both theory and applied practice,
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of transformative change as a means to achieve nature-positive outcomes in comparison to stepwise incremental changes,
- Structural analysis of global tele-coupling and biodiversity footprints, including how to prioritise between regional versus far-reaching biodiversity impacts,
- A better understanding of the role for transformative change in reversing negative feedback loops in the nexus of biodiversity loss and its primary drivers – habitat loss, invasive species, climate change, overexploitation, and pollution – and interactions between them,
- Integrative analysis of the role of various societal aspects in addressing losses of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, e.g., values, justice, governance, economic, cultural, health, and gender aspects, as well as social systems and knowledge systems,

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;

Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

- Analysis of economic paradigms, practices and financial models to identify potential change agents and to enable social dynamics for nature-positive outcomes while safeguarding social and ecological boundaries,
- Identifying trade-offs and co-benefits of different goals, as well as means to reconcile conflicts around biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people, while acknowledging the interconnectedness between humans and biodiversity,
- Evaluating trade-offs on a temporal scale, and levelling between short- and long-term needs,
- Analysis and scenario modelling of what actual implementation of societal transformation means for biodiversity and for people, what governance is needed to achieve it, and who might gain and suffer from the effects of such change, with special attention to marginalised and vulnerable groups,
- Evaluating “business-as-usual” scenarios and the risks associated to NOT perpetrating transformative change in action,
- Research on how variations in mission, structure, decision-making processes, technical capacity, and funding sources in organisations involved in conservation (including government agencies, civil society organisations, research institutes, private corporations, and community organisations) affect their impact on conservation policy and practice, and ultimately the status of biological diversity and nature’s contributions to people.

Other general elements to help you develop a good proposal

- Include theory of change to clearly address how and where the proposed research can substantially contribute to transformative change.
- Demonstrate how the proposed project will influence and ideally positively enhance sustainable relationships between biodiversity and society.
- Target diverse values, paradigms and knowledge systems of different actors as leverage points for transformation. This includes solutions with explicit systematic strategy and potential for uptake, perceptual and systemic barriers and enablers, as well as research *for* and *by* those actors who drive or own the process.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilise the scientific research infrastructures and Earth observation programmes which have been created and supported by the European Union to facilitate biodiversity research and observation across the continent (e.g. LifeWatch, AnaEE, eLTER, Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS), as well as global research infrastructures (e.g. GBIF, ILTER, GEOSS/GEOBON, GERI, and others).
- Address opportunities or complications that may arise from the engagement of stakeholders, including business, policymakers, citizens and volunteers, in the planning and implementation of the proposed project.

4. PROCEDURES, ELIGIBILITY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

4.1 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, <https://proposals.etag.ee/biodiversa/2024>). Instructions for electronic submission will be available on the Biodiversa+ website at <https://www.biodiversa.eu/BiodivTransform> in September 2024.

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 a first Step and an eligibility check and an evaluation of full proposals at a second Step.

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

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;

Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

Step 1	12 June 2024	Pre-announcement of the call
	10 September 2024	Official launch of the call
	24 September 2024 at 13:00 CEST	General webinar of the Call
	8 November 2024, 15:00 CET	Deadline for submitting pre-proposal
	December 2024	First eligibility check completed by the Call Secretariat and Funding organisation Contact Points (FCPs)
	Mid-February 2025	<p>Results of the first Evaluation Committee (EvC) meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 will not be 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 2025. No score nor rank will be communicated.
Step 2	11 April 2025, 15:00 CEST	Deadline for submitting full proposals
	May 2025	Second eligibility check completed by the Call Secretariat and FCPs
	June or July 2025:	<p>Second EvC meeting</p> <p><i>Ranked list of proposals established by the EvC</i></p>
	Late September 2025:	<p>Recommendation for funding projects by the Call Steering Committee (CSC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 2025. No score nor rank will be communicated.
	1 December 2025:	<i>Earliest possible start of funded projects</i>
	1 April 2026:	<i>Latest possible start of funded projects</i>

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

4.2 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 research entities and for participation by private sector (profit and non-profit) organisations;
- The Project Partner Coordinator (i.e., person in charge of the whole project, also referred to as research Partner 1) is eligible and employed by an eligible Organisation according to the terms and conditions of the participating Funding Organisation from which he/she applies for support;
- The Project Partner Coordinator (i.e., person in charge of the whole project, also referred to as research 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 research Partners from at least three different countries participating in the call** and requesting support from at least three different Funding Organisations; including eligible research 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 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 he/she represents. He/she will not be considered as two different Partners within the consortium.
- Proposals must be written in English;
- The submission of a pre-proposal is compulsory. Applicants cannot submit a proposal at a later stage otherwise;
- Pre-proposals and full proposals must be received before the deadlines set for the submission;
- 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 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

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.

Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

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 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. 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 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”; Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

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.

1) First Step:

An eligibility check will be performed by the Call Secretariat and Funding Organisation Contact Points (FCPs) as well as a first Step 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) Second Step:

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 reviewers (as far as possible 3 external reviewers per proposal, 2 scientific and 1 policy/management) 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.

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.

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

The EvC will discuss about 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.

5. FUNDING

For this call a total amount of over 30 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 his or her 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.

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;
Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

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 research Partner. Please consult the Funding Organisations’ rules and contact your Funding Organisation Contact Point for more information.

Country	Funding organisation	Acronym	Reserved budget in EUR
Austria	Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung	FWF#	1,500,000.00
Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels)	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique	FNRS#	300,000.00
Belgium (Flanders)	Fonds Voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen	FWO#	750,000.00
Brazil	Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development	CNPq#	100,000.00
Brazil	Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies	CONFAP#	1,560,000.00 (tbc)
Bulgaria	Bulgarian National Science Fund	BNSF#	460,163.00
Czech Republic	Technology Agency of the Czech Republic	TA CR#	1,000,000.00
Denmark	Innovation Fund Denmark	IFD#	1,300,000.00
Estonia	Sihtasutus Eesti Teadusagentuur	ETAG#	300,000.00
Faroe Islands	The Faroese Research Council	RCFI#	100,000.00
Finland	Research Council of Finland	RCF#	850,000.00
France	Agence Nationale de la Recherche	ANR#	2,000,000.00
Germany	German Research Foundation	DFG#	1,500,000.00 (tbc)
Germany	VDI/VDE Innovation + Technik GmbH (on behalf of BMBF)	VDI/VDE-IT# (on behalf of BMBF)	2,000,000.00 (tbc)
Hungary	Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Hivatal	NKFIH#	250,000.00

**Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;
Document 1 Announcement of Opportunity**

Iceland	Icelandic Centre for Research	Rannis [#]	Participation to be confirmed
Israel	Ministry of Environmental Protection	MoEP [#]	100,000.00
Italy	Ministry of Universities and Research	MUR [#]	1,500,000.00
Italy	Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen	BOZEN [#]	250,000.00
Latvia	Latvian Council of Science	LZP/LCS [#]	600,000.00
Lithuania	Lietuvos mokslo taryba	LMT [#]	300,000.00
Moldova	National Agency for Research and Development	NARD [#]	200,000.00
Netherlands (the)	Dutch Research Council	NWO [#]	2,000,000.00
Norway	Research Council of Norway	RCN [#]	1,700,000.00
Poland	Narodowe Centrum Nauki	NCN	1,000,000.00
Portugal - Azores	Fundo Regional para a Ciência e Tecnologia	FRCT [#]	100,000.00
Romania	The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding	UEFISCDI [#]	500,000.00
Slovakia	Slovak Academy of Sciences	SAS [#]	240,000.00
Slovenia	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation	MVZI [#]	900,000.00
South Africa	Department of Science and Innovation	DSI [#]	400,000.00
Spain	Agencia Estatal de Investigación	AEI [#]	1,500,000.00
Spain	Fundación Biodiversidad	FB [#]	600,000.00
Sweden	The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning	Formas [#]	3,500,000.00
Switzerland	Swiss National Science Foundation	SNSF [#]	ca. 3,900,000.00

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;
Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

Taiwan	National Science and Technology Council	NSTC#	810,000.00
Tunisia	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	MHESR#	400,000.00
Türkiye	Türkiye Bilimsel Ve Teknolojik Arastirma Kurumu	TÜBİTAK#	350,000.00

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.

6. 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 conference** to present 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 required 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.

7. ELIGIBLE BUDGET ITEMS

Eligible costs and the maximum allowed requested budget per project and/or per research 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.

8. 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 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.**

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.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

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

Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”; Document 1 Announcement of opportunity

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 research 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.

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 (https://www.biodiversa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Biodiversa-Data-Management_WEB_2023.pdf).

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.⁴ Please refer to the competent authorities for more information.

Additional resources

⁴ 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.

**Call Documents of the 2024-2025 Biodiversa+ Call “BiodivTransform”;
Document 1 Announcement of Opportunity**

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.