

ERA4Health Call for transnational research proposals

“Increasing health equity through promoting healthy diets and physical activity (HealthEquity)”

Preliminary Announcement

The Partnership “Fostering a European Research Area for Health” (ERA4Health) aims at establishing a flexible and effective coordination between funding organisations in the European Research Area (ERA) for Health and Well-being. This Partnership brings the opportunity to increase European transnational collaborative research funding by creating a funding body for joint programming in priority areas addressing European public health needs. Under this umbrella, the joint transnational call “Increasing health equity through promoting healthy diets and physical activity (HealthEquity)” will be launched.

1. Timeline

There will be a one-step submission and evaluation procedure for joint applications (followed by a rebuttal stage). One joint proposal document (in English) shall be prepared by the partners of a joint transnational consortium. The project coordinator must submit the proposal by uploading it on the electronic submission system. The following timeline is planned for the application process:

13 January 2023	Publication of the ERA4Health Call for proposals
26 January 2023	Info webinar for applicants on the call specifics. Please register here: https://terminplaner6.dfn.de/en/b/6bedf7545dc9795972f571a019114f8c-71848
14 March 2023	Deadline for proposal submission
16 - 25 August 2023	Rebuttal stage
End of October 2023	Communication of the funding decisions to the applicants
December 2023 - May 2024	Expected project start (subject to national procedures)

2. Aim of the call

Unhealthy diets and inadequate physical activity exacerbate the risk of poor physical and mental health. Socio-economic disadvantaged groups are particularly affected, leading to further health inequalities between social groups. There is a need to understand, predict and ultimately change the circumstances determining citizens' lifestyle and health behaviours, and lifestyle and health behaviours, permanently. Research has shown that many current intervention strategies targeting the individual do not result in sustained improvements in dietary and physical activity behaviours.

Accordingly, there is a clear need to take a broader perspective at the surrounding environment leading to these behaviours, i.e. not only with respect to the food and built environment for physical activity, but also including the family, social, cultural, and local background, as well as digital influences. Following that, targeted innovative strategies leading to long-term behavioural changes need to be developed in order to reduce health inequalities.

The aim of this call is to develop novel strategies and targeted approaches to identify, understand, and modify determinants and mechanisms of diet-related behaviour and physical activity as well as sedentary behaviour, which have the potential to break through the cycles maintaining unhealthy behaviours and lifestyles and to reduce health inequalities.

Research should be targeted at socio-economically disadvantaged groups and their setting, including the family, social, cultural, and local background, as well as digital influences. The applicants need to clearly define and justify their selection of target group(s). In addition, the strategy how these target groups will be reached needs to be innovative and outlined in detail.

Proposals should comprise holistic and multi-disciplinary research, that must include several approaches tackling different aspects, such as:

- Mapping the current situation of the vulnerable groups with respect to food and built environment for physical activity;
- Developing and testing innovative interventions/ targeted strategies, that
 - o may target the food environment and/or the built environment for physical activity and/or
 - o may address illiteracy by increasing knowledge with respect to food, lifestyle and adequate use of digital media and/or
 - o may be focussed on different settings, including but not limited to day-care, schools, workspace, retirement homes, neighbourhood, and/or
 - o may use a life course approach.
- Evaluating existing interventions, e.g. to identify barriers in the implementation;
- Assessing the efficiency of policies and fiscal approaches (e.g. taxes and subsidies) that were implemented to enhance healthy diets and physical activity;
- Expanding the theoretical basis on the systemic barriers to change, e.g. political, economic and/or cultural barriers to increase the effect of interventions.

The research results should have a clear potential to be translated into policy recommendations or actions.

Beyond that, the following points should be taken into account:

- **Involvement of citizens/stakeholders:**
 - It is strongly recommended to involve stakeholders in the projects, e.g. political representatives (local/regional/national), citizens and/or citizen representatives, local communities, schools, municipalities, local/ national NGOs, consumer organisations.
 - Involvement of stakeholders should start as early in the process as suitable for the research, ideally already in the conception stage.
 - The type of stakeholders and level of involvement depends on the design, e.g. for new interventions it should be co-creation; applicants should well explain their reasons behind (not) involving certain stakeholders.
 - Stakeholders can be directly involved in the project as funded partner (depending on the respective national/regional regulations for funding of stakeholders), collaborator, or as part of an advisory board.
 - Dissemination activities only are NOT sufficient in terms of co-creation/participation of stakeholders.
- Proposals should consider potential moderators of effects such as age, sex, gender, ethnic or other demographic features/differences in the respective research approaches.
- Proposals should make use of existing cohorts, if applicable. Otherwise, it should be explained why existing cohorts are not used.
- The way policies (social domain) determine health should be in accordance with a HiAP (Health in All Policies) perspective.

3. General conditions for application

The duration of the projects will be 36 months.

Joint research proposals may be submitted by applicants belonging to one of the following categories (eligibility may vary according to national/regional regulations of the participating funding organisations):

- **A. Academia** – research teams working in universities, other higher education institutions or research institutes;
- **B. Clinical/public health sector** – research teams working in hospitals/public health and/or other health care settings and health organisations;
- **C. Enterprises** – private companies of all sizes;
- and **D. Operational stakeholders** – e.g. citizens and/or citizen representatives, local communities, schools, municipalities, local/national NGOS, consumer organisations. In line with the concept of RRI, operational stakeholders should be in a position to provide useful knowledge to the consortium, ensure the consortium's research is useful and translatable to their (or other) organizational contexts, and/or influence decision making or create change within their organisations. Operational stakeholders should be engaged in the research process from conception of the study to dissemination.

The number of participants and their research contribution should be appropriate for the aims of the transnational research project and be reasonably balanced in terms of international participation. Each transnational collaborative project should represent the critical mass to achieve ambitious scientific goals and should clearly demonstrate an added value from working together.

Only transnational projects will be funded. The following conditions apply to the composition of consortia:

- A minimum of three eligible and a maximum of five eligible partners from at least three different countries participating in the call (see list below).
- The maximum number of eligible partners can be increased up to six or seven if they include one or two partners, respectively, from a potentially underrepresented country (to be defined in the call text).
- No more than two eligible partners from the same country participating in the call will be accepted within one consortium.
- A maximum of two collaborators per consortium. Collaborators are self-funded partners that do not request funds for this Joint Transnational Call from one of the participating funding organisations, i.e. partners from non-funding countries, or partners that are not fundable according to national/regional regulations of the participating funding organisations.

Project partners will be funded by their relevant national/regional funding organisation. Eligible costs and funding rules vary between the respective funding organisations.

4. Participating countries and respective funding organisations

Countries	Funding organisations
Belgium	Fund for Scientific Research-FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS)
Belgium/ Flanders	The Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO)
Denmark	Innovation Fund Denmark (IFD)
France	French Research Funding Agency (ANR)
Germany	Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF)/DLR Project Management Agency (DLR-PT)
Ireland	Health Research Board (HRB)
Israel	Chief Scientist Office of the Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH)
Italy	Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR)
Italy	Italian Ministry of Health (IT-MoH)
Latvia	Latvian Council of Science (LCS)

Lithuania	Research Council of Lithuania (LMT)
Poland	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR)
Portugal	Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)
Romania	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)
Slovakia	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)
Spain	Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)
Spain	Andalusian Regional Ministry of Health and Consumers Affairs (CSCJA)
Taiwan	National Science and Technology Council (NSTC)
The Netherlands	The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMW)
Türkiye	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TUBITAK)

More information will soon be available online:

<https://era4health.eu/>

Please note: The content of the call described in this pre-announcement is indicative, may be subject to changes and is not legally binding. Interested applicants are encouraged to initiate scientific contacts with potential project consortium partners for applications. The [partner search tool of the European Commission](#) can be used to offer you support or look for a partner.