



# PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

## Call for Proposals for

# NETWORKING GROUPS ON

# CHRONIC PAIN

**Submission deadline for proposals: 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, 14:00 C.E.T.**

### Electronic proposal submission

For further information, visit our website:

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

or contact the

**NEURON Joint Call Secretariat:**

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### 1. Background

Chronic pain imposes a massive burden to the individual, the health system, and the economy worldwide. It leads to a severe reduction in the quality of life of those affected and their families. Patients' daily activities such as work and social interactions are heavily impaired. As a consequence, chronic pain can lead to sleep problems, depression and anxiety. The underlying mechanisms are often not understood. Thus, joined efforts of basic scientist, clinicians, lay organisations, and policymakers are needed to understand the pathophysiology, improve diagnosis and therapy, increase awareness, and improve the every-day life of the patients. The success of biomedical research however, is hampered by the lack of harmonization of procedures, experimental methodologies, and data management. For the translation and implementation of future research outcomes into clinical practice, as well as for shaping future research priorities, it is essential to form synergies in the research community, to overcome gaps and hurdles, to build overarching networks, and to generate harmonizing concepts and ideas. Thus, a networking call in the field of chronic pain is now launched under the umbrella of the ERA-NET NEURON.

The 'Network of European Funding for Neuroscience Research' (NEURON) has been established under the ERA-NET scheme of the European Commission ([www.neuron-eranet.eu](http://www.neuron-eranet.eu)).

The call will be conducted simultaneously by the participating funding organisations (see Annex I) in their respective countries and coordinated centrally by the Joint Call Secretariat ([neuron@aei.gob.es](mailto:neuron@aei.gob.es)).

## 2. Aim of the Call

The aim of the call is to support ambitious, innovative, multidisciplinary and multinational initiatives of leading experts and is aimed to enhance resource alignment and to maximize existing and future efforts in the field of **Chronic Pain. The networking call does not fund experimental research activities.**

Networking groups should address cross-cutting challenges in the research field of chronic pain, to build knowledge on specific aspects, identify gaps, and find solutions for urgent issues such as interoperability of data and method harmonization. Proposals addressing hurdles and potential solutions to ensure the fruitful, homogeneous and inclusive translation of basic science into clinical practice are also within the scope of this call.

Applicants should clearly define the expected outcome, including the specific questions that will be addressed and answered. It should be clarified how the proposed outcome is potentially useful to the relevant community, and demonstrated that the consortium includes most of the key actors (researchers, clinicians, patient representatives, etc.) with respect to the addressed question. A clear scientific benefit from working across national borders should be demonstrated. **The elaboration of white papers, prospective views, recommendations, guidelines or best practice frameworks** of value to the wider research community and with societal impact, among others, will be considered possible outcomes of this call. Key opinion leaders with an internationally competitive track record in the field of chronic pain should be involved.

The resulting recommendations should help to answer important conceptual questions to delineate future ERA-NET NEURON joint activities on this subject. The outcomes provided by the Networking Groups may be (amongst others):

- Conceptualisation of new ideas,
- Provision of white papers,
- Prospective studies in expert centres to unveil problems or gaps in protocols,
- Harmonization and standardization of methods, protocols and/or techniques,
- Guidelines for patient stratification based on analysis of available resources,
- Best practices concerning data access, handling and/or sharing,
- Roadmaps for implementation of techniques or protocols related with chronic pain
- Guidelines for best practices in the treatment of chronic pain.

**Note that acute pain is excluded from this call as well as proposals focussing on psychological and social consequences of pain conditions.**

Experimental research activities are also excluded.

The ERA-NET NEURON seeks to strengthen patient engagement in research. All applications should include a description of the expected outcomes with potential relevance for patients. If appropriate, applicants are expected to engage patients and to disseminate the results to the patient community.

Involvement of **early career researchers (ECRs) is highly encouraged**. They should be included in meetings, workshops, or to build an ECR forum for the addressed topic

## 3. Eligibility

### 3.1. Networking group composition

A networking group must consist of a minimum of 10, and should not exceed 25 participants. At least half of the participant institutions participating to a Networking Group must belong to a member of the ERA-NET NEURON COFUND 2 (Annex II). To ensure the general eligibility for funding a networking group, a minimum of three participants must come from at least **three different funding countries** (see List in Annex I). The inclusion of experts from non-NEURON regions is encouraged.

It is strongly recommended to contact the respective funding organisations to ensure the eligibility of those participants before submission. Industrial partners can only be included as external collaborators, not being able to receive or provide any funding.

### 3.2. Coordination of the networking group/responsibilities

The networking group will be led by a **Scientific Coordinator** from any of the ERA-NET NEURON COFUND 2 member countries (see list Annex II). The Scientific Coordinator will assemble the Networking Group, act as first point of contact and be responsible for the internal supervision of activities, such as monitoring, reporting, management of intellectual property rights issues and sharing of data. The Scientific Coordinator **cannot act as the coordinator of another Networking Group**.

Funds will only be received and managed by the **Budget Recipient**. The Budget Recipient may be the Scientific Coordinator him/herself, or any other member **eligible for funding by any of the agencies listed in Annex I**. The Budget Recipient will centralize the budget for the entire Networking Group and directly cover the consortium activities (travels, meetings, catering services, etc.). **No funds transfer between countries is possible.**

The decision on who will be best suited as Budget Recipient shall be taken together with the Joint Call Secretariat **after projects selection**, considering all eligible partners in the consortium and the availability of the respective national funds.

### 3.3. Funding

The networks will be selected through a competitive Joint Transnational Call (JTC). Each network created can receive up to **50.000 €** (+ overheads, depending on the national rules) for support of its activities for a maximum duration of **1 year**.

Funding will cover activities such as the organization of face-to-face and/or virtual meetings, workshops and travel costs, which are required to attain the objectives. It may also be used for remote working costs (e.g. audio and video conferencing licences), as well as data exchange, long-term storage, and harmonisation. Part of the budget must be reserved for attending the final symposium of the Networking Call. **No experimental research activities will be funded** (e.g. costs for research equipment or consumables). Salaries of investigators or **scientific staff or student** stipends are neither eligible but salaries dedicated to administrative or technical staff supporting for example for analysis or data handling is allowed.

## Annex I: Anticipated amount of funding provided by each participating funding organisation

Partner Country	Funding organisation	Anticipated amount of funding (for 3 years)	Anticipated number of fundable research groups
Estonia	Estonian Research Council (ETAg)	50.000€	1
Italy	Ministry of Health (IT-MoH)	50.000€	1
France	French National Research Agency (ANR)	100.000€	2
Ireland	Health Research Board (HRB)	50.000€	1
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)	100.000€	2
UK	Medical Research Council (MRC)	50.000€	1

## Annex II: List of member countries in NEURON ERANET COFUND 2

Country
Germany
Belgium
Canada
Finland
France
Israel
Italy
Latvia
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovakia
Spain
Turkey
Greece
Taiwan

Ireland
United Kingdom
Switzerland
Croatia
Hungary
Estonia

### Annex III: Tentative Call Timeline

<b>6 September 2022</b>	Publication of the call
<b>8 November 2022</b>	Proposal submission deadline
<b>31 January 2023</b>	Deadline for proposal remote evaluations
<b>16 March 2023</b>	Funding decision
<b>20 March 2023</b>	Communication of results
<b>April-June 2023</b>	Start of selected projects