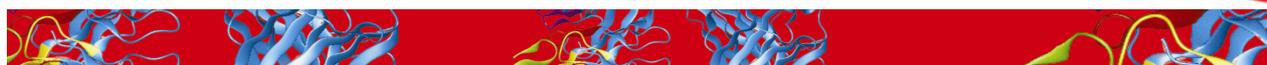




# **HIVERA Call for Proposals 2013 for “European Research Projects on HIV/AIDS”**

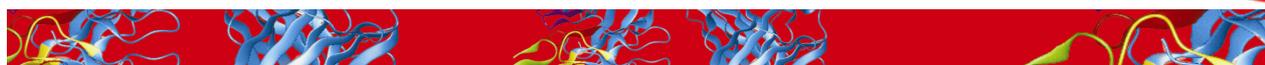
**Submission deadline for proposals:**

**12<sup>th</sup> of April 2013**



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This document announces the second joint transnational call for proposals on HIV/AIDS research within the framework of the ERA-NET HIVERA. The main purpose of the call is to generate transnational collaboration for research and development in the field of HIV/AIDS in Europe.

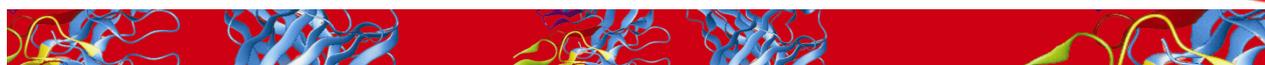
## 1. MOTIVATION

HIV infection is a major worldwide epidemic threatening public health in all affected countries, with an estimated 34 million people living with HIV, 2.5 million new infections and 1,7 million deaths in 2011 (UNAIDS). In Europe, an estimated 2.3 million people are living with HIV. In Western countries, the situation is relatively stable, partly with a progressively ageing patients' population, whereas in Central and Eastern European countries the number of newly infected people continues to increase.

Although high level of financial support has been successfully dedicated to HIV through national and/or EC-funded programmes, there is still little cooperation between national funding programmes in Europe, while this field is highly international, operationally as well as competitively, in all disciplines of science.

HIVERA is designed as an instrument to create sustainable cooperation and coordination between national funding bodies and their programmatic activities in HIV/AIDS research. The ERA-NET is coordinated by the National Agency for Research on AIDS and viral hepatitis (ANRS, France) with the participation of the Project Management Agency in the German Aerospace Centre (PT-DLR, Germany), Vlaams Gewest (VLAGEW, Belgium), the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT, Portugal), the National Institute of Health (ISS, Italy), the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS), AIDS Programme Coordination (CNSida, Portugal), Estonian Research Council (ETAG, Estonia), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF, Germany) and The National centre of epidemiology (NCE, Hungary).

The following HIVERA partner organisations agreed to participate in the call (hereinafter referred to as PARTNERS):



Funding agency		PARTNER-country
<b>ANCS</b>	National Authority for Scientific Research (Romania)	Romania
<b>ANRS</b>	National Agency for Research on AIDS and viral hepatitis (France)	France
<b>FCT</b>	Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal)	Portugal
<b>ETAG</b>	Estonian Research Council (Estonia)	Estonia
<b>BMBF PT-DLR</b>	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany)DLR - Project Management Health Research (Germany)	Germany
<b>VLAGEW</b>	Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) mandated by Vlaams Gewest (VLAGEW) / Flemish Ministry of Economy, Sciences and Innovation (EWI) (Belgium)	Belgium ( <b>Flemish Region</b> )

The partners decided to open the second HIVERA joint call for funding multilateral research projects on HIV/AIDS, which is being opened simultaneously by the partners involved in their respective countries (PARTNER-countries).

## 2. AIM OF THE CALL

The aim of the call is to support research proposals building an effective collaboration on a common interdisciplinary research project in the area of HIV/AIDS including all areas (e.g. basic, epidemiological and clinical research, social sciences, economics...). **TB-HIV co-infection and phase III clinical trials are excluded from the scope of this HIVERA call.**

Project proposals must clearly demonstrate:

- the potential health impact as well as the added-value of transnational collaboration;
- gathering a critical mass of patients and/or biological material;
- sharing of resources (models, registries, diagnosis etc.);
- data harmonisation, sharing of know-how and of innovative ideas.

## 3. TOPICS

Transnational research proposals must cover at least one of the following areas, which are equally relevant for this call:



### **Topic 1: Advanced research on reservoirs and cure**

Combined ART treatment allows long term control of HIV viraemia in most of treated patients. However, persistent proviruses in infected cells constitute a latent and stable reservoir. It prevents the immune clearance of viruses and of infected cells and prohibits eradication with the current treatment strategies. In addition, side effects of ART and limited access to treatment in large parts of the world make it a crucial societal challenge to accelerate research on HIV cure strategies, as developed in the symposium 'Towards an HIV cure – 2012'. The priority in the context of the HIVERA call-2013 is to build strong transnational collaborative research on the topic, based on multidisciplinary approaches.

Application to this topic shall address, among others:

1. Development of innovative strategies and new molecular approaches, pursued through basic or translational research and/or through phase I and II clinical trials, for proof of concepts of new agents or combinations;
2. Better understanding of viral, immunological and pathophysiological mechanisms of HIV persistence;
3. Better understanding of the epigenetic regulations involved in the persistence/latency control in different tissues and cellular compartments;

### **Topic 2: Research on prevention and treatment:**

Transnational research involving teams from Central/Eastern and Western European regions is crucial for a global control of the epidemic trend in Europe. The persistence of HIV transmission in specific groups is a common and major concern, even while patterns may vary between countries and regions. Specific challenges include, among others, continued low-level transmission in young people, persistent unprotected intercourse in men having sex with men, and the spread of HIV through the process of migration within and from outside Europe. Translating new biological, psycho-sociological and epidemiological insights in the dynamics of persistent transmission patterns into innovative tools for targeted prevention, testing and treatment is a main priority. Effective models and pilots of integrated prevention strategies are most needed.

HIV-infected patients, in particular those with long-standing infection and treated with first generation antiretrovirals, are increasingly affected by age-related and other comorbidities. The respective roles and interaction of HIV infection, comorbidities, individual factors and antiretroviral treatment are poorly understood. Collaborative research within the HIVERA network is to increase our knowledge on the pathophysiology of these comorbidities, on their prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management.



Studies on strategies to decrease the incidence and/or impact on HIV of these comorbidities are important to generate future guidelines.

This topic includes, but is not restricted to research in the following areas:

1. Integrating behavioural and biomedical strategies for HIV-prevention;
2. New strategies to manage comorbidities, including neurocognitive disorders and STIs.

For both topics, interaction with stakeholders in the community, including non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, charities and foundations is encouraged.

#### 4. APPLICATION

**Only transnational projects will be funded:** Each consortium submitting a proposal must involve a **minimum of 3** and a **maximum of 6 research groups** from **at least three different countries** participating in the call ( ‘the PARTNER countries’ listed on page 4).

Each transnational collaborative project should have the optimal critical mass to achieve ambitious scientific goals and should clearly demonstrate an added value of the collaboration.

##### 4.1. Funding recipients / Eligibility

HIVERA funds to joint proposals will be awarded only to eligible recipients from PARTNER-countries and belonging to one of the following categories (according to country / regional regulations):

- academia (research teams working in universities, other higher education institutions or research institutes)
- clinical / public health sector (research teams working in hospitals)
- small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs, see SME definition of EC: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm)). Note that the inclusion of enterprises in the consortium is optional and only a maximum of one SME is allowed in each consortium. A consortium shall clearly describe and justify the reasons for including an SME partner in the project.

Research groups from non-PARTNER countries may participate in projects if they secure their own funding and if their expertise is indispensable for reaching the submitted project’s objectives. They must



state clearly in the proposal if these funds are already secured or if not, how they plan to obtain funding in advance of the project start. Availability of the additional individual funds needs to be demonstrated before final funding recommendation by the Call Partnership Board (CPB).

Coordination of the proposal: Each consortium must nominate a project coordinator among the project partner principal investigators to represent the consortium and to be responsible for its internal management. The consortium coordinator must be a principal investigator of a project partner from an HIVERA funding country/region. The project coordinator will represent the consortium externally and towards the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS) and CPB, and will be responsible for its internal scientific management (such as controlling, reporting, intellectual property rights issues and contact with the JCS).

Within a joint proposal each project partner (an institution from a partner country) will be represented by only one principal investigator towards the national funding organisation. All participants should agree to abide by the rules of the HIVERA call text and the Consortium Agreement (CA) among project partners.

The duration of the projects can be up to 3 years. Nevertheless, a partner can receive funding for less than 3 years according to HIVERA funding organisations eligibility criteria and regulations.

- Applications are subjected to eligibility criteria of individual funding organisations. **It is mandatory that all applicants contact their corresponding national / regional representative** and confirm eligibility with their respective funding organisations in advance of submitting an application (see national / regional contact details and Annex I).
- Inclusion of a non-eligible partner in a proposal **may lead to the rejection of the entire proposal without further review.**

There will be **one step submission procedure for joint applications: full proposals**. One joint proposal document (in English) shall be prepared by the partners of a joint transnational proposal, and must be submitted to the JCS by the coordinator.



Joint proposals must be received by the JCS in an electronic version which is to be uploaded into an electronic proposal submission system under: <http://www.pt-it.de/ptoutline/application/hivera>, not later than 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 at 5 p.m. GMT. Upon registration in the evaluation database, the coordinator will upload all relevant information and submit for evaluation. The proposals should strictly follow the "Guidelines for applicants". The **language of the proposals is English**.

The decision on the selection of proposals will be communicated to applicants immediately after the evaluation and ranking discussion between the HIVERA partners.

Information on the electronic submission of proposals will be made available through the HIVERA website ([www.hivera.eu](http://www.hivera.eu)) and in the "Guidelines for applicants". The forms that have to be used for proposal submission are available on the HIVERA website. Applicants should take note of individual national / regional rules, and should contact their national / regional contact person for any questions (see Annex I).

## 5. EVALUATION

Two boards, with the support of the HIVERA Joint Call Secretariat (**JCS**) will manage and direct the evaluation of the research projects. The process includes the evaluation procedure of full proposals and the final selection and award of research projects.

- i) **Call Partnership Board (CPB)** is composed of a single representative from each PARTNER participating in the call and the task leaders of the call management. It will supervise the progress of the call and the evaluation of proposals. Final funding decisions and recommendation to the national / regional funding organisations on the proposals to be funded will be made by the partner countries participating in the call, and will be based on the final ranking list provided by the Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC) and the funding available. All decisions concerning the call procedures will be taken by the CPB.
  
- ii) **The Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC)** is a panel of internationally recognised scientific experts responsible for the evaluation of submitted proposals.



To ensure objectivity during the evaluation procedure the members of these two boards will not submit or participate in proposals within this call, and must sign confidentiality and conflict of interest forms.

## **5.1. Evaluation criteria**

Full proposals will be assessed according to specific evaluation criteria (see below), using a common evaluation form. A scoring system from 0 to 5 will be used to evaluate the proposal's performance with respect to the different evaluation criteria.

### **5.1.1 Scoring system**

**0:** fails or missing / incomplete information; **1:** poor; **2:** fair; **3:** good; **4:** very good; **5:** excellent.

### **5.1.2 Evaluation criteria**

- Scientific quality of the proposal (innovative potential, novelty, originality international competitiveness).
- Methodological scientific soundness of the proposal.
- Relevance to health sciences application; impact on relevant field of research.
- Scientific expertise of the consortium / record of the application/team; transnational added value of the consortium.
- Quality of the organisation and coordination, multidisciplinary, appropriateness of time and work schedule, feasibility according to existing and requested resources (equipment, man power, etc.)



## 5.2 Eligibility check

The JCS will assess all proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (date of submission; number and country distribution of participating research groups; inclusion of all necessary information in English, page length of each section). The JCS will forward the proposals to the CPB members, who will perform a formal check for compliance to Country / region rules.

- Proposals not meeting the formal **criteria or the national / regional eligibility criteria and requirements will be declined without further review.**
- Faulty eligibility of one partner in a proposal may **result in an automatic decline of the whole proposal.**

## 5.3. SEC evaluation

The JCS will send proposals to the SEC members for reviewing. All proposals will be reviewed by at least three evaluators. The SEC will meet to discuss each proposal and, after consideration of the evaluation criteria, possible external reviews, and their own discussions, the SEC will make a classification of the proposals and rank proposals recommended for funding: A – Highly recommended for funding; B – Recommended for funding; C – Not fundable.

## 5.4 Funding

The CPB will suggest the projects to be funded to the national / regional funding agencies taking into account both the proposals' classification established by the SEC and available funding.

The final decisions will be made by the national / regional funding agencies based on CPB recommendations.

The Joint Call Secretariat will communicate to all project coordinators the final decisions together with the review from the SEC.



## 6. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

### 6.1. Funding model

The HIVERA Funding Partners have agreed to launch a joint call using the “virtual common pot” funding mode. This means that national / regional funding will be made available through national / regional funding organisations according to national / regional funding regulations. Each country / region funds only its national / regional component of the transnational research project. The funding rate within the call will be variable up to a maximum of 100% of the funds requested, according to national / regional rules. Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants should verify their eligibility and the rate of financial support with their national / regional funding organisation, and are recommended to contact their national / regional contact person (see Annex I).

- Funding is foreseen for a maximum of three years according to national regulations.
- **Eligible costs may vary according to the corresponding national / regional funding agency regulations.** Each group is subject to the rules and regulations of their respective national / regional funding agency (see Annex I & Guidelines for Applicants).

### 6.2. Funding contracts

Each project includes several consortium members called research partners and one project coordinator. Each research partner will have a separate funding contract / letter of grant according to national / regional regulations with the appropriate national / regional funding institutions.

Changes to the composition of research consortia or in budget cannot occur during the contract / letter of grant, unless there is a good justification for it. Any changes have to be well justified and the relevant funding organizations will decide upon the proper action to be taken. The research partners shall inform the JCS and the funding bodies of that project of any event that might affect the implementation of the project.



### 6.3. Research consortium agreement and ownership of intellectual property rights

The project consortium partners must sign a consortium agreement (CA) for cooperation addressing the issues given in “Guidelines for Applicants” on consortium agreements (available on the HIVERA website). The **CA must be signed no later than six months** after the official project starting date. Upon request, this consortium agreement must be made available to the concerned HIVERA funding organizations. Otherwise, the funding of the project consortium may not be possible according to national rules.

Results and new Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) resulting from projects funded through the HIVERA Joint Transnational Call will be owned by the researchers’ organisations according to national rules on IPR. If several participants have jointly carried out work generating new IPR, they shall agree amongst themselves (consortium agreement) as to the allocation of ownership of IPR, taking into account their contributions to the creation of those IPR as well as the European guidelines on IPR issues.

**Research project results and the IPR generated** should be actively exploited and **made available for use**, whether for commercial gain or not, in order **for public benefit to be obtained from the knowledge created**.

The funding partners shall have the right to use documents, information and results submitted by the research partners and / or to use the information and results for their own purposes, provided that the owner’s rights are kept and taking care to specify their origin.

## 7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DISSEMINATION

The coordinators of all the funded projects must submit **brief annual scientific project reports and a final scientific project report** (within six months of the end of the project) to the JCS. All reports must be in English and use a common report form that will be provided by the Secretariat. The research partners are jointly responsible for delivery of the reports, and the JCS will only accept reports delivered on behalf of the consortium, via the project coordinator.

The coordinators will present **the results of their projects at status seminars** to be organized yearly by the HIVERA Secretariat.



If required, each participant has to submit financial and scientific reports to their **national / regional funding organisations**, according to national / regional regulations. The progress and final results of each individual contract / letter of grant will be monitored by the respective national / regional funding organisations.

Any publications resulting from the funded projects must acknowledge the national funding agencies and the ERA-NET HIVERA, and one copy must be sent to the HIVERA Secretariat.

## **8. CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

The JCS is set up at PT-DLR (DLR - Project management health research (Germany)) to assist the CPB and the national / regional funding bodies during the implementation of the call and the follow-up phase until the funded research projects have ended. The JCS will be responsible for the administrative management of the call. It will be the primary point of contact referring to the call procedures between the research consortia, the funding organisations (CPB) and the peer reviewers. The project coordinator will be the person contacted by the JCS during the application procedure, so he / she must forward this information to the other participants. The secretariat will insert full contact details and a link to the online system where also an IT support is given.

Information on the HIVERA Project, the Call and the follow-up is available at the HIVERA website ([www.hivera.eu](http://www.hivera.eu)).

**It is mandatory to contact the national / regional contact person for any questions regarding the Call (please see national / regional contact details below).**



Country / Region	Organisation	Website	National Contact
Belgium	VLAGEW	<a href="http://www.itg.be/en">www.itg.be/en</a> <a href="http://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/en">www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/en</a>	Lut Joris E-mail: <a href="mailto:ljoris@itg.be">ljoris@itg.be</a> Phone: + 32 3 247 62 12
Estonia	ETAG	<a href="http://www.etag.ee">www.etag.ee</a>	Iige Maalmann E-mail: <a href="mailto:iige.maalmann@etag.ee">iige.maalmann@etag.ee</a> Phone: +372 731 7363
France	ANRS	<a href="http://www.anrs.fr">www.anrs.fr</a>	Roxane Brachet E-mail: <a href="mailto:roxane.brachet@anrs.fr">roxane.brachet@anrs.fr</a> Phone: +33 1 53 94 80 62
Germany	BMBF PT-DLR	<a href="http://www.bmbf.de">www.bmbf.de</a> <a href="http://www.pt-dlr.de">www.pt-dlr.de</a>	General E-mail: <a href="mailto:hivera@dlr.de">hivera@dlr.de</a>  Barbara Junker E-mail: <a href="mailto:barbara.junker@dlr.de">barbara.junker@dlr.de</a> Phone: Phone: +49 228 3821 1274  Stefan Wagener E-mail: <a href="mailto:stefan.wagener@dlr.de">stefan.wagener@dlr.de</a> Phone: +49 228 3821 1685
Portugal	FCT	<a href="http://alfa.fct.mctes.pt/">http://alfa.fct.mctes.pt/</a>	Anabela Isidro E-mail: <a href="mailto:Anabela.Isidro@fct.pt">Anabela.Isidro@fct.pt</a> Phone: +351 21 391 1552
Romania	ANCS	<a href="http://www.ancs.ro">www.ancs.ro</a>	Ioana Ispas E-mail: <a href="mailto:ioana.ispas@ancs.ro">ioana.ispas@ancs.ro</a> Phone: +4021 212 77 91



## 9. TIME SCHEDULE

Activity Step	Time Frame
Call Pre-announcement	November 2012
Call announcement	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2013
Partnering event	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2013
Call Deadline	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2013
Eligibility check	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2013
Evaluation	April-June 2013
SEC meeting	July 2013
Final decision meeting	July-August 2013
Predicted Time for Project start	December 2013



## ANNEX - I

### Eligible Costs among HIVERA partners

Partner	Preliminary studies	Small and medium equipment	Personnel	Networks/consortia funding	Coordination of programme	Intellectual Property Rights (e.g. patents)	Mobility
<b>Belgium</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	<b>NO</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	<b>NO</b>	YES	YES
<b>France</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	<b>NO</b>	YES
<b>Germany</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<b>Portugal</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	<b>NO</b>	YES	YES
<b>Romania</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES