



BiophotonicsPlus: Photonic appliances for life sciences and health

European Competition for Collaborative R&D Funding

Announcement of a transnational call for proposals
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Call announcement: **BiophotonicsPlus – Photonic appliances for life sciences and health**

General Information

BiophotonicsPlus is a transnational call for research and development project proposals on 'photonic appliances for life sciences and health', primarily aiming at the stimulation and support of innovative R&D projects which will translate existing biophotonic technologies and methods into appliances and put them into clinical, medical or industrial practice.

The call is organised as a competition for funding and will be implemented jointly by the participating national and regional funding bodies (see appendix) from the following countries and regions:

- the Catalonia region (Spain),
- the Flanders region (Belgium),
- Germany,
- Israel,
- Latvia,
- the Tuscany region (Italy) and
- the United Kingdom

The competition is open to participants from these countries and regions. In exceptional circumstances, partners from additional countries or regions may be involved in the project (without funding from BiophotonicsPlus). Successful applicants will be funded according to the national or regional rules applying to them. Grants will be paid to the project participants solely by their responsible national or regional funding bodies.

For the implementation of the call a two-stage procedure will be applied. The deadline for the online submission of stage 1 pre-proposals is **17 December 2012 (17:00 CET)**. The deadline for the online submission of stage 2 full proposals is **9 April 2013 (17:00 CET)**. The submission of a stage 2 full proposal is only valid after the previous submission of a stage 1 pre-proposal.

All proposals must be submitted online via the online submission tool *PT Outline*. The online submission system is accessible via the BiophotonicsPlus website at <http://www.biophotonicsplus.eu/online-application.php>.

BiophotonicsPlus is supported and co-funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT) under the ERA-NET-Plus scheme.

Purpose

Biophotonic applications offer a broad range of innovative solutions, but many potential improvements have not yet been validated and established in environments close to the application, such as clinics and doctor's surgeries.

Thus, the BiophotonicsPlus call mainly aims at stimulating R&D projects which translate existing biophotonic technology and methods into appliances and put them into clinical, medical or industrial practice.

To this end, up to 15 million EUR government grants in total will be awarded to innovative project proposals under this competition.

BiophotonicsPlus consolidates public funding activities in the participating countries and regions and supports the best possible exploitation of R&D resources. The competition is expected to provide a strong incentive for European companies to co-operate in strategic research; this is a unique opportunity for them to benefit from a more efficient use of their R&D resources and from comprehensive expertise made available by a variety of research institutes.

Scope for Applications

There will be two funding lines under this BiophotonicsPlus call:

Line A. Translation into practical applications

Line A is the primary funding line under the joint call and it is intended to invest the majority of the available funds in projects submitted under this line. Line A addresses larger projects typically in the range of 1-3 million € total costs per project.

Rationale:

While the contribution of biophotonics related methods and techniques to biomedical fundamental research is well-recognized and of further increasing importance, many potential improvements of established methods in e.g. doctors' practices, clinics, rapid tests, quality monitoring of pharmaceuticals etc. have not yet been realized and set into practice. Therefore, whereas investment in basic research will certainly be necessary to enable further progress in the future, a more immediate return on investment can be expected by launching projects to translate existing biophotonic technology and methods.

Objective:

Already existing biophotonic technology shall be further developed, refined and combined to the stage of pre-commercial demonstrators which should easily be convertible to commercial products. The pre-commercial demonstrator should be used in application fields with a high societal and/or economic relevance for Europe such as medicine, environment, cosmetics, food and drug quality & safety.

Conditions:

Proposals submitted under Line A of the call need to fulfill the following conditions:

- The proposed project needs to start from a proven photonic method or tool for which the proof-of-principle has already been achieved.
- The proposed project needs to aim at a specific outcome – preferably a photonic appliance - with the goal of substantially improving or enabling applications in the above mentioned fields, including improvements of cost effectiveness in health care.
- The outcome of the project needs to be validated during the term of the project, i.e. the demonstrator needs to be tested and validated in an environment close to the application, e. g. clinical environment, point of care.
- If subsequent steps require a clinical study, a full concept for a clinical study needs to be developed during the term of the project (e. g. in the case of medical applications).

In addition to these mandatory conditions, proposers under Line A are strongly recommended to consider the following:

- Adequate end-user (clinics or industry) involvement is vital for achieving the objectives of this funding line and thus strongly recommended. End-users may be involved as full or as associated partners. (It should be noted that application and commercialisation aspects will be vital criteria for the evaluation of the project proposals!)

Line B. Investigation on new tools or methods

Line B offers funding for smaller projects in the field of early application-oriented research with a maximum of total costs per project of 1 million €. Funds to be spent on Line B projects will be limited to a total cost of 2 million €.

Rationale / Objective:

New and emerging techniques may lay dormant which have the potential to pave the way towards innovative solutions to the societal challenges in life sciences and health care. Seed funding shall be provided to promising application-oriented approaches at an early stage of the value chain.

Conditions:

Proposals submitted under Line B of the call need to fulfill the following conditions:

- The method or principle to be investigated must be new and innovative. Project proposals addressing incremental improvements will not be considered for funding.
- The proposed project needs to aim at achieving a proof of principle for the method / technique to be investigated. The proof of principle needs to be delivered during the term of the proposed project.

In addition to these mandatory conditions, proposers under Line B are strongly recommended to consider the following:

- Early end-user (industry or clinics) involvement is highly desired in order to incorporate their needs and requirements from the beginning and in order to prepare for subsequent steps of development. End-users may be involved as associated partners.

It should be noted that project proposals under both lines will compete with each other. They will be reviewed within the same evaluation process and with the same general rules applying. Also, there will be only one joint selection list mixing project proposals from both funding lines.

General rules of participation

BiophotonicsPlus is supported by the European Commission, DG CONNECT under the ERANET-Plus scheme. However, it is not a FP7 call for proposals but it is conducted and implemented under the responsibility of the participating countries and regions. Thus, specific rules of participation apply.

The BiophotonicsPlus competition is open for participants from the Catalonia region (Spain), the Flanders region (Belgium), Germany, Israel, Latvia, the Tuscany region (Italy) and the United Kingdom. In exceptional circumstances, partners from additional countries may be involved in the project. However, they will not receive any funding from the BiophotonicsPlus agencies and their role must be clearly defined and justified.

General Eligibility Criteria:

The following general eligibility rules apply to applications under both lines, Line A and Line B. To be considered eligible and to be admitted to the independent transnational evaluation (in the 2nd stage) project proposals need to meet the following criteria:

- Applications must be submitted and received duly and complete in its entirety before the relevant deadline given in this call announcement.
- Applications must be written in English.
- Proposals must clearly address either Line A or Line B and fulfill the respective conditions.
- The center of gravity of the proposed work must be on optical and photonic technologies.
- All projects proposals need to address at least one of the following **application areas**:
 - Medicine / healthcare
 - Pharmaceuticals
 - Environmental protection / surveillance
 - Food and water safety
 - Cosmetics
 - Veterinary medicine
- At least two independent partners/organisations from at least two participating countries and regions¹ have to be involved in the project.²
- Not more than 75% of the total eligible project costs shall be incurred by any single organisation or by the organisations from a single participating country or region.

¹ Participating countries and regions: Catalonia, Flanders, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Tuscany, UK

² Applicants searching to build collaborations may visit the 'Find Project Partners' section of the BiophotonicsPlus website at <http://www.biophotonicsplus.eu/project-partners/>.

- Project duration shall be between 24 and 36 months.
- The full proposal must clearly demonstrate the plan to exploit, apply and/or commercialise the results of the project. The project results must be exploitable in the participating countries and regions and the EU.

In addition, project proposals and participants must comply with the applicable national/regional eligibility criteria. Some countries or regions may request additional information via national/regional annexes. Participants are obliged to ensure that they provide all mandatory forms or information in time. It is recommended to check the appendix and the call website carefully and to consult with the responsible national/regional contact in the case of uncertainty.

Process

All proposals must be submitted online via the online submission tool *PT Outline* by one of the project partners, acting as the project coordinator on behalf of the consortium. The online submission system is accessible via the BiophotonicsPlus website at <http://www.biophotonicsplus.eu/online-application.php>. Guidelines are available for download.

A two-stage application procedure is applied:

Stage 1 Pre-Proposal:

Applicants (project consortia) must submit an outline proposal (max. 10 pages), using the electronic form provided in the online submission tool. Outline proposals (pre-proposals) consist of a project abstract and information on the costs, the consortium members and their roles.

Estimated costs will be requested in order to plan national/regional budgetary commitments at an early stage. The individual funding requested has to be based on the relevant national/regional rules for each consortium partner.

The funding bodies will check these pre-proposals against the general as well as the national/regional eligibility criteria (see appendix) and provide feedback regarding the eligibility of the project proposal to the project coordinators.

No applicants will be formally excluded at stage 1. Notwithstanding this fact, the submission of a stage 1 pre-proposal is mandatory. Stage 2 full proposals will only be admissible after the valid submission of a stage 1 pre-proposal.

Consortia whose proposals cannot for any reason be funded by one or more of the participating countries will be warned at this early stage. The relevant funding bodies may give additional oral feedback; for example, to the other participants in a consortium. This may include advice about how the project can become eligible for funding.

Non-compliance with the eligibility criteria in the full proposal stage (stage 2) will result in the immediate exclusion of the full proposal from the competition and the evaluation process.

Therefore it is recommended to avoid major changes to the project proposal regarding work plan, partners, budgetary figures, etc. between stage 1 and stage 2, except for adjustments recommended by the BiophotonicsPlus funding agencies.

Stage 2 Full Proposal:

Applicants (project consortia) must submit a 30-50 page full proposal, using the electronic form to be provided to the coordinators, once the stage 1 has been concluded. Full proposals consist of a structured description of the proposed work, including objectives, state-of-the-art technology, work plan and resources (costs projection), impact, exploitation aspects and a consortium description.

Where requested, consortium members must also submit a national/regional annex relating to the eligibility criteria of their country or region of origin along with the full proposal.

The full proposals will be evaluated in two steps:

Evaluation step 1:

Each participating country will assess those full proposals that include project partners from their country or region, and perform a final check against the national/regional eligibility criteria. Proposals that do not meet all applicable eligibility criteria will be rejected. Notifications will be sent to the coordinators once the evaluation and selection procedure has been concluded.

Evaluation step 2:

Proposals that are accepted by the participating countries and regions will be assessed by independent international experts (evaluators) to be jointly selected by the participating funding agencies. The evaluators will assess the full proposals in strict consideration of the evaluation criteria listed below. The evaluation step 2 will result in a ranked list of the eligible project proposals.

The available funds will be allocated to the projects on the ranked list in descending order. 20% of the EC funds will be reserved in a common 'balancing pot'. The balancing pot will be used to fund eligible consortium partners who cannot otherwise participate because their country has allocated all of its funds to the projects ranked above, while funding for other partners in the consortium is still available.

The allocation of funds to Line B projects is limited to 2 million € in total. Undrawn funds originally reserved for Line A projects will be used for additional Line B projects rated above threshold, if any.

Project proposals that have been recommend for funding but cannot be selected for funding as all available funds have been allocated to the projects ranked above will be put on a reserve list.

All participants of the project proposals selected for funding will be invited to enter into negotiations with their responsible funding bodies. The invitation does not yet constitute a commitment to fund. Funding will only be granted after successful conclusion of the negotiations. Some countries or regions may request the submission of additional national/regional forms during negotiations before the grant agreements can be issued.

Evaluation Criteria:

Projects will be expected to focus on critical issues in the areas defined above, explaining why they are critical, and exactly what impact the successful completion of the project will have. Proposals should also be explicit about the exploitation of the results and their future path to commercialisation.

In the 2nd stage the full proposals will be judged against the following evaluation criteria³:

- scientific and/or technological excellence;
- potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results;
- quality and efficiency of the implementation and management.

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the three criteria. Each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

Further arrangements

The participants in a project to be funded through this competition will need to confirm that a consortium agreement is in place before the project starts.

Each national/regional funding body will issue funding contracts (grant agreements) to individual project participants in accordance with its national/regional law. The reporting duties of individual project participants will be determined by the relevant national/regional regulations.

In addition, the project coordinator, on behalf of the consortium, must also submit an annual short standard report in English on the project's progress. For the final report, the project coordinator must summarize the results, accomplishments and impact of the project. The final reports must be suitable to be published by the participating countries and regions as well as the EC.

The participant of the projects to be funded under this call will be expected to contribute to the assessment and the dissemination of the outcomes of the BiophotonicsPlus call. E. g., each project must attend an annual co-ordination meeting of all BiophotonicsPlus projects to share progress and best practice as the projects develop.

Applicants searching to build collaborations or to find project partners may find the following links helpful:

- *BiophotonicsPlus 'Find Project Partners' facility*: <http://www.biophotonicsplus.eu/project-partners/>
- *Enterprise Europe Network*: <http://portal.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu>
- *FP7 NCP Network*: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html

³ The European Commission's FP7 evaluation criteria (and sub criteria) will be applied. For details see 'Annex 2: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria for Proposals' of the 'FP7 Cooperation Work Programme 2013: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/download?docId=32919>

Key Dates

Competition opens	1 October 2012
Deadline for submission of stage 1 pre-proposals	17 December 2012 (17:00 CET)
Deadline for submission of stage 2 full proposals *	9 April 2013 (17:00 CET)
Results available / notification of applicants	July 2013
Projects start	As from end of 2013

* including national/regional annexes (where requested)

Appendix: National and Regional Eligibility Rules and Contact Information

BiophotonicsPlus is a joint initiative by:

- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany
- VDI Technologiezentrum GmbH, Germany
- Regione Toscana – Giunta Regionale, Tuscany region
- Matimop - Israeli Industry Center for R&D (ISERD), Israel
- Technology Strategy Board (TSB), UK
- Agentschap voor Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie (IWT), Flanders region
- Latvian Academy of Sciences (LZA), Latvia
- Agència de suport a l'empresa Catalana (ACC10), Catalonia region

All participants of the BiophotonicsPlus competition (not only the coordinators!) are encouraged to communicate with their national or regional contacts (responsible funding bodies) indicated below to check their national/regional eligibility before submitting a project proposal.

The following national and regional eligibility rules apply:

Catalonia

Small, medium and large companies can be funded. Private research centres, universities and other public research entities can participate as subcontractors.

Technically and financially feasible R&D projects based on Biophotonic technologies with an impact increase in the R&D company activities are eligible.

Personnel costs, external collaborations for R&D activities related to the project, equipment (where applicable), IPR activities (for SME only), other costs such as travelling and management costs are eligible.

Check funding rates and other specific rules for participation at:

<http://www.acc10.cat/ACC10/cat/ajuts-financament/>

Contact for participants from Catalonia:

Funding agency:	ACC10 (Agència de suport a l'empresa Catalana)
Contact:	David Roviroso
E-mail:	droviroso@acc10.cat
Phone:	+34 93 567 49 13

Flanders

The eligibility criteria for Flanders are published on the IWT website at:
www.iwt.be/subsidies/oeno-bedrijfsproject

Contact for participants from Flanders:

Funding agency:	Agentschap voor Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie (IWT)
Contact:	Geert Carchon
E-mail:	GCA@IWT.BE
Phone:	+32 (0)2 432 42 94

Germany

Project consortia with German participants must include at least one industrial partner (company) based in Germany.

Funding of German participants is available:

- For companies (funding up to 50% of the total eligible costs; SMEs may receive an additional bonus of up to 10%)
- For universities and research institutes/organisations (funding up to 100% of the total eligible costs/expenditures).

Companies are expected to contribute to the costs of the BMBF-funded academic and research partners within the project consortium (if any) according to their economic capacity. In general, their contribution should amount to at least 50 % of the total eligible costs on the part of all German participants in the project.

The national regulations AnBest-P, BNBest-BMBF 98 and/or NKBF 98 apply. The documents can be found at:

http://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare&formularschrank=bmbf

Contact for participants from Germany:

Fund owner:	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
Funding agency:	VDI Technologiezentrum GmbH (on behalf of the BMBF)
Contact:	Sebastian Krug
E-mail:	krug@vdi.de
Phone:	+49 211 6214 472

Israel

Only industry partners are eligible for funding. Proposals must include a single or multi-year programme that will provide know-how, processes or methods for the manufacture of a new product or the significant improvement of an existing product, or a new process or a significant improvement in an existing process. The product must have a sizeable potential for export sales.

The support is in the form of a conditional grant amounting to 20%, 30%, 40% or 50% of the approved R&D budget.

Application forms in Hebrew are available from the website www.moital.gov.il/madan.htm or via the BiophotonicsPlus website at <http://www.biophotonicsplus.eu/eligibility-rules.php>.

Contact for participants from Israel:

Funding body: The CSO fund - The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor
Management agency: Matimop - Israeli Industry Center for R&D (ISERD)
Contact: Aviv Zeevi Balasiano
E-mail: aviv@iserd.org.il
Phone: +972 3 5118121

Latvia

Eligible for funding are research organizations registered in the Register of Scientific Institutions and SMEs registered in the Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia.

Participants from Latvia are requested to contact the responsible Latvian funding body (see below) for further information.

Contact for participants from Latvia:

Funding body: Latvian Academy of Sciences
Contact: Dr. Juris Balodis; Dr. Maija Bundule
E-mail: jbalodis@latnet.lv; maija.bundule@lza.lv
Phone: +371 67558746; +371 67227790

Tuscany

The Tuscany Region can only fund projects in which there is at least one industrial partner involved. The Tuscany Region cannot fund any projects in which only Tuscany research organizations would be involved.

Participants from Tuscany are requested to contact the responsible Tuscan funding body (see below) for further information.

Contacts for participants from Tuscany:

Funding body: Regione Toscana - Giunta Regionale
Contacts: Angelita Luciani, Gianluca D'Indico
E-mail: angelita.luciani@regione.toscana.it
gianluca.dindico@regione.toscana.it
Phone: +39 055-438-3614; +39 055-438-2436

United Kingdom

The following national eligibility criteria are relevant for UK project participants:

- Only UK Industrial partners [Large companies and SMEs] are eligible for funding from the Technology Strategy Board. Academics are welcome to participate in projects but they have to self fund or secure funding from other sources prior to application.
- All UK participants must be separate legal entities.
- Companies with fewer than 5 Full Time staff cannot lead a project, unless agreed prior to application with the Technology Strategy Board.
- Companies must have been trading for at least 12 months, be VAT registered and have to *provide evidence they have the resources* and finances to undertake the project.
- The maximum total grant limit is €300,000 for all UK consortium partners in a single project.
- No single UK company can:
 - receive more than €500,000 from the BiophotonicsPlus call budget;
 - be a partner in more than 3 proposals for funding.
- Subcontracting is limited to 20% of the UK partner grant.

There are specific accountancy rules for Sole Traders & Micro Companies [companies with less than 10 employees].

Claims under the UK grant must be for project costs incurred in the UK, project management must be undertaken by a project participant and cannot be subcontracted.

Applications will be reviewed to identify if there are any obvious reasons for exclusion on the basis of national track record such as the participant having already received funding for the same or a very similar activity.

Please consult the TSB website for any further information:

<http://www.innovateuk.org/deliveringinnovation/internationalprogramme/eranet-biophotonicsplus-.ashx>

Contacts for participants from the United Kingdom:

Funding agency: Technology Strategy Board
Contact: Myrddin Jones, Graham Mobbs
E-mail: Myrddin.Jones@tsb.gov.uk; Graham.mobbs@tsb.gov.uk
Phone: +44 (0)1793 442700