Specific challenge: Maximising scarce resources and coordinating research efforts are key elements for success in the area of rare diseases, characterised by scattered knowledge and relatively small patient populations. Transnational cooperation and coordination to pool resources and avoid duplication of efforts, while developing common standards and research priorities, is therefore essential. The International Rare Diseases Research Consortium (IRDiRC) was launched in 2011 to strengthen international collaboration in the area with the aim of delivering 200 new therapies for rare diseases and means to diagnose most of them by the year 2020[1]. An ERA-NET focused on funding research according to IRDiRC objectives and priorities should be an implementation tool for the realisation of the IRDiRC 2020 goals.

Scope: Proposals should coordinate national and regional programmes for research on rare diseases by preparing and implementing a transnational call with EU co-funding, resulting in grants to third parties, with a view to implement IRDiRC[2] objectives and identified priorities. This call should aim at furthering the understanding of disease mechanisms and natural history of rare diseases with the objective to develop new diagnostic tools and treatments. Selected proposals should adhere to the policies and guidelines of IRDiRC.

Proposals should be complementary with other funding programmes and activities on European and international level.
In line with the Union’s strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation[3], the project will contribute to reaching the overall goals of IRDiRC; Deepened and extended coordination of national and transnational research in the field of rare diseases resulting in a substantial contribution to the overall goals of IRDiRC; Streamlined national/regional and international practices in organising research funding; Increased interoperability of national research programmes; Increased sharing of data and knowledge; Increased networking of infrastructures and databases.

Proposals should demonstrate the expected impact on national and transnational programmes and IRDiRC objectives as well as the leverage effect on European research and competitiveness, and should plan the development of key indicators for supporting this.

Proposals should also aim at implementing other joint activities including training and additional joint calls without EU co-funding.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of a minimum of EUR 5 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

**Expected impact:**

- In line with the Union’s strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation[3], the project will contribute to reaching the overall goals of IRDiRC;
- Deepened and extended coordination of national and transnational research in the field of rare diseases resulting in a substantial contribution to the overall goals of IRDiRC;
- Streamlined national/regional and international practices in organising research funding;
- Increased interoperability of national research programmes;
- Increased sharing of data and knowledge;
- Increased networking of infrastructures and databases.

**Type of action:** ERA-NET Co-fund


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