Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for M-ERA.NET Call 2026

Content

Scope of the Call

Q1: Is it possible to select several topics for my proposal?

A1: No, only one topic can be selected per proposal. Please choose the most appropriate topic. The topic selected in the proposal template must correspond to the topic selected in the submission tool. In case of discrepancies, the topic selected in the submission tool will prevail.

Q2: Is there a dedicated budget per topic? Is it possible that no projects are funded under a certain topic?

A2: Budgets are not allocated per topic. Available global funding will be provided to proposals according to quality until national/regional budgets are exhausted.

Eligibility

Q3: Who can apply?

A3: The eligibility of applicants depends on the respective national/regional funding programmes. SMEs, large companies, academic research groups, universities, or other research organisations can apply according to their regional/national regulations. Prospective applicants are requested to discuss eligibility with their national/regional funding organisations. The funding organisations participating in the call and their funding programmes are listed under https://www.m-era.net/joint-call-2026/participating-countries-regions-call-2026. The Annex 3 to the Guide for Proposers is a collection of the participating national/regional funding organisations. Both documents are available on the Call 2026 website.

Q4: Should the coordinator be an industrial or an academic partner?

A4: In general, there is no preference. Please make sure that all consortium members are eligible according to the published M-ERA.NET and national/regional requirements respectively and that they have a valid role and the necessary expertise.

Q5: Can an applicant in this call also register as an expert to evaluate research proposals in this call?

A5: Experts participating in a proposal submitted in the current Call are considered to have a conflict of interest and will not be appointed as evaluators. M-ERA.NET encourages them to register as evaluators for future Calls.

Q6: Are there any limitations concerning the work balance and country balance of the consortium?

A6: Yes, the criteria are as follows:

- The total effort of one single applicant cannot exceed 60% of the total project efforts (measured in person months) in the proposal.
- The total effort of applicants from one country cannot exceed 70% of the total project efforts (measured in person months) in the proposal.

Q7: What is 'human effort' (person-months) and how to calculate it?

A7: A person month (human effort) is the metric for the time (effort) that the key personnel of an organisation devote to the project. Key personnel include the entire project team and not only the permanent staff. To calculate person months (PM), please follow the EC definition: https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/643967

Q8: Can partners from other countries/regions than those participating in the M-ERA.NET Call 2026 join the project consortium?

A8: In principle, yes. Consortia can include partners from countries/regions not participating in the M-ERA.NET Call 2026, but they must be self-funded and only in addition to the minimum consortium.

Q9: Can applicants be involved in more than one project?

A9: This depends on respective national/regional programme regulations: It is possible to participate in more than one project if this complies with the respective national/regional programme regulations.

Application Process

Q10: How can I find potential partners?

A10: M-ERA.NET recommends the following databases:
Partner Search Facility (PSF): https://www.m-era.net/joint-calls/partnersearch
European Enterprise Network (https://een.ec.europa.eu/)

Q11: Where do I find the national/regional regulations of the participating funding organisations?

A11: Go to the website concerning the participating countries / regions in Call 2026: https://www.m-era.net/joint-call-2026/participating-countries-regions-call-2026. In the right column of the displayed matrix table, you will find the national / regional regulations as pdf-files for download. The documents include information about each of the participating funding organizations, contact persons and links to the respective national/regional programme websites.

Q12: Does every applicant have to submit a proposal?

A12: No, **only the project coordinator** must submit the M-ERA.NET Call 2026 Pre-Proposal form (stage 1) and the Full-Proposal form as well as the Annex 1 (stage 2) using the electronic submission tool. In addition, **each applicant has to apply for funding** to their respective national/regional funding organisation. **Please note that it may be necessary to submit additional information already at the Pre-Proposal stage to the national/regional funding programme!**

Q13: Where can I find all the necessary forms for submitting a proposal?

A13: It is mandatory to use the M-ERA.NET proposal forms. All call documents are available for download on the M-ERA.NET Call 2026 homepage: https://www.m-era.net/joint-call-2026.

Q14: Is it possible to change the layout and the headings of the proposal forms?

A14: No, the templates cannot be changed. Any restructuring or change of the layout and formatting conditions of proposal forms will result in formal rejection of the proposal. Please fill in the Pre- and Full-Proposal form as requested, paying attention to the following colour code:

- Black: text in black must be kept (this includes the checklist at the end of the proposal forms)
- Blue: text in blue is for information purpose only and can be deleted.

It is not allowed to delete, rename, reorder or shorten the chapters: their structure reflects the evaluation criteria and the relevant information must be provided in the corresponding field.

Q15: What are the formatting conditions for the proposal?

A15: The formatting conditions of the proposal forms aim to guarantee the equity and fairness of the evaluation. Therefore, any modifications that might result in effectively bypassing the maximum page limit are not allowed. The formatting conditions are to be found in the Guide for Proposers under chapter 2.2.1 and in the Pre-Proposal resp. Full-Proposal templates.

Q16: Is there a page limit for the Pre- and Full-Proposals?

A16: Yes.

- The mandatory M-ERA.NET Pre-Proposal form cannot exceed 17 pages.
- For Full-Proposals, there are two mandatory documents: the main document (Full-Proposal form) for the whole project description which cannot exceed 40 pages and the Annex 1 to Full-Proposal form for partner profiles, CVs and Letters of Intent (LoI) (if applicable), for which there is no page limitation.

Please note that proposals below the maximum page limit will also be accepted.

Q17: Can I provide an external link to a detailed work plan or to the references?

A17: No external links to additional documents are to be provided. The evaluation is done solely on the information provided within the mandatory templates. All the relevant information of the Pre-/Full-Proposal must be provided within the page limit.

Q18: Where should the references be placed in the proposal forms?

A18: There are no guidelines regarding citations. It is up to the proposers to use footnotes, brackets and/or list of references according to the formatting conditions of the proposal form

Q19: How many keywords do I have to provide?

A19: At least 5 and max. 20 keywords from the two lists of predefined keywords (topic specific and general keywords) have to be provided. If necessary, additional keywords can be chosen to describe your individual project. A document with all the available predefined keywords, detailed information on their purpose and general recommendations will be available in the submission platform.

Q20: How do I submit a proposal?

A20: For proposal submission, the M-ERA.NET online submission tool must be used. Access to the electronic submission system (and its user manual) is provided via the link on the M-ERA.NET Call 2026 homepage. Applicants acting as coordinators of a proposal must register on the website prior to gaining access to the online submission system.

➔ Proposals can be saved as drafts, revised and re-submitted again before the deadline. ←

Please note that it may be necessary to submit additional information to respective national/regional funding organisations!

Q21: Can I re-submit a proposal which was already submitted to a previous M-ERA.NET call but was not funded?

A21: In general, this is possible. However, please check that the scope still fits the call topics and that all partners are still eligible for funding in the participating countries or regions.

Q22: Can I submit more than one proposal?

A22: No. Starting from 2026, a principal investigator (PI) can just submit one proposal per call.

Q23: What exactly is a principal investigator (PI)?

A23: A PI is the lead researcher of a project or group.

Q24: Can an organisation submit more than one proposal?

A24: Yes.

Q25: Can I request an extension of the M-ERA.NET Call 2026 deadline to submit either a Pre-Proposal or a Full-Proposal?

A25: No. The M-ERA.NET Call 2026 deadlines for Pre-Proposals and Full-Proposals are fixed. Please contact your national/regional funding organisation to confirm national/regional deadlines.

Q26: Can I submit a Full-Proposal without submitting a Pre-Proposal?

Q26: No.

Q27: Is it acceptable to submit a proposal in a national language?

A27: No. The M-ERA.NET Call 2026 Pre-Proposals and Full-Proposals can **only be submitted in English**. The language of national/regional funding applications depends on the rules of the respective national/regional funding programmes. **All applicants must contact their respective national/regional funding organisation for national/regional programme details.**

Q28: What is a Participant Identification Code (PIC)?

A28: The PIC is a 9-digit number serving as a unique identifier for organisations (legal entities) participating in EU funding programmes / procurements. Please refer to the website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Registration+and+validation+of+your+organisation

Q29: How can I find and/or apply the PIC of my organisation and the consortium members?

A29: Please check on the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register. The website provides a search tool to find out, if an organisation is already registered and has a PIC. In addition, the website provides information on how to apply for a PIC.

Q30: Does my organisation need a validated PIC for proposal submission?

A30: No, you can submit a proposal with a temporary PIC.

Q31: After proposal submission, will I receive confirmation of receipt?

A31: Yes, the coordinator will receive a confirmation of receipt.

Q32: Is it necessary to provide a Consortium Agreement with the proposal?

A32: At the time of proposal submission, it is recommended to provide the principles ruling the consortium agreement (CA) but not the CA itself. A duly signed and stamped consortium agreement (CA) between the project partners is recommended for funded projects based on national/regional funding rules, including agreements on intellectual property rights (IPR) and agreements on scientific publications.

Q33: Where can I find a template for a Consortium Agreement?

A33: Examples for consortium agreements can be found on the website of DESCA (Development of a Simplified Consortium Agreement): https://www.desca-agreement.eu/ . Support can also be found on the website of the European IP helpdesk: https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/index_en. It also provide examples for MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) and Non-Disclosure Agreements: https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/regional-helpdesks/european-ip-helpdesk/europe-useful-documents_en

Q34: Can I make use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to write my proposal?

A34: Generally, AI can be used for proposal writing, but it must be adhered to the guidelines of the European Commission/ European Research Area on the responsible use of generative AI in research, which can be found here. Key points to pay attention to are that i) researchers remain ultimately responsible for scientific output and ii) the use of generative AI must be made transparent.

Evaluation

Q35: How are proposals evaluated?

A35: Pre- and Full-Proposals will be centrally assessed by international experts. The evaluation criteria are available in the Guide for Proposers. Additional national/regional programme conditions such as relevance to the funding programme and national/regional eligibility criteria may apply.

Q36: Will I receive the evaluation reports of my evaluated Pre-Proposal and Full-Proposal?

A36: Feedback emails will be sent by the call secretariat to the coordinators and all project partners including the compiled peer review report (excluding the scoring).

Q37: What happens, if one or more project partner(s) is/are considered ineligible or not recommended?

A37: In case one or more project partners are considered ineligible or not recommended, the entire proposal will be rejected if the not eligible / not recommended partner(s) account for ≥15% of the total project effort (measured in person months). If the respective project partner accounts for <15%, the remaining project partners can either take over the project tasks in consultation with their national/regional funding organizations, or appoint a new partner to take over those tasks, which is funded by one of the previously included funding organizations. Example: If a consortium consisting of partners from Sweden, Germany and Italy applied for funding and 1 project partner from Germany (<15% PM) was labelled as ineligible, either i) the remaining partners can take over the tasks of the ineligible partner or ii) a new partner based in Sweden, Italy or Germany can be appointed, given the fact that he is eligible/fundable.

Costs & Funding

Q38: Who is funding this call?

A38: Projects are funded by the participating national/regional funding organisations. All applicants are requested to contact their respective national/regional funding organisations even before pre-proposal submission.

Q39: What types of costs will be funded?

A39: The level of funding and the costs covered depend on the rules of the relevant national/regional programmes. Proposers must discuss financial details with the respective funding organisations (see Guide for Proposers).

Q40: What are direct costs and indirect costs?

A40: **Direct costs** are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the project. They can be differentiated as personnel costs, costs for equipment, consumables, travel and for subcontracting. Other direct costs can be costs for seminars or for renting rooms.
Indirect costs are general administrative costs – overhead costs incurred in connection with the direct costs of the action. Examples for indirect costs are costs for renting rooms or buildings, costs for electricity, heating, telephone, mailings, room cleaning as well as structural costs (for technical or administrative staff).

Q41: Is it necessary to define the different budget concepts (personnel, goods, etc.)?

A41: Yes, details on cost categories (personnel cost, equipment, consumables, travel, subcontracting, other costs, indirect costs) are requested in both phases.

Q42: Should partners not requesting funding provide the person months and project costs?

Q42: Yes, if the partner is not subcontracted but a partner supporting the project through R&D activities.

Q43: Are there any M-ERA.NET guidelines regarding limits of use of subcontractors from other countries?

A43: No, M-ERA.NET has not defined any limits of use of subcontractors from other countries. National/Regional funding rules apply.

Project Implementation

Q44: How long does it take before projects recommended for funding actually start?

A44: It is expected that final funding decisions will not be made before February 2027. Contract negotiations are expected to start in March 2027.

Q45: Can a project start before the final decision by the national/regional funding organisation is made?

A45: It is recommended that the project should only start after the funding decisions have been made. Earlier starts are at the risk of the proposers.

Q46: Can project partners have different project starting dates?

Q46: Only in exceptional cases. It is highly recommended that the project start and end dates are the same for all project parties.

Q47: Can the project duration be extended?

A47: Only in exceptional cases under the condition that all involved project partners, funding organisations and the M-ERA.NET monitoring task force (email: monitoring@m-era.net) agree and confirm the extension.

Q48: What happens, if a partner leaves the consortium after the project start?

A48: This issue should be covered by the Consortium Agreement. In addition, the monitoring task force (email: monitoring@m-era.net) and all funding organisations involved in the project have to be informed and will deal with it according to M-ERA.NET and national/regional rules. Please use the “change request form” available on the Call 2026 website for the notification.

Q49: Do I need to submit a report to M-ERA.NET?

A49: Yes, in addition to national/regional reporting procedures, a final project report must be submitted by the project coordinator to M-ERA.NET using the M-ERA.NET reporting templates. The reporting templates will be available on the Call 2026 web page. More details will be provided in the „Tutorial for project coordinators on how to submit the final report“, available on the call website