

# ERDERA Joint Transnational Call (JTC) 2026 – Applicant FAQ

This FAQ consolidates questions raised during the JTC 2026 Information Webinar that occurred on December 16, 2025. It is intended to support applicants in preparing a strong and eligible proposal.

## 1. Scope and Scientific Focus

### What is the main objective of the JTC 2026 call?

The call aims to **resolve unsolved cases in rare genetic and non-genetic diseases**, with a strong focus on improving diagnosis and diagnostic pathways for patients who remain undiagnosed after standard approaches.

### Which types of rare diseases are in scope?

Both **rare genetic diseases** and **complex, multifactorial rare non-genetic diseases** are in scope, provided the project addresses clear diagnostic challenges.

### Are purely computational projects eligible?

Purely computational projects are **not automatically excluded**, but eligibility will be assessed by the **Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC)**. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how computational approaches contribute to diagnostic resolution and patient benefit.

### Is basic research eligible?

Basic research can be included **only if clearly linked to improving diagnosis** of undiagnosed rare diseases. Projects focused solely on mechanistic or exploratory research without a diagnostic endpoint are unlikely to be competitive.

### Are projects on already-diagnosed rare diseases eligible?

Projects should primarily target **undiagnosed or misdiagnosed cases**. Research focused exclusively on already-diagnosed conditions without addressing diagnostic gaps is generally considered out of scope.

### Can a project focus on diagnosing complications or symptoms rather than the disease itself?

Projects should primarily focus on **diagnosing the rare disease itself**. Diagnostic work on complications or symptoms may be acceptable if it is an integral part of achieving diagnostic clarity, but this will be assessed by the SEC.

## 2. Eligibility of Countries and Participants

### Which countries are eligible for funding?

Funding is provided by participating national and regional funding organisations. Each partner must be eligible under **their own national/regional rules**. Always consult Annex 1 of the Guidelines and contact your national contact point early.

### Can UK teams participate?

UK teams **cannot receive ERDERA funding** under JTC 2026, as there are no UK funders participating. However, they may join projects as **collaborators**, provided they secure their own funding.

### What about Cyprus?

Cyprus confirmed participation late. National guidelines may be issued separately or updated. Applicants should regularly check for updates and contact the Joint Call Secretariat if needed.

### Can partners from non-participating countries join a consortium?

Yes, as **collaborators**. Collaborators: - Do not receive ERDERA funding - Must secure their own funding - Cannot lead work packages - Do not count toward the maximum number of funded partners

### 3. Consortium Composition

#### How many partners can be included in a consortium?

- Maximum of **8 funded partners**
- Generally, **no more than two funded partners per country**

#### Can a researcher participate in more than one proposal?

This depends on **national/regional funding rules**. Applicants must verify this with their national funder and ensure they can realistically deliver all commitments.

#### Can new partners be added at the full proposal stage?

Yes, but only with strong justification (e.g. additional expertise required). Changes must be approved and remain compliant with national eligibility rules.

### 4. Patient and Stakeholder Involvement (PAOs and Patient Partners)

#### Is patient involvement mandatory?

Meaningful involvement of **Patient Advocacy Organisations (PAOs)** or patient partners is **strongly encouraged** and considered an important element of proposal quality, especially at full proposal stage.

#### What is considered “meaningful” patient involvement?

PAOs or patient partners should be involved beyond dissemination only. Appropriate roles may include: - Contribution to defining unmet needs and project objectives - Input on study design, outcomes, and feasibility - Participation in governance or advisory structures - Support for communication, dissemination, and impact

#### Can PAOs be involved as funded partners?

Yes. PAOs can be included as consortium partners and benefit from **centralised ERDERA funding**, subject to eligibility criteria.

#### How much funding can PAOs request?

PAOs may request **up to €25,000 per project** through the centralised PAO funding mechanism. This funding is managed separately from national funding schemes.

### Do PAOs count toward the maximum number of consortium partners?

No. PAOs funded through the central mechanism **do not count toward the maximum number of funded research partners**.

### Are PAOs required to submit national applications?

No. PAOs funded centrally do **not** submit parallel national applications, but they must comply with the specific ERDERA requirements described in the Guidelines.

### Can the PAO be from a country other than those represented in the consortium?

Yes, provided that these countries participate in ERDERA:

- EU Member States and EU/EEA states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands,
- ERDERA partner countries next to EU Member States and EU/EEA states: Georgia, Israel, Morocco, Serbia, Türkiye.

### Can a single PAO be involved in multiple projects?

Yes, there is no restriction.

How to **find PAOs for very rare diseases**? In such cases, EURORDIS can be contacted ([roseline.favresse@eurordis.org](mailto:roseline.favresse@eurordis.org)). They may help identify a suitable organization to participate in the project, possibly a patient representative for a similar disease.

## 5. Submission Process

### How many stages are there?

The call follows a **two-stage procedure**: 1. **Pre-proposal** 2. **Full proposal** (by invitation only)

### What are the key deadlines?

- Pre-proposal deadline: **12 February 2026, 14:00 CET**
- Full proposal deadline: **8 July 2026, 14:00 CEST**

### Who submits the proposal?

Only the **project coordinator** submits the joint proposal via the ERDERA electronic submission system.

### Do partners need to sign the proposal?

Yes. **All funded partners must sign** the proposal. Scanned signatures are accepted.

### Is a national or regional submission also required?

Some funding organizations require **parallel national submissions**. Applicants must check and comply with national rules.

## 6. Funding and Budget

### How is funding organised?

ERDERA uses a **virtual common pot**: - Each national/regional funder finances its own teams - No budget transfers between partners are allowed

### Are there budget caps?

Yes. Budget limits vary by funder and are detailed in **Annex 1 of the Guidelines**.

### Does the coordinator receive additional funding?

This depends on national rules. Some funders provide **additional coordination funding**, others do not. Contact your national funder for confirmation.

## 7. Evaluation and Ethics

### Who evaluates the proposals?

- Pre- and full proposals are evaluated by the **Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC)**

- Final funding decisions are made by the **Call Steering Committee (CSC)**

### What are the evaluation criteria?

Aligned with Horizon Europe: - Excellence - Impact - Quality and efficiency of implementation

### Is ethics evaluation required?

Yes. **Failure to meet ethical requirements will result in non-funding**, regardless of scientific score.

## 8. Support Services

### Is proposal support available?

Yes. **ERDERA mentoring and support services** are available **only at full proposal stage** for invited applicants. These include: - Webinars - One-on-one expert mentoring - Guidance on regulatory, data management, innovation, and project management aspects.

## 9. Who to Contact

### Who should I contact for eligibility or funding questions?

- **National/regional eligibility and funding rules:** [Contact your national/regional funding organization](#)
- **Consortium or call-level questions:** [Contact us!](#)

### Don't forget to read the official documents as well!

- [Call Text](#)
- [Guidelines for Applicants](#)