

Open Call for Expressions of Interest

Call text and FAQs

The [European Platform for Neurodegenerative Diseases](#) (EPND) invites neurodegeneration researchers to submit an expression of interest to leverage biosamples (and data, if applicable) [catalogued](#) on the EPND platform. EPND will then invite the most interesting expressions of interest to submit a full proposal in November 2024. Successful proposal(s) will benefit from financial support and services including facilitated access to the requested biosamples and data.

The EPND Consortium is made up of [29 public and private partners](#) and is creating new pathways for collaborative research by removing barriers to sample and data sharing. With 19 countries currently represented, EPND is building a diverse community of researchers in Europe working to eradicate neurodegenerative diseases. Earlier this year, EPND launched its extended Study Catalogue, which includes metadata from 72 cohorts, across 12 disease areas with almost 240,000 participants.

The EPND Consortium invites the neurodegenerative research community to bring promising research questions to EPND to test the full suite of functionalities of the EPND platform. The EPND team will evaluate the expressions of interest (EoIs) and identify studies aligned with the goals of this call for submission of a full proposal. Accepted proposals will be highlighted on the EPND technical hub, catalogue and provided in-kind resources to leverage secure workspaces, tools, and community features via the [AD WorkBench](#) (AD Data Initiative's data ecosystem). The selected applicants will join a robust community of neurodegenerative disease researchers, including (but not limited to) members of the consortium with the ambition of accelerating the discovery of diagnostic and therapeutic solutions for neurodegenerative diseases through collaboration.

Successful applicants will receive:

- Financial support in the range of **€10k-€50k per case study** for sample access (for academic applicants). *N.B: interested applicants are expected to apply with external funding sources to enable their research study.*
- Access to a rich selection of data for combined analyses, and well-characterised samples from AD, PD, and other neurodegeneration cohorts
- Support with data harmonisation, saving time before initiating analysis
- In-kind access to secure workspaces, tools and apps (including: Jupyter Notebook, RStudio, Julia, Docker, GitLab, LibreOffice, Visual Studio Code, the NTKapp, and [more](#)), the ability to upload or install your own tools and software, storage, compute, and community features via the [AD WorkBench](#) (provided by the AD Data Initiative).
- Ethical-legal support (interpretive guidance, assistance in understanding compliance requirements in terms of data protection, consenting, institutional ethics approvals and data/sample access approvals)

Please note that our objective for this study is to gather user feedback of the EPND platform and catalogue, with the goal of using this input to optimise the final offering. Therefore, we invite you

to propose possible incentives in the questionnaire attached to the application form, that you would find valuable in addition to those listed above, and the EPND management board will take this into consideration.

Feel free to be creative in the incentives you propose!

Key study requirements include:

- Sample and data discovery and access request through the EPND catalogue.
- Agree to list the derived data in the EPND catalogue, making them discoverable and requestable, through the EPND user interface (data and results can be hosted centrally or remotely via a federated connection; permissioning processes can be defined by the applicant)
- Leverage EPND workspaces for data analyses: in the spirit of testing the platform, EPND would appreciate analysis being performed in the secure environment to the extent possible. If there is any analysis that needs to be performed in an external environment, please note that in your application with justification so that we can review this to offer the support needed.
- Compliance with the applicable legal requirements (including under the applicable data protection regulation)
- Compliance with European data sharing, permissioning, and access regulations
- Proposal must have funding available to execute the study and analysis
- Communication of the results either jointly or through EPND's communication channels

Interested candidates/teams can download the application form and questionnaire [here](#). Completed forms and questionnaires should be emailed to collaborate@epnd.org by **15 September 2024**. Selected applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal (~ 4 pages) by 30 November 2024. Please read the FAQs below for additional information on the call.

We look forward to receiving your application!

Frequently asked questions

What are the main objectives of the Call?

EPND is working to accelerate the discovery of diagnostics and therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases, by facilitating data and sample sharing, and collaborative research. The EPND Consortium invites the neurodegenerative research community to bring promising research questions to EPND, to test the full suite of functionalities of the EPND platform. We are also asking applicants to complete a short feedback questionnaire. This will allow us to refine and adapt the platform to best meet the needs of neurodegeneration researchers.

The EPND platform includes the following elements:

- The [Study Catalogue](#), which enables discovery of biosamples and datasets from over 70 neurodegeneration research cohorts across 12 disease areas
- Secure workspaces on the AD Data Initiative's [AD Workbench](#), including tools, apps and software for data visualisation and analysis
- Ethical-legal support services, providing interpretive guidance and assistance in meeting data protection, ethical and permissioning requirements.

What research areas does the Call cover?

To be eligible for this Call, researchers must leverage biosamples (and data, if applicable) from neurodegeneration research studies. We welcome Expressions of Interest across all neurodegenerative disease areas, including, but not restricted to, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies. We also encourage collaborative proposals, involving multiple investigators or groups.

To identify potential collaborators, biosamples and datasets, we invite researchers to explore the [EPND Catalogue](#) which includes over 70 neurodegeneration research studies representing more than 240,000 research participants.

Who is eligible for this Call?

We welcome applications from researchers in academia or industry, with a proven track record of publications in the neurodegenerative field. Early career researchers are also encouraged to apply, provided they have a confirmed employment contract from their institution covering the duration of the proposed project.

We also welcome collaborative proposals, specifying the principal investigators and key collaborators. There is no limit on the number of collaborators.

What does the application process involve?

The application process involves downloading and completing a short application form and brief feedback questionnaire on the EPND platform. The application form and questionnaire can be downloaded [here](#) (to download the form, click File > Download > Microsoft word). Applications should be submitted via email to collaborate@epnd.org, by **15 September 2024**.

A committee of EPND partners will evaluate all Expressions of Interest and select proposals that best test the functionalities of the platform and identify possible additional incentives that could be implemented in the next selection step.

Successful applicants will be notified by 1 November 2024. Selected Expressions of Interest will be invited to submit full proposals (less than 4 pages) that will include possible additional incentives. The deadline for full proposals is 30 November 2024.

Award notifications will be published on 15 December 2024. Awardees will have 18 months to complete the planned study and provide a report detailing the study results and various aspects of the EPND platform tested.

What funding will be provided to successful applicants?

EPND offers funding support in the range of €10,000-€50,000 per case study for partial coverage of sample costs for academic applicants, contingent upon the identification of samples of interest from the EPND catalogue. However, external funding must cover the core study and analysis process.

What additional support will EPND provide to successful applicants?

As well as covering partial sample costs (see above), EPND will provide the following support to successful applicants:

- Access to well-characterised samples from AD, PD and other neurodegeneration cohorts
- Access to a rich selection of data for cross-cohort analyses
- Ethical-legal support, including interpretive guidance, assistance in understanding data protection requirements, consenting, institutional ethics approvals, and data/sample access approvals
- Support for data harmonisation, saving time before initiating analysis
- Access to secure workspaces, tools and apps via the [AD Data Initiative's AD Workbench](#), including: Jupyter Notebook, RStudio, Julia, Docker, GitLab, LibreOffice, Visual Studio Code, the NTKapp, and more
- The ability to upload or install your own tools and software; as well as access to storage, compute and community features via the [AD Workbench](#).

Are there any specific requirements for the Call?

There are a number of specific requirements for proposals to be eligible for this Call:

- Sample and data discovery, and access request, must be made through the EPND Catalogue
- The derived data must be listed in the EPND Catalogue, making them discoverable and requestable through the EPND user interface (data and results can be hosted centrally or remotely via a federated connection; permissioning processes can be defined by the applicant)

- If possible, EPND workspaces on the AD Workbench should be leveraged for data analyses. If there is any analysis that needs to be performed in an external environment, please note that in your application with justification so that we can review this to offer the support needed
- Compliance with the applicable legal requirements (including under the applicable data protection regulation)
- Compliance with European data sharing, permissioning, and access regulations
- Proposal must have funding available to execute the study and analysis
- Communication of the results either jointly or through EPND's communication channels.

How will Expressions of Interest be assessed?

A committee of EPND partners will evaluate all expressions of interest and select proposals that best test the functionalities of the platform and identify possible additional incentives that could be implemented in the next selection step.

Selected expressions of interest will be invited to submit full proposals (less than 4 pages) that will include possible additional incentives.

Successful applicants will have 18 months to complete the planned study and provide a report detailing the study results and various aspects of the EPND platform tested.

What are the key dates and deadlines?

- Expression of Interest launch – July 23rd, 2024
- Deadline for expression of interest – September 15th, 2024
- Notification of success / invitation to submit full proposal – November 1st, 2024
- Deadline for full proposals - November 30st, 2024
- Award Notifications – December 15th, 2024

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

Please email the EPND team at collaborate@epnd.org, we will be happy to promptly answer any questions you may have!