

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Regarding the Call for Proposals: "Alliance Center in the Berlin University Alliance"

1. Eligibility to Apply and Participate

Who is eligible to submit an application?

Consortia comprising at least three of the four Berlin University Alliance institutions (Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin) are eligible to apply.

Applications must be submitted jointly by the consortium.

Other universities, non-university research institutions, companies, and other external organizations may also participate as associated partners. Associated partners are not eligible to apply and cannot receive funding under this call for proposals. However, they are expected to provide an appropriate financial contribution, which must be outlined in the application.

Who is eligible to serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) or the person in charge?

Members of the four BUA institutions with a cost center or financial authority are eligible to participate in a consortium, provided they have the consent of the cost center holder.

In addition to research infrastructure facilities, an Alliance Center may also involve researchers, research groups, or professorships. The project must focus on research infrastructures and aim to promote their cross-institutional use, further development, or strategic networking.

For PIs with fixed-term appointments, the application must clearly explain how continuity of tasks will be ensured during the funding period and with regard to intended sustainability.

2. Scope of Funding

What is an Alliance Center?

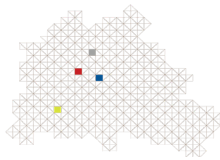
Alliance Centers are strategic platforms that facilitate the cross-institutional coordination, development, and shared use of research infrastructures within the Berlin University Alliance.

The centers systematically network existing research infrastructures, improve access, develop joint usage and governance concepts, and strengthen community building and international visibility in high-impact research areas.

What types of research infrastructure can be included in an Alliance Center?

The call for proposals focuses on existing research infrastructures.

Planned or currently developing research infrastructures may also be included if their intended role within the Alliance Center and their stage of implementation are clearly outlined.



This call is not intended to establish new research infrastructures. Rather, the goal is to strategically develop existing infrastructures further, interconnect them, and improve their shared use.

Is the call for proposals limited to technical research infrastructures?

No, the term "research infrastructure" encompasses not only technical research equipment, but also research data infrastructures and support services. The key criterion is that the provided infrastructure has a clear research focus and contributes to the Alliance Center's objectives.

Do all participating institutions have to contribute the same research infrastructure or technology?

No, the infrastructures or technologies contributed should complement one another in a meaningful way. The most important thing is that their collaboration creates scientific and strategic added value, and that they pursue a common approach to use, governance, and further development.

What does the term "shared use of research infrastructures" mean?

The goal of this call for proposals is to improve cross-institutional access to these infrastructures and facilitate their shared use.

Depending on the type of infrastructure, this can be achieved through shared usage policies, coordinated service offerings, access to equipment, or shared research data infrastructures. The key consideration is facilitating researchers' access to the respective infrastructures.

Providing self-collected research data is not eligible for funding under this call for proposals. If research data infrastructures are part of an Alliance Center, funding applies to the shared infrastructure for managing, storing, processing, or providing research data, not to providing individual research datasets.

3. Funding and Eligibility Requirements

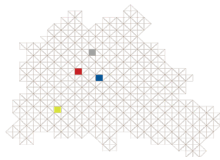
When will the funding begin?

The planned start date is January 1, 2027.

In principle, it is possible to begin the project at a later date in 2027. However, the actual funding period would be shortened accordingly.

How much is the grant?

You can apply for grants of up to €200,000 per year, per Alliance Center, for a term of up to three years.



What types of expenses can be claimed?

The following can be claimed:

- Personnel costs,
- Non-personnel expenses,
- Investment funds

provided they are necessary for the establishment, coordination, or further development of the Alliance Center.

Are investment funds eligible for funding?

Yes.

You may request funding for investments if it is necessary to achieve the project's objectives and if it is clearly justified in the financing plan.

Can funding be carried over to the next fiscal year?

No, because funding is subject to the principle of strict annuality. Funds that are approved must be spent within the respective fiscal year. Unspent funds cannot be carried over to the following year.

4. Application Process

What role do early- and mid-career researchers play in the proposal?

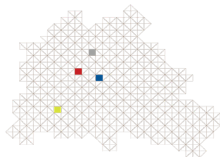
The proposal must explain the Alliance Center's role for these researchers.

This includes existing or planned measures to provide access to research infrastructures, training opportunities, networking opportunities, and support for this target group. If there are any needs, they should be described clearly and in detail.

Are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) required for the application?

Yes, the application must define at least three key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the Alliance Center's progress in achieving its objectives during the funding period. These KPIs should be derived from the project's objectives and work plan, and they should be formulated in a transparent, measurable way.

Applicants with questions about developing suitable KPIs or measuring success can contact the Quality Management Unit of the Berlin University Alliance at qmu@berlin-university-alliance.de.



Is the integration of research infrastructures into OpenIRIS mandatory?

Yes.

Applicants agree to integrate research infrastructures (i.e., research equipment and services) contributed through the Alliance Center into the OpenIRIS management and booking software. They also agree to keep the stored information up to date throughout the funding period.

Research equipment operators who need help integrating their equipment into OpenIRIS can contact the Berlin University Alliance's OpenIRIS team at openiris@berlin-university-alliance.de.

5. Sustainability

What are the requirements for an Alliance Center to be sustainable?

Funding is intended to support the establishment of a long-term, sustainable Alliance Center.

Applications must outline how the Alliance Center will continue after the funding period ends, in terms of organization, structure, and funding, if applicable. To this end, it is recommended that discussions be initiated early on with the relevant infrastructure managers at the participating BUA institutions.

Will there be an opportunity to receive further funding after the current funding period ends?

Existing Alliance Centers may reapply.

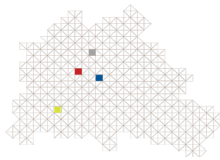
However, funding is limited to a maximum of two periods. There is no guarantee of follow-on funding. Decisions regarding renewed funding will be made as part of future calls for proposals and will be based on the funding conditions in effect at that time.

6. Evaluation and Selection

What is the significance of research relevance in the review process?

Clear research relevance is an essential prerequisite for funding.

The application should demonstrate the scientific need addressed by the Alliance Center and the added value offered to the research community by the shared use and further development of research infrastructures. Appropriate evidence may include usage statistics, documented needs, or experiences from scientific practice, for example.



How are proposals presented?

Eligible proposals are presented by a consortium spokesperson during an online “Sharing Resources” Steering Committee (SC5) meeting.

The presentation (max. 10 minutes) explains the written proposal. The funding decision is based solely on the submitted proposal.

Who can attend the presentation?

A spokesperson for the consortium will give the presentation.

Additional organizational details, particularly those regarding the participation of other consortium members, will be communicated to applicants well before the presentation date.