

## Funding Announcement: Alliance Centers at the Berlin University Alliance

Objective 5: Sharing Resources

Call for Proposals: Establishment of BUA Alliance Centers

**Call opens: June 17, 2026**

**Call closes: September 10, 2026**

Expected start date of funding: January 1, 2027

Submit to: [brt@berlin-university-alliance.de](mailto:brt@berlin-university-alliance.de)

### 1. Objectives and Scope of Funding

The Berlin University Alliance (BUA) supports the establishment of **Alliance Centers** as strategic platforms for the cross-institutional coordination, development, and use of research infrastructures<sup>1</sup>.

This funding aims to systematically connect existing research infrastructures within the Alliance, strengthen their cross-institutional use, and support their development in accordance with shared strategic goals. The focus is on existing research infrastructures. Planned research infrastructures or infrastructures currently under development may be considered if their role within the Alliance Center and current stage of implementation are clearly demonstrated. **Alliance Centers aim to improve access to research infrastructures, leverage synergies, and strengthen the BUA's international visibility in profile-defining areas.** The funding also supports targeted community building around research infrastructures to intensify cross-institutional exchange, foster collaboration, and establish sustainable networks.

Funding is provided for projects that aim to establish sustainable Alliance Centers supported by the institutions, with funding for up to three years.

### 2. Eligibility and Requirements

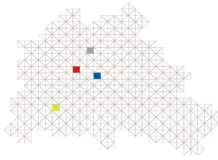
Consortia comprising **at least three of the four institutions** of the Berlin University Alliance are eligible to apply: Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin.

Applications must demonstrate the following:

- clear added value of the alliance for Berlin as a science and research hub;
- a compelling concept for cross-institutional collaboration and strategic development;
- the development potential of the proposed Alliance Center and its relevance for a broader user and expert community;

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this call for proposals, research infrastructures include scientific equipment, equipment pools, data resources, research data infrastructures, services, software environments, methods, workflows, technical platforms, and other resources made available or developed for scientific use, methodological development, or research collaborations.



- a description of the existing research infrastructures, as well as planned research infrastructures or infrastructures currently under development, that will be incorporated into or potentially integrated with the Alliance Center, including their role in the project and their current stage of implementation;
- a joint, cross-institutional concept for the use of the included research infrastructures;
- a statement on the significance of the Alliance Center for early- and mid-career researchers, including access, training, networking, or support needs and how these are already addressed by existing structures or are to be addressed within the project.

Existing Alliance Centers may reapply; however, funding is only available for a maximum of two funding periods.

Additionally, **other universities, non-university research institutions, and external partners** may participate in the Alliance Center as associated partners. These institutions are not eligible to apply for this funding and cannot receive BUA grant funds. However, they are expected to provide an appropriate level of contribution, which must be outlined in the application. Contributions from associated partners may be financial or non-financial, such as staff time, infrastructure, data, methods, facilities, expertise, communication services, or contributions to training and exchange programs.

### 3. Scope and Duration of Funding

Funding is provided for **up to three years**.

The maximum amount of funding is **EUR 200,000 per year per project**.

The following types of funding may be requested under this call:

- Personnel costs,
- Non-personnel expenses,
- Investment funds<sup>2</sup>.

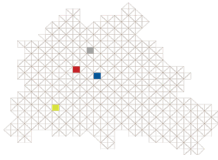
The funds must be used exclusively for the establishment, coordination, and further development of the Alliance Center.

The provided funds are subject to the annual budget principle. This means that approved funds must be spent in full within the respective fiscal year. Unspent funds cannot be carried over to the following year.

The provision of funding under this call is subject to the availability of budgetary resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Investment funds include, for example, equipment, fixtures, and other assets with an acquisition cost of EUR 5,000 or more per item.



#### 4. Eligible Measures

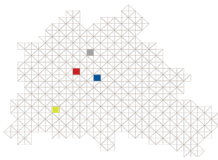
Funding is available for measures that contribute to the objectives of the call, including:

- Development and implementation of measures to **enhance the visibility** of research infrastructures (e.g., events and communication formats);
- **Technical and methodological development** of existing infrastructures;
- Measures to **simplify and harmonize access to** research infrastructures (e.g., common terms of use);
- Establishment and strengthening of **networks and cooperation structures** within the Alliance;
- Concepts and formats to **support early- and mid-career researchers** in accessing research infrastructures;
- Development and implementation of **joint research data infrastructures or systems**;
- Concepts for cross-institutional use of **research infrastructures in teaching**;
- **Formats to develop future research projects** (e.g., externally funded projects) based on research infrastructures.

#### 5. Application Requirements (see application template)

In particular, proposals should address the following aspects:

- **Initial situation**
- **Objectives and work program** for the funding period
- **Research-related and strategic added value of** the planned Alliance Center
- **Description of the research infrastructures** involved and their strategic significance
- Concept for cross-institutional **governance** and collaboration
- Measures to **improve access, cross-institutional use, and visibility**
- Statement on the significance of the Alliance Center for early- and mid-career **researchers**, including existing access, training, networking, or support needs and any existing or planned contributions to addressing these needs
- Definition of at least three **key performance indicators (KPIs)** to measure success during the funding period
- **Sustainability concept** with a plausible plan for structural, organizational, and financial continuation or institutional anchoring after the end of funding
- **Financial plan.**



The applicants agree to integrate the research infrastructure contributed through the Alliance Center, in particular research equipment and services, into the **OpenIRIS** management and booking software, and to keep the corresponding entries up to date.

## 6. Evaluation and Selection Process

Projects to be funded are selected through a competitive evaluation and selection process.

The decision on funding is made by the “Sharing Resources” Steering Committee (SC5).

**Formally eligible applications will be presented by a spokesperson representing the applying consortium during an online SC5 presentation session on September 15, 2026, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** The SC5 will then have the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed Alliance Center. The presentation is intended to clarify the written application; the submitted application remains the primary basis for evaluation. Applicants are asked to ensure the availability of a spokesperson for this session.

The SC5 review and funding decision are scheduled for **October 13, 2026**.

**The evaluation is based on the following criteria:**

- Alignment with the funding objective and relevance to research infrastructure
- Research-related added value and relevance for a broader user and expert community
- Cross-institutional use, visibility, community building, and synergies
- Strategic added value for the BUA and Berlin as a science and research hub
- Quality, coherence, and feasibility of the work program
- Governance, institutional embedding, and sustainability perspective
- Performance measurement and financial planning

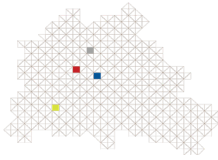
Typically, up to three Alliance Centers are funded per call for proposals.

These calls are typically held every three years.

## 7. Reporting Requirements and Evaluation

Funded Alliance Centers must submit annual reports detailing the progress of their work packages and the achievement of their objectives in relation to the defined KPIs.

At the end of the funding period, they must submit a final report detailing the results achieved, the Alliance Center's impact, and the implementation of the sustainability strategy.



## 8. Contact

Applicants are expected to contact the **responsible infrastructure contacts at the BUA partner institutions** well before submitting their applications. This ensures that planned projects are coordinated at an early stage and that applicants receive informed feedback on feasibility and integration into existing structures.

### **Berlin University Alliance**

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### **Responsible infrastructure contacts**

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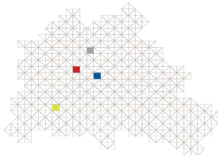
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## **9. Effective Date**

This funding announcement takes effect upon publication.