2024 JOINT TRANSNATIONAL CALL ON "WATER FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY"

INCLUDING THE MODALITY OF EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

Publication Date: 12/09/2024
Pre-proposal deadline: 13/11/2024, 15h00 CET

Disclaimer:

In September 2024, the Water4All and the DUT Partnerships under Horizon Europe have launched calls for research on topics that are complementary. Duplication of funding for the same proposal is not allowed, therefore the applicants must carefully choose the best fit for their proposals based on the scope of each call and their respective research priorities.

For topics with a stronger water and circularity focus, applying to the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call is recommended (Water4all Partnership)

For proposals with a focus on urban planning and changes in urban water cycle paradigms, applying to the DUT Call 2024 is recommended (DUT Partnership)

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Glossary

- **Associated Countries:** Associated Countries are countries who signed an association agreement with the European Union and its Members. In Horizon Europe, legal entities from Associated Countries can participate under the same conditions as legal entities from the Member States. The list of Associated Countries is available here
- **Call Secretariat (CS):** The Call Secretariat, hosted by the Project Management Agency Karlsruhe (PTKA), will be in charge to prepare, coordinate and follow-up the joint call processes, both electronically and physically. It will work in cooperation and consultation with the Call Steering Committee (CSC) and provide the CSC with all documents needed for decisions. It is the central contact point for applicants regarding all technical and general issues of the submission.
- **Call Steering Committee (CSC):** The Call Steering Committee (CSC) will be composed of one representative per FPO and will be the decision-making body in the framework of this call.
- **Consortium Coordinator (CC):** Coordinator of the transnational collaborative RD&I proposal. Coordinates the submission of the proposal prepared by the partners in the online submission system, represents the Consortium before the CSC and the CS and, if funded, is responsible for the internal project management.
- **Consortium/Consortia**: Transnational group(s) of partners, submitting a collaborative Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) proposal.
- **Early Career Researchers (ECR)**: Refers to the Modality of Early Career Researcher of the 2024 Joint Transnational Call aimed at project proposals coordinated by early career researchers, who have obtained their PhD less than 10 years prior to the call launch.
- **European Commission (EC):** European Commission is acting as a Funding Authority in the Water4All Partnership, co-funding the Transnational Projects selected for funding in the 2024 Joint Transnational Call
- **Evaluation Panel (EP):** Panel of evaluators which will evaluate and rank the Transnational Project full proposals submitted in the 2024 Joint Transnational Call in order of merit. EP members will not submit or participate in proposals within these Call and must sign declarations on confidentiality, conflict of interest and code of conduct.
    - **EP Chairperson:** Leads the EP meeting, by: ensuring active, all-inclusive and rich participation of all members; managing the collective decision-making by the EP; launching voting procedures if necessary; approving the EP meeting agenda and the minutes, proposed by the CS.
    - **EP Vice-Chairperson:** Takes the duties of the Chairperson if the Chairperson is absent, for example, due to a conflict of interest.
    - **Evaluators:** Internationally recognised scientific or industry experts appointed for their independent evaluation of the submitted pre and/or full proposals to the 2024 Joint Transnational Call. Evaluators will not submit or participate in proposals within these Calls and must sign declarations on confidentiality, conflict of interest and code of conduct.
- **Funding Partner Organisation (FPO):** Parties that have committed national/regional funds to participate in the 2024 Joint Transnational Call and/or in the modality of Early Career Researchers.
- **Independent Observer:** external expert invited as observer to the EP meeting to assess the conformity of the evaluation procedure.
- **Joint Transnational Call (JTC):** A call for the funding of excellent transnational research and innovation projects, co-funded by the FPOs supporting the call and the European Commission.

- **National Contact Point (NCP):** Each participating FPO in the 2024 Joint Transnational Call and/or in the modality of Early Career Researchers has nominated NCP(s) to provide information on national/regional funding rules and procedures.
- **Principal Investigator (PI):** Researcher/Leader of the research team of a Project Partner in a Transnational Project.
- **Project Coordinator:** The Principal Investigator leading the consortium of Project Partners in a Transnational Project and is in charge of submitting the proposal in the Call.
- **Project funding:** The total sum of the funding, which will be granted by the FPOs to the Project Partners. The amount of funding that each project partner can receive depending from the national funding rules.
- **Project Partner:** independent legal entity participating in the Transnational RD&I project.
- **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA**): A key document of the Water4All Partnership that defines the strategic orientations of the programme
- **Transnational Project costs:** The total sum of the project costs which is necessary for the implementation of the foreseen activities.
- **Transnational Project:** A project funded in the frame of the 2024 Joint Transnational Call and its modalities.

1. Introduction

1.1. Joint Transnational Calls in the context of Water4All partnership

The Water4All partnership started in 2022 under the auspices of the European Union Horizon Europe programme for research and innovation, to concentrate research and innovation on water in Europe and beyond. Water4All's Vision is to "boost the systemic transformations and changes across the entire research – water innovation pipeline, fostering the matchmaking between problem owners and solution providers for ensuring water security for all in the long term".

Water security stands for the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability. Water security and 'Just' access to clean water for all of society are an essential aspect for Sustainable Development. This is reflected specifically in the UN Sustainable Development Goals [1] (SDGs), in first instance SDG 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", which is interconnected with SDGs addressing Poverty (1), Hunger (2), Health (3), Clean Energy (7), Cities (11), Responsible Consumption and Production (12), Climate (13), Life below Water (14) and on Land (15), Peace, justice and strong institutions (16) and Partnership for the Goals (17).

Reaching Water4All´s objectives require an inclusive and systemic approach, with a logical chain from problem analysis and the identification of knowledge gaps to the uptake of solutions and their concrete applications by the relevant stakeholders. The direct connection between stakeholders and problem owners with solution providers from the RD&I field is required to make decisive contributions towards the objectives of Water security: *improved access to water; availability of adequate water supplies for all economic uses; ecosystems health and delivery of ecosystem services; resilience to global changes and water-related hazards*. This approach will be implemented through a broad range of activities, aiming together at achieving the following outcomes:

- Deliver sound knowledge, tools, and evidence basis on water for policy- & decision-making.
- Improve consideration of water impacts in all relevant policies.
- Enhance the field/market use of innovative solutions to water challenges.
- Increase citizens' awareness and engagement for an inclusive water governance.

Among its activities to produce these outcomes, Water4All will launch a series of annual co-funded Joint Transnational Calls (JTCs) pooling national financial resources through the participation of ministries, authorities and funding organisations, together with the support of the European Commission (EC). These calls primarily aim at strengthening the water RD&I collaboration and producing and sharing top class water-related knowledge and data. The topics for the calls are drawn from the water challenges identified in the Water4All Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) (Figure 1).

[1] https://sdgs.un.org/goals

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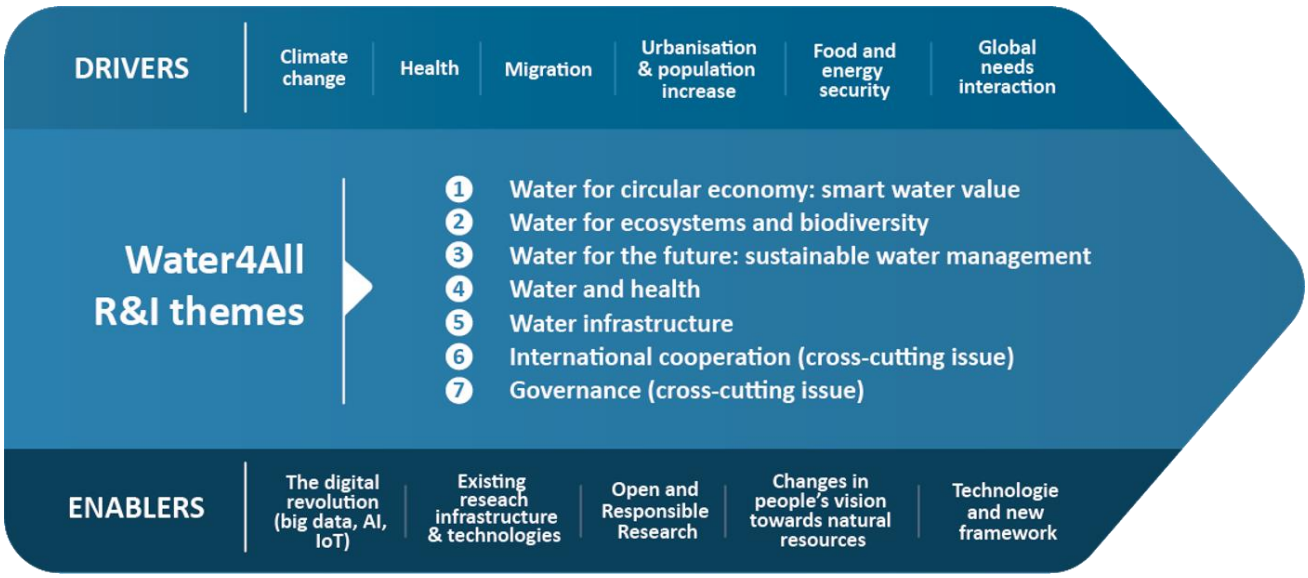

Figure 1 – Water4All RD&I's themes, drivers and enablers

The 2024 Joint Transnational Call (JTC) is the third in the series of the Water4All co-funded calls. It is jointly launched by 36 Funding Partner Organizations (FPOs) from 31 countries responsible for funding research and innovation actions in the field of water, with the financial support from the EC.

With the aim of developing the capacities of talented young researchers and giving them the opportunity to act as leaders of the project consortia, Water4All also integrates an independent modality of the Early Career Researchers (ECR) in this JTC. **The thematic focus of the ECR modality is aligned with the JTC topics.** The applicants can choose whether to apply under the regular JTC or under the modality of ECR, provided they comply with the requirements.

1.2. Objectives of the 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Circular Economy is a development strategy that emphasizes the finite nature of resources and the need for efficiency in their use at all scales. The basic principles involved in the changes needed to achieve transition to a Circular Economy include avoiding waste and pollution, circulation of resources, products and materials and environmental protection. Water plays a central role in the Circular Economy, acting as both a valuable resource and a critical component for sustainable development. The European Commission adopted the new Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) in March 2020, which is one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal.

In a Circular Economy framework, water has an economic, societal, and environmental value. Some of the aspects considered in the Circular Economy are not new in the water field, where substantial progress has been made to deal with water stress caused by climate conditions and water demand. However, further progress with a holistic approach is now needed. In a context of global changes and aligned with the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029 with focus on "Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature" and "A more circular and resilient economy", Water4All's 2024 Joint Transnational Call aims to deliver new solutions to develop new circular feedstocks and value chains, increase water resource efficiency, improve water allocation, and optimize water use in water-dependent sectors. The 2024 Joint Transnational Call will also focus on the barriers to the adoption of proposed solutions and the deployment of outputs, and to the impact in inland and coastal water environments.

The proposed solutions should contribute to a reduction in resource interdependencies and supply of scarce resources. Water4All also wishes to contribute to the resolution of conflicts and the fair distribution and

optimization of water resources, promoting synergies across water uses and needs as an alternative strategy to trade-offs strategies, and through participatory approaches and the empowering of users.

2. Description of the aims and themes of the 2024 Joint Transnational Call and the Early Career Researchers modality

IMPORTANT: The aim and the thematic framework are the same for the proposals submitted in the regular 2024 Joint Transnational Call and for the proposals submitted under the Early Career Researchers modality. **More information on the call structure is included in Chapter 3.**

2.1. Strategic aim of the Joint Transnational Call and the Early Career Researchers modality

The 2024 Joint Transnational Call within the Water4All Partnership is aimed at research and innovation to contribute to water security in the long term. In line with the strategic objectives of Water4All, the results should contribute to the implementation of evidence-based, global, EU and national water management policies and strategies, within the frameworks of the European Green Deal, the zero-pollution action plan, the Water Framework Directive, Just Transition Mechanism, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Proposals should show cognisance of appropriate legislation and policy frameworks at national and international levels that are relevant for the call, while addressing policy actions and steering mechanisms needed to foster the paradigm shift to Circular Economy.

2.2. Theme of the Joint Transnational Call and the Early Career Researchers modality

The general theme of the call is “Water for Circular Economy”. Research & innovation proposals submitted under the Water4All 2024 Joint Transnational Call and the Early Career Researchers modality are required to address at least one of the following topics:

1. Enhancement of water circularity in industries

1.1. Introducing innovative paradigms and methodologies for transitioning sectors towards circular economy models and decoupling production and water demand. This may include strategies to achieve zero liquid discharge and resource recovery.

1.2. Development of innovative processes and approaches to address minimization of water consumption, wastewater treatment for reuse, sustainable use of water sources, integration of stakeholder engagement for reuse for and among industrial actors and linkage to urban schemes.

1.3. Development of innovative monitoring procedures for process control and development of operating concepts and metrics for efficient water cycle management, compliance with regulation and standards, economic valuation, and risk assessment.

2. Urban water circularity

2.1. Enhancement of water cycle management within urban environments to increase efficiency and circularity and reduce reliance on conventional and less sustainable water supplies.

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2.2 Integration of decentralized and centralized treatment systems, nature-based solutions enhancing existing systems, integration with industrial sector, harvesting and reuse of rainwater and runoff.

2.3 Novel monitoring and control methodologies. Comprehensive risk assessment strategies to mitigate potential environmental and operational risks associated with water reuse practices, ensuring compliance with applicable standards and regulations. Develop a comprehensive framework for dynamic risk monitoring and assessment to evaluate the safety and efficiency of water reuse systems under varying operational conditions and environmental impacts.

3. Resource recovery and valorization

3.1. Developing integrated approaches for recovering valuable resources from wastewater, sludges, brines, and reservoir sediments. Among others, strategies may target nutrients, metals, critical raw materials, high value products and energy.

3.2. Exploring synergies between resource recovery and water reuse in both industrial and urban contexts to maximize efficiency and sustainability.

3.3. Assessing the applicability of recovered materials for various uses, considering emerging standards and regulations for resource recovery, business models and the Life Cycle Analysis of the recovered materials across the value chain.

4. Economic, environmental and social implications of water reuse and recovered products

4.1. Conducting comprehensive assessments on the implications of circularity schemes on water environments to ensure long-term sustainability and mitigate negative impacts. This includes assessing how components coupled in a functionally and meaningful way in systems will impact the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus. Incorporate circularity measurement and assessment with emerging standardized indicators for circularity and sustainability, to foster inclusive and equitable water resource management across all sectors. Compliance with the emerging regulations and standards, monitoring and modelling approaches and potential interventions to minimize the environmental impact may be addressed.

4.2. Identifying and assessing economic and social aspects collectively influencing stakeholders' awareness, market confidence and acceptance, social acceptance, opportunities, drivers and barriers to the creation and adoption of solutions for water reuse and resource recovery and reuse.

4.3. Developing management strategies, policy options, steering mechanisms and governance systems that facilitate the integration of circularity methodologies into existing water management frameworks while addressing economic and social concerns. Approaches may consider innovative regulatory frameworks to promote circularity.

The context for the general call topics is described in Theme I of the Water4All Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), "Water for Circular Economy: smart water value". Likewise, Themes VI and VII in the SRIA on "International cooperation" and "Governance", respectively, must be considered as they are cross-cutting issues to all other themes. Applicants are encouraged to check links in the SRIA between themes.

IMPORTANT: Applicants should note that not all the descriptors included in the Water in Circular Economy theme in Water4All SRIA are considered as eligible topics for the 2024 Joint Transnational Call. The use of water for hydroelectric generation, cooling in power plants and industry, and the use of water in agriculture under topics 1, 2 and 3 are not within the scope of the call. Although health approach can be considered in risk assessment, aspects related to epidemiology and downstream fate of contaminants are not eligible.

Please note:

- The call topics are non-exclusive. Proposals can therefore address one or several topics and/or subtopics;
- It is not compulsory to address all subtopics within a topic in the proposals;
- Consult with your Funding Partner Organisation (FPO) which topics are eligible for each applicant. ANNEX A provides a list of national contact points (NCPs) by each participating country/region.

2.3. Expected approach from the proposals

The proposals presented to the Water4All's 2024 Joint Transnational Call are expected to deliver new knowledge, innovative tools, methodologies, and approaches to governance and management enabling the development of new circular feedstocks and value chains, increased water resource efficiency, improved water allocation, and optimized water use in water-dependent sectors.

Delivered knowledge needs to cover relevant existing gaps and have the clear potential to be used in new and improved tools, options and policy making. Consideration should be given to better understanding of the socio-economic and human well-being aspects influencing the social and governance barriers that prevent or delay adoption and implementation of solutions and new paradigms, including a focus on how to overcome them. Likewise, the proposals must avoid too specific and categorized cases; thus, they are expected to address aspects that are cross-cutting and relevant cases where transfer of solutions to other cases and sectors is feasible and can have a higher impact.

The proposals are also expected to contribute to the acceleration of the adoption of measures and to connect actors to improve coordination of actions. In all cases, knowledge transfer and impact of the outputs must be demonstrated. The proposals will be also required to demonstrate how stakeholders are involved to achieve the desired impact.

The complexity of water challenges and the related impact in different domains require systemic approaches, with consortia crosscutting scientific disciplinary boundaries (multi- or interdisciplinarity) since solutions will not come from any single discipline. Multi- and interdisciplinarity must not be a per se approach, but an approach for better defining the problems, developing solutions and deliver them. The proposals must indicate the research questions and multidisciplinarity aspects they will address.

Proposals must not duplicate past efforts and results delivered by projects and actions previously funded by other instruments, e.g. Horizon 2020, Water JPI, Biodiversa and PRIMA calls. Approaches built on the results of previous projects must demonstrate that they include substantially new ideas and approaches for additional progress and impact.

Collaboration with active projects on the topic will be welcomed to achieve synergies and avoid duplications. Links with other projects funded by Horizon Europe, the LIFE Programme, Partnerships and Missions are encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to use existing resources and infrastructures for their project.

2.4. Impact of the proposals

Proposals are expected to identify challenges and provide solutions to beneficiaries at local to global scale, thus contributing to the objectives and impact of the call. Furthermore, Horizon Europe aims at creating significant societal and environmental impact. Likewise, the call aims at creating momentum on water in the context of SDGs.

The right stakeholders should be identified and included in the proposal design from the beginning to understand their needs and receive their input (co-design). Diversity of stakeholders, spanning the entire research and innovation chain, is important to accurately describe the problem and develop solutions to better guarantee policy implementation of the results, e.g., representatives from water agencies, the business and financial sectors, water authorities, NGOs, ministries, academia, citizens etc. Ideally at least one of the stakeholders should be end-users or have an understanding of their needs, with regular feedback seen throughout the project (co-creation). This interaction should be an integrated part of the project and not a separate work package.

The proposals should be problem or outcome-driven, with solutions feeding into the impact pathway, through verifiable contributions to the state of the art, including learning from shared negative results. There needs to be a long-term view of the outcomes such that the proposals results will be used to further state of the art in a tangible manner, e.g., publications, policy recommendations, presentations to end-users and SMEs, among others. The different types of impacts, from scientific and technological to societal and environmental, may have different pathways that need to be defined.

Measurable indicators related to the impact pathway should be defined and used to reflect the socio-economic and wider benefits of the solutions, looking at potential for scaling, replication and use in other situations both in and outside of Europe. Proposals not only need to solve technical problems, but also the problems owned by stakeholders benefiting from solutions. The evaluation will examine if the impact pathway expected is credible.

3. Call Structure

3.1. 2024 Joint Transnational Call Structure, including the Early Career Researchers modality

Applicants are invited to submit their proposals under the Joint Transnational Call or its modality of Early Career Researchers Call, provided they comply with the general and national/regional eligibility requirements:

- **Joint Transnational Call (JTC)** – the annual Water4All call for funding of excellent research and innovation proposals
- **Early Career Researchers modality (ECR)** – aimed at projects coordinated by early career researchers. The thematic framework described in Chapter 2, the proposal structure and the evaluation process are the same as for the JTC.

IMPORTANT: Applicants mark in the submission tool under which modality they are applying (regular JTC or ECR, provided they comply with the criteria). The thematic framework, the evaluation criteria and the pre-proposal template are the same for the JTC and for the ECR except for the eligibility criteria for the Consortium Coordinator. The applicants must comply with the General eligibility criteria as stated in Chapter 4, as well as with the national/regional regulations for each of the modalities. **Not all FPOs financially support the ECR modality** (see ANNEX A).

3.1.1. Modality of Early Career Researchers

The ECR modality focuses on developing capacities for talented early career researchers by giving them an opportunity to act as project Coordinators in this call. The principle criterion for the early career researcher acting as Coordinator is to have obtained their PhD less than 10 years before the call launch[2]. The aim of this modality is to support early career researchers to conduct basic or applicable research related to JTC topics and to provide them with a platform to present their research as well as forge valuable international connections with other researchers in a similar field.

The ECR modality is governed by the same thematic framework and evaluation criteria as the JTC, but under different general eligibility criteria for the Consortium Coordinator of the proposal. **The Consortium Coordinators complying with the ECR criteria may choose to apply under the JTC or ECR, but not under both JTC and ECR.**

While the evaluation and ranking of the proposals submitted in the JTC and ECR will be done under a single call process and subject to the same rules, the funding organisations participating in the ECR modality with available budget will prioritize the funding of ECR proposals, in cases of equal ranking of several projects.

[2] Unless the FPOs calculate any exemption (e.g. maternity leave) as specified in the national/regional regulation annex.

3.2. Participating countries

A total of 36 Funding Partner Organisations (FPOs) from 31 countries have agreed to launch a Joint Transnational Call for RD&I proposals on the topic "Water for Circular Economy". In addition, a total of 15 FPOs from 13 countries will support the Early Career Researcher modality.

The research teams applying for funding shall comply with the **general eligibility criteria**, as well as with the **national/regional regulation of their respective FPO**. The participation of applicants from other countries is allowed, provided they have their own separate source of funding or if funds by another source are guaranteed (i.e., by a national or international funding organisation). In this case, a letter of commitment by these partners must be provided upon submitting the full proposal.

For more information on eligibility of international research institutions please see section **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**.

Applicants should note that in some countries, several funding organisations participate in the call with different organisational rules and priorities. Applicants must pay attention to the national regulations and if questions arise, it is highly recommended to contact the NCPs before submitting a pre-proposal and full proposal (see ANNEX A).

3.3. Financial Commitment

A total of approx. 35 million Euros has been provisionally allocated for the 2024 Joint Transnational Call and the ECR modality by the participating FPOs with the support of the EU (Table 1). These funds will be used for RD&I activities carried out by researchers, institutions and companies according to the funding rules and legal frameworks of their respective FPOs.

The funding request per applicant and/or project and/or modality may be limited by relevant FPO, as stated in the national/regional regulations.

TABLE 1: WATER4ALL FPOS COMMITMENTS IN 2024 CALL

No.	Country	Funding Partner Organisation	Short name	JTC (yes/no)	ECR (yes/no)	Total national budget for JTC and ERC in €
1	Austria	Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung	FWF	yes	No	800.000,00
2	Belgium	Flanders foreign investment office	FIO/ VLAIO	yes	No	800.000,00
3	Belgium	Fonds Voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek-Vlaanderen	FWO	yes	Yes	700.000,00
4	Belgium	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique	F.R.S.-FNRS	yes	Yes	300.000,00
5	Brazil	Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies	CONFAP	yes	Yes	1.610.000,00
6	Brazil	Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development	CNPq	yes	Yes	100.000,00
7	Czechia	Technology Agency of the Czech Republic	TA CR	yes	No	300.000,00
8	Denmark	Innovation Fund Denmark	IFD	yes	No	1.300.000,00
9	Estonia	Sihtasutus Eesti Teadusagentuur	ETAg	yes	No	300.000,00
10	Finland	Suomen Akatemia	AKA	yes	Yes	850.000,00
11	Finland	Ministry of the Environment	YM	yes	Yes	150.000,00
12	France	Agence Nationale de la Recherche	ANR	yes	Yes	1.700.000,00
13	Germany	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung	BMBF	yes	Yes	2.000.000,00
14	Greece	General Secretariat of Research & Innovation	GSRI	yes	No	1.000.000,00

15	Hungary	Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Hivatal	NKFIH	yes	No	330.000,00
16	Ireland	Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland	EPA	yes	Yes	700.000,00
17	Israel	Ministry of Energy	MoE	yes	No	tbc
18	Italy	Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca	MUR	yes	Yes	2.000.000,00
19	Latvia	Latvijas Zinātnes padome	LZP	yes	Yes	570.000,00
20	Lithuania	Lietuvos mokslo taryba	LMT	yes	Yes	300.000,00
21	Luxemburg	Luxembourg National Research Fund	FNR	yes	No	350.000,00
22	Malta	Ministry for Environment, Energy and Regeneration of the Grand Harbour	MEER	yes	No	300.000,00
23	Moldova	National Agency for Research and Development	NARD	yes	Yes	200.000,00
24	Netherlands	Dutch Research Council	NWO	yes	No	1.500.000,00
25	Poland	Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju	NCBR	yes	No	1.500.000,00
26	Portugal	Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia	FCT	yes	Tbc	500.000,00
27	Romania	The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding	UEFISCDI	yes	No	1.000.000,00
28	Slovak Republic	Slovak Academy of Sciences	SAS	yes	No	240.000,00
29	South Africa	Department of Science and Innovation	DSI	yes	Yes	390.000,00
30	Spain	Agencia Estatal de Investigación	AEI	yes	Yes	1.500.000,00
31	Spain	Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology	CDTI	yes	No	tbc
32	Sweden	The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning	FORMAS	yes	Yes	1.800.000,00
33	Switzerland	Swiss National Science Foundation	SNSF	yes	No	1.500.000,00
34	Tunisia	The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	MHESR	yes	No	400.000,00
35	Turkey	Turkiye Bilimsel Ve Teknolojik Arastirma Kurumu	TUBITAK	yes	No	500.000,00
36	United Kingdom	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	EPSRC UKRI	yes	No	468.000,00
Estimated EU contribution (in Euro)						6.681.960,00
Total national commitment (in Euro)						27.958.000,00
Total contribution (in Euro)						34.639.960,00
EU Member States and Associated countries			Third countries and other countries			

(*) Funding Agencies that may update their own contribution: Please check National Annexes

3.4. Call Process

The application process consists of two consecutive steps. **The submission of a pre-proposal in Step 1 is mandatory**. It is not possible to enter the application procedure at a later stage.

STEP 1

The Consortium Coordinator must submit a pre-proposal on behalf of the consortium, providing key data on the proposed project. The Consortium Coordinators fulfilling the condition of eligibility of the modality of ECR (see section 3.1.2) are invited to mark it in the submission tool. Their pre-proposals will be submitted as part of the ECR modality.

The deadline for the submission of the pre-proposal is 13/11/2024, 15h00 CET.

STEP 2

The Consortium Coordinator must submit a full proposal on behalf of the consortium. Deadline to be confirmed after Step 1.

ANNEX A provides the contact information of the NCPs in each participating country/region for the 2024 JTC and the ECR modality. It is required that each partner in a consortium checks their national/regional eligibility regulations prior to the submission of a pre-proposal and full proposal and confirms their eligibility with the NCPs.

3.5. Dates and deadlines

Tentative Time Schedule of the 2024 Joint Transnational Call and the ECR modality	
First Step: Submission of pre-proposals	
July 2024	**Pre-announcement**
12 Sept. 2024	**Call Publication and 1st Step opening**
13 Nov. 2024 15.00 CET	**Deadline for submission of the pre-proposals**
End of Feb. 2025	**Notification to the applicants of the 1st Step outcomes**
28 Feb. - 12 Mar. 2025	**Period for request to redress**
Second Step: Submission of full proposals	
28 Feb. 2025	**2nd Step opening**
29 Apr. 2025 15.00 CEST	**Deadline submission of the full proposals**
September 2025	**Notification to the applicants of the 2nd Step outcomes**
September/October 2025	**Period for request to redress**
September/October 2025	**Communication of the decision after request to redress**
Last quarter 2025 / 1st quarter 2026	**Start of the RD&I projects**
Last quarter 2028 / 1st quarter 2029	**End of the RD&I projects**

3.6. Confidentiality & Conflict of interest

Research plans (pre-proposals and full-proposals), abstracts, and evaluation statements are confidential documents. Proposal documents are therefore handled and stored with due care and confidentiality.

The Water4All consortium and its Call Secretariat ensure complete confidentiality to applicants during the evaluation process, i.e., the proposals will only be available to the national/regional funding organisations and the mandated experts responsible for the evaluation of the proposal. Experts appointed for the evaluation will sign a confidentiality agreement and will be asked to declare any conflict of interest. The proposals will be handled by the Water4All Call Secretariat. Each of the funding organizations will subsequently handle projects approved for funding. Accordingly, national law will govern. Projects approved for funding will be governed by the applicable law on confidentiality, including, where relevant, national law of the participating funding organisations.

The publishable information of the projects selected for funding, as listed in section 3.7 below will be published at the end of the call process.

3.7. Publishable Information

A list of the funded projects will be published at the end of the call process (once the projects have been selected). Therefore, applicants should be aware that the following information from the proposals may be published by Water4All and FPOs for promotional purposes: (1) Project Title and Project Acronym, (2) Publishable abstract, (3) Duration of the project, (4) Total costs and total funding of the research project, (5) Organisation name and country of each partner, (5) Name of the Project Coordinator.

3.8. Privacy Policy

By submitting the application, the Consortium Coordinator and partners agree to the use, to the share (for specific purposes: e.g., evaluation, for future nomination of experts, Water4all specific communication) and to the storage of projects related information according to the Privacy Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Further information on Privacy Policy[3] is presented on the Online Submission Tool.

4. Eligibility criteria

Partners should note that the general eligibility criteria (section 4.1) and the national/regional regulations are decisive for the initial evaluation of project proposals at both first and second step.
A (pre-)proposal that does not fulfil all the general eligibility criteria will be declined without any further review. Ineligibility of a partner applying for funding may cause the rejection of the entire proposal without further review. Therefore, before submitting an application, the Consortium Coordinator should verify that all partners of the consortium have read their corresponding national/regional regulations. Coordinators and project partners must be aware that some national funding agencies require the submission of national documents in addition to the international pre-proposal.
Proposals passing the general and national eligibility checks will be assessed by the Evaluation Panel. The Call Secretariat (CS), on behalf of the Call Steering Committee (CSC), will communicate the results of the eligibility check and the decisions taken to the Coordinator of each consortium.

Eligibility of Water4All Partnership beneficiaries
Research teams from some beneficiaries of Water4All Partnership may exceptionally participate to this co-funded call; the list of the beneficiaries of Water4All Partnership and those allowed to participate in the projects' consortia are indicated in ANNEX C. **For those beneficiaries, measures have been foreseen to mitigate the risk of, perception of, or de facto conflict of interest or unequal treatment of applicants**. No other beneficiary of Water4All partnership may apply for funding under the 2024 Joint Transnational Call or the ECR modality.

4.1. General eligibility criteria

The general eligibility criteria for the Joint Transnational Call (JTC) and the Early Career Researchers (ECR) are summarized in Table 2. Failing to fulfil these requirements, the proposal will not be considered for funding.

[3] https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/privacy-policy

TABLE 2: GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR JTC AND THE ECR MODALITY

Scope	• Proposals must address at least one main topic, even though it is not compulsory to address all subtopics within a topic in the proposals.
Consortium composition	**General Consortium composition:** • Each consortium must be composed of **a minimum of three eligible partners** that request funding from participating Funding Partner Organisations from three different countries. • In addition to the abovementioned condition, the projects must involve **at least two independent legal entities from two different EU Member States** or Horizon Europe associated countries. • The **upper limit of eligible project partners per consortium is 7** (including 1 self-funded partner) for the proposals submitted as JTC as well as for those under the ECR modality. • The national/regional regulations may limit the maximum number of partners from the same country within the consortium. • For proposals involving up to 5 partners, maximum two entities that are also involved in the Water4All partnership (listed in ANNEX B) may participate in the same proposal. Larger proposals may involve up to three entities that are also involved in the Water4All partnership (listed in ANNEX B).
	Consortium Coordinator in JTC • In each proposal, one of the entities must act as the Consortium Coordinator who has the responsibility for submitting the proposal. • The Consortium Coordinator must be eligible for funding by a FPO of this call. • The Principal Investigator (PI) of the entity acting as Consortium Coordinator can only participate in one proposal of either JTC or the ECR modality (i.e., if the PI is the Consortium Coordinator of a proposal, he/she cannot participate in any other proposal of the JTC or ECR, neither as a Consortium Coordinator nor as PI of a partner).
	Consortium Coordinator in ECR • The Consortium Coordinator must have obtained his/her PhD less than 10 years prior to the call launch. The other PIs in the Consortium **do not** need to be early career researchers. • **A Consortium Coordinator who complies with the ECR criteria may decide whether they wish to participate in the JTC or in the ECR, however, participation in both modalities is incompatible.** • In each proposal, one of the entities must act as the Consortium Coordinator which has the responsibility for submitting the proposal. • The Consortium Coordinator must be eligible for funding by a FPO of this call. • The PI of the entity acting as Consortium Coordinator can only participate in one proposal of either JTC or the ECR modality (i.e., if the PI is the Consortium Coordinator of a proposal, he/she cannot participate in any other proposal of the JTC or ECR, neither as a Consortium Coordinator nor as PI of a partner).
	Workload: • The workload distribution within a consortium must be balanced, and no partner (including a self-funded partner) shall have more than 50% of requested person months.

	• Partners from the same country shall not have, altogether, more than 50 % of requested person months
	Partners not requiring funding (self-funded partners): • No more than one self-funded project partner per consortium is allowed. • The applicants have to prove their willingness to self-fund their own activities or the willingness of other partners to fund their activities by sending a letter of intent/commitment together with the full proposal. • They have to follow the rules laid down in this Call Announcement and have to be part of the project consortium agreement. • A self-funded partner cannot coordinate a project. • They are not considered in the minimum requirement of eligible partners and countries in the Water4All eligibility criteria. • They are counted for the requirement of the maximum number of partners in a project.
Duration	• The international RD&I projects duration is 36 months. • Start date and end date of the researcher groups within the consortium must be aligned as far as possible.
Submission	• Pre-proposals and Full Proposals must be submitted before the deadlines. • The pre-proposal and the full proposal must be submitted correctly and completely via the Online Submission Tool as outlined in Chapter 5 and in line with the Guidelines for Proposal Submission. • Proposals must be written in English.

4.2. National/regional eligibility criteria

In addition to the general eligibility criteria, each project partner must ensure that his/her contribution to the overall project conforms to the national/regional regulations of their respective FPO for the JTC and/or the ECR modality:

- Where applicable, relevance of the proposal to the topic(s)/subtopic(s) funded by national/regional FPOs;
- Compliance with national/regional funding criteria and regulations;
- Compliance with limits to budget requests;
- Where requested by the national funding organization, submission of additional national documents in accordance with national rules.

4.3. Eligibility of international research institutions and partners from countries not participating in the call

The following eligibility rules count for international research institutions:

- **The Joint Research Centre (JRC)** can participate in a proposal as a partner. Coordinating the proposal is not possible, since they do not “belong” to any FPO country. They will have to participate at their own expenses. They will not count in the "three different eligible entities" rule from three different FPO countries for eligibility purposes. The formal signed letter of availability of funds should be included in the full proposal as an Annex.
- **Partners from countries not participating in the Call** may join consortia only as partners (not as coordinator). Participation will be at the institutions' own expense. Moreover, such partners will have

to demonstrate that they will achieve the related tasks in the proposal. The formal signed letter of availability of funds should be included in the full proposal as an Annex.

- **International institutions**, e.g. UN institutions, need to investigate their respective national eligibility guidelines for national and/or global funding and make sure they would be able to fulfil the duties of funded projects (i.e. signature of consortium agreement).

4.4. Recommendations for the applicants

All partners within a consortium should take into consideration the following recommendations for setting up their project proposals:

Scope:

- Proposals should go beyond the state of the art by providing high quality RD&I and, when appropriate, make use of innovative technologies, approaches and concepts to do so;
- Proposals should consider on-going research activities funded by other instruments, programmes or projects. Identification and cooperation with these activities is of high importance;
- Proposals should consider and incorporate appropriate cross-cutting issues, such as socio-economic and/or capacity development.

Consortium composition:

- All proposals are encouraged to consider geographical balance and implementation in appropriate geographic settings and according to the objectives of the proposal, including in low- and middle-income countries/regions
- Project partners may participate in more than one proposal provided this is in line with the national/regional regulations.
- Participation of legal entities from countries (and/or regions) not participating in the call, at the entities' own expense, is welcome.
- Project partners that are not eligible for funding may participate at their own expense or if they have their own separate source of funding. They have to comply with requirements set out in Table 2 for partners not requiring funds.
- It is highly encouraged, although not compulsory, to involve stakeholders (i.e., small and medium enterprises (SMEs), industries, authorities, public administrations, associations, as well as civil society organisations) as partners or self-funded partners. The participation of stakeholders is subject to national/regional regulations if eligible for funding.
- All proposals should integrate the gender dimension[4] of RD&I activities.
- Every partner in a proposal, including a self-funded partner and subcontracted partner, needs a Participant Identification Code (PIC) from the EC to be included in the submission. The applicants have to check their PIC or ask for the creation of a PIC well in advance of the submission[5].

Budget

- There is no specific limit of total budget per whole project proposal.

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/gender/h2020-hi-guide-gender_en.pdf

[5] 9-digit number serving as a unique identifier for organisations (legal entities) participating in EU funding programmes / procurements. If needed, one can apply for a temporary PIC on: *https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register.* A search tool for organisations and their PICs is available on https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register-search. We suggest validating the PICs via the public available Partner Search – Organisation Profile service. This allows use to fill out some requested data inputs automatically, which is less error-prone and provides much better user experience.
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/apis

- The requested total budget of proposals is only limited by the number of eligible partners and by the budget of each partner. **Please consider the national regulations of each FPO with regard to the specific budget limitations.**

Duration

Duration of the RD&I projects must be **36 months**. Funded consortia will be asked to agree on a starting date no later than 30 April 2026 and an end date no later than 30 April 2029.

4.5. Further considerations

Applicants should also take into consideration the following:

- All Partners and the Consortium Coordinator must comply with the applicable national and EU rules and legal provisions, for instance about competition and EU State aid rules, environment, utilisation of genetic resources, equal opportunity and gender, and public contracting whenever applicable.
- Plan and complete the application process as soon as possible to avoid an overload of the system near the deadline and ensure the support by the CS or the NCPs in case of need.
- The financial plan and allocation of resources (table available in the electronic submission system and filled in by the Consortium Coordinator following the instructions given by all Partners) should be coherent with the work plan proposed. Funding requests which are not adequately justified may affect the evaluation score given to the proposal.

4.6. Ethical Issues

Ethical issues will be taken into account in the scientific evaluation of proposals and when making the funding recommendation. Applicants should always describe any relevant ethical aspects in their research plans. If a research permit or a statement by an ethics committee is required for the implementation of the project, applicants should provide information on the permits or permit proposals.

Any proposal which seems to contravene fundamental ethical principles will not be selected and may be excluded from the evaluation and selection procedure. Judgment of the significance of ethical issues will be made by using the criteria published by the Commission in its guidelines on How to Complete your Ethics Self-Assessment[6].

The project must comply with the EU "Do no significant harm" principle (DNSH).

5. Evaluation of Proposals

5.1. Evaluation Procedures

A two-step evaluation procedure will apply, for the pre-proposals (step 1) and the full proposal (step 2) respectively. The evaluation procedure will be common for all proposals submitted under the JTC and ECR modality.

The CSC will set up an Evaluation Panel (EP), which will be comprised of international scientific experts from the relevant research areas covered in this call. Its composition will consider the gender and geographical balance. The EP members cannot be applicants in the joint call and cannot evaluate proposals with which they declared a conflict of interest, to ensure a fair evaluation process and equal treatment of applicants.

The CS will check that no Conflict of Interest exists concerning the proposals evaluated.

The EP will be headed by a Chair and a Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be in charge of moderating the EP meetings and conveying the results of the discussions to the CSC.

[6] Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf

All proposals, either submitted under the JTC or the ECR modality, will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria (see section 5.2) and ranked in a ranking list.
An independent observer will be invited as external observer to the EP meetings to assess the conformity of the general procedure with the EU regulation.

Step 1 (Pre-proposal stage)
Pre-proposals submitted correctly and within the deadline will be checked for eligibility by the Call Secretariat against general criteria defined in Chapter 4 and by the FPOs according to their national/regional criteria.
All eligible pre-proposals should be subject to a scientific evaluation by 3 EP members, as far as possible, based on two criteria - 'Excellence' and 'Impact' (see Table 3). One of the evaluators will act as the rapporteur during the EP meeting.
During the EP meeting, the evaluation results of each pre-proposal will be presented by the rapporteur. The EP will discuss the pre-proposals and agree on the final scores for each criterion. All applicants will receive a consensus report from the EP.
A ranking list of pre-proposals will be produced, including only those pre-proposals that meet the minimum threshold, i.e., 3 out of 5 in each criterion. The final score will be agreed by the Evaluation Panel for each criterion, and afterwards, the two criteria will be summed up to produce the final score.
The objective of this first step is to identify the best proposals to proceed to Step 2 and to ensure balance between requested and available funds at the national/regional level. The ranked eligible pre-proposals will be sent to the CSC and divided in 3 groups, according to their scores: Group A (highest evaluation scores), Group B (medium evaluation scores) and Group C (low evaluation scores). All pre-proposals in Group A will be invited to Step 2. Among the pre-proposals in Group B, proposals will be selected to Step 2, taking into account the ranking list, the representativeness of all FPOs, the participation in the ECR modality and the financial pressure per FPO. Pre-proposals in Group C will be dismissed for their low classification.
Consortium Coordinators will be informed of the outcomes by the CS and, if applicable, invited to submit a full proposal.

Step 2 (Full proposal stage)
After the submission deadline for full proposals, the submitted full proposals will be checked to ensure that they meet the formal call criteria and have not changed substantially from the respective pre-proposals. Full proposals not meeting the formal conditions will be rejected without further review.
As in Step 1, each full proposal will be reviewed by 3 members of the Evaluation Panel (EP) based on three criteria - 'Excellence', 'Impact' and 'Quality and Efficiency of Implementation'. The EP members will assess the full proposals in advance of the EP meeting and prepare individual evaluation reports. In case of a missing expertise in the EP for some full proposals, the CS will identify and mobilize external experts to obtain 3 individual evaluation reports.
The evaluation results for each full proposal will then be presented by the rapporteur during an EP meeting and discussed by the Panel members. The EP meeting will complete the evaluation procedure by agreeing on the final individual score for each criterion, and the overall score for each proposal. Due to the large number of proposals evaluated, the EP could decide to focus on those proposals that report divergent scores from the evaluators. Any proposal where there is a consensus between the evaluators on any of the three criteria being below the threshold (i.e. 3 out of 5 in each criterion) may not be discussed and ranked by the EP (regardless if there is divergence or not in other scores). The overall threshold on the final score is 10/15: no project with a lower score will be funded.
The decisions of the EP should be taken collectively, preferably by consensus or by simple majority of the panel members, in case consensus cannot be reached. The rapporteur will produce a common consensus report on behalf of the EP for each full proposal, which will be transmitted to the applicants.

A ranking list of proposals will be produced based on the final scores, following the same methodology as in Step 1. The final ranking list will be forwarded to the CSC, which will meet to decide on the projects to be recommended for funding by FPOs. For this decision, the CSC will strictly follow the order of the ranking list from the EP until the available funding is exhausted.
The projects with the same final scores will be prioritised by the CSC taking into consideration a number of principles. The CSC may decide how to use these principles providing that they are used uniformly for all proposals:

- Maximizing the total number of projects funded and thus optimizing the amount of EC financial support to the Water4All call;
- Prioritizing the projects submitted under the ECR modality;
- Maximizing the number of countries/regions involved into the projects funded;
- Assuring a good balance between different topics of the call;
- Promoting the allocation of the EC financial support pro rata, based on the actual contributions of the Funding Organisations involved in the proposals.

Once the available EC funding is exhausted, in case funds remain available for some FPOs supporting the ECR modality, a second step of selection will apply to a short list of proposals submitted under the ECR modality, following strictly the order of the ranking list from the EP for proposals submitted under the ECR modality and provided that these projects are of sufficient quality (i.e., threshold in section 5.3).

The applicants will be informed about the final outcome of the call.

5.2. Evaluation Criteria

If a pre-proposal or a full proposal passes the general and national eligibility checks, it will be evaluated following the procedures reported in the previous section 5.1. The following evaluation criteria will be applied by the EP members (as well as the external experts, if needed) in order to assess each proposal:

TABLE 3: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Excellence	Impact	Implementation (Step 2 only)
Threshold: 3/5	**Threshold: 3/5**	**Threshold: 3/5**
1.1 Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives to the Water4All JTC 2024 topics and extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state of the art. - Is the proposal clearly addressing, and has a main focus, aspects related to circularity in the use of water or the creation of water-related circular value chains? - Is the proposal contributing to and/or increasing the advancement of the Science &Technology knowledge? - Does the proposal take scientific and/or technological risk? (Please comment…)	**2.1 Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the call text, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from the project.** - Is the plan for impact clear and does it follow logically from the expected results of the project? - Is it suitably ambitious with regards to solving the problem addressed? - Is there strategic impact on reinforcing competitiveness and/or on solving societal or environmental problems at European and international level? - Are the outcomes feeding into the expected pathway?	**3.1 Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.** - Is the proposed organization and management of the scientific project effective and efficient? - Are the management structures and procedures, including and innovation management, appropriate? - Are risks properly identified and managed? - Are the resources assigned to the work packages in line with their objectives and deliverables? **3.2 Capacity and role of each participant, and the extent to which**

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- Does the proposal have a potential breakthrough despite this risk-taking? **1.2 Addressing the knowledge gaps.** - Are the methodology and research design clear, feasible and suitable to answer the identified knowledge gaps and / or achieve the proposed objectives? - Are stakeholders and end-users involved in the definition of the challenge and problems? **1.3 Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.**	**2.2 Relevance** - Are the cases representative of water intensive sectors and activities? - Can the knowledge and solutions be transferred to other users, activities and sectors? - Can the results enhance the regulatory framework or increase wide compliance with regulation? **2.3 Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.** - Are there feasible exploitation and dissemination plans of the scientific project results (including management and IPR) - Are the expected results or the knowledge acquired of importance for economic / societal sectors and the economic development? - Is there a clear communication plan? **2.4 Added value of European transnational co-operation and networking** - Does the proposal identify the right actors to make successful use of the results possible? - Is there are clear plan for interactions with / exchange and transfer of results within the consortium, to stakeholders or society? - Are the outcomes linked clearly to SDGs	**the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.** - Are participants in the proposal well-suited to the tasks assigned to them (necessary expertise)? - Is their role well-defined and do they complement each other well? - Are tasks well balanced among partners? **3.3 Appropriateness of the partners and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment …)** - Is the estimated effort / allocation of resources appropriate? - Is it ensured that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role? - Do the work and financial plans plus the time schedule show prospects for success? - Is there a balance of scientific and financial contributions from respective countries' partners?
Overall score Threshold: 10/15		

5.3. Scoring system

Evaluation Panel members will address all sub-criteria described in Table 3, but individual scores will be attributed only to the three main criteria. Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5 (no half marks allowed) based on the scoring system. The threshold for each criterion is 3 out of 5: no project with a lower score for one of the criteria, or an overall score lower than ten (10) at Step 2 will be funded.

TABLE 4: SCORING SYSTEM

0 – LIMITED - The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1 – POOR - The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2 – FAIR - The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3 – GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4 – VERY GOOD - The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5 – EXCELLENT - The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Evaluators will identify strengths, shortcomings and weaknesses (if any) and provide context for their comments based on the application, i.e., evaluators will be asked to score proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made. When an evaluator identifies substantial shortcomings and weaknesses, he/she must reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. There should be consistency between the numerical scores and written comments.

5.4. Funding recommendation

Projects will be recommended for funding by the CSC, based on the ranking lists of the full proposals described above and in accordance with budgetary considerations. Final funding decisions are made by the participating FPOs.

5.5. Redress procedure

Applicants can appeal against the evaluation outcome if they suspect a breach in the application of the evaluation and selection procedures. This redress procedure only covers the procedural aspects of the evaluation and/or eligibility checks, including the national eligibility checks. The redress will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts.
In this case they shall submit their appeal to the Partnership Coordination Team of Water4All (redress_water4all@agencerecherche.fr) and the call secretariat (water4all.call2024@ptka.kit.edu) via email, up to 14 calendar days after the date of dispatch of the evaluation outcome email by the call secretariat at the end of each stage (first or second step). The proposal outcome email containing the results of the evaluation will give information on the appeals procedure, which is described below.

Admissibility of appeals

For an appeal to be admissible the following conditions must be met:

- The appeal must be submitted by the Coordinator of the proposal to which the appeal relates
- Only one appeal per proposal will be considered
- The appeal must be addressed to the Water4All Vice-Chair
- The appeal must be submitted via email within the 14 calendar days deadline. The appeal must contain the following minimum information:
    - The name of the call for proposals;

- The proposal number;
- The title of the proposal;
- A description of the alleged shortcomings of the evaluation procedure.

The appeal must demonstrate a procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment, misuse of powers, or a conflict of interests. Appeals that do not meet the above conditions, do not deal with the evaluation of a specific proposal or merely express disagreement with the result or the reasoning of the evaluation will not be considered suitable for redress.

Procedure

Upon receipt of an appeal, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent by the call secretariat within 7 calendar days. The acknowledgement shall report the redress process and the anticipated date by which a decision on the appeal will be communicated to the appellant.

All appeals received by the 14 calendar days deadline will be processed together and the decision will be communicated to the appellant within 14 calendar days from the deadline for submitting the appeals.

The Water4ll Vice-Chair will establish an internal appeals committee chaired by the Water4All Vice-Chair and comprised of the Independent Observer, one representative from the Ethics & deontology board of Water4All and one representative of the Water4All consortium (Pillar B leader / CEO or other representative of the coordinator / funding agency not involved in the call). The role of the appeals committee is to evaluate the appeals according to the procedure, ensuring fair and equal treatment of applicants, with support of the call secretariat (or the Chair of the Call Steering Committee) and one representative per funding agency concerned by the appealing proposals, if needed. The Committee will provide its opinion on the implementation of the evaluation procedure, on the basis of the available information related to the proposal and its evaluation and will make a recommendation to the Water4All Vice-Chair, who is in charge of deciding, except for national eligibility.

A negative national eligibility check of a funding organization cannot be overruled by the Water4All Vice-Chair. Appeals on national eligibility decisions will be assessed by the FPO responsible for the national eligibility check, that will provide justification about its decision to the Vice Chair, in order to prove that national funding rules listed in the call text have been applied correctly.

For Step 1: Pre-proposals which were originally considered ineligible or not admissible to submit a full proposal, but which the Water4All Vice-Chair found to be eligible, will be allowed to participate in Step 2. This will not lead to a change of the deadline for the full proposal submission.

For Step 2: The redress procedure may lead to a re-evaluation of all or part of the proposal by independent experts not involved in the previous evaluation or to the confirmation of the initial evaluation.

A re-evaluation will only be carried out if the appeal shows that the selection procedure was flawed by a breach which affects the evaluation outcome and the final decision on whether to fund a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if the proposal has failed anyway on another criterion or if even by adding the maximum points for this criterion the final score still remains below the funding threshold.

The score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.

All appeals will be treated in confidence and will not prejudice future applications.

6. Application procedures

A 2-step application procedure will apply for the JTC and the ECR modality. Pre-proposals and full proposals must be submitted electronically via a specifically designed web platform, the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS), using the templates provided.

Applicants should note that the online system may experience high traffic volumes in the last hours before the submission deadline and it is therefore highly recommended to submit the final version of the pre / full-proposal well in advance of the deadline to avoid any last-minute technical problems. Requests for extensions of the deadline due to last minute technical problems will not be considered.

6.1. Online Submission Tool

The Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) is available at the following address: https://ptoutline.eu/app/CircEco-Water4All

Step 1 (Pre-proposal stage)

1. The Consortium Coordinator creates an account on the EPSS Section for the Water4All 2024 JTC
2. The Consortium Coordinator should choose under which modality they wish to participate: the JTC or the ECR.
3. Only the coordinator can enter, edit and save the electronic forms, add partners to the consortium, upload the project description and submit the proposal.
4. It is possible to save and edit the pre-proposal as many times as necessary until submission (deadline: 13/11/2024, 15:00 CET).

Applicants should note that any core data change (such as the partner institutions, applicants' personal data and budget) after pre-proposal submission will need to be approved by the concerned FPO should the proposal be invited to Step 2 (See section 6.2).

The submission of a pre-proposal is mandatory. It is not possible to enter the application procedure at a later stage. The information given in the pre-proposal will be used to check for eligibility and to evaluate the pre-proposal.

Please note, that **some of the partners will also need to submit an application directly to their respective national/regional FPOs**. For further details about these procedures and schedule, please consult the national/regional regulations and / or your NCP (ANNEX A).

Step 2 (Full proposal stage)

The second step of the application consists of the submission of a more extensive full proposal. Only research consortia which successfully passed the first step will be invited to submit a full proposal. All rules mentioned in the pre-proposal stage apply for this stage as well.

The Consortium Coordinator and the project partners should consider the following for the submission of the full proposal:

1. The Electronic Proposal Submission System will be open for invited consortia.
2. The information provided in the pre-proposal will be automatically imported into the full proposal.
3. The coordinator can enter, edit and save all new information according to the guidelines of the full proposal in the submission tool.
4. It is possible to save and edit the pre-proposal as many times as necessary until submission (deadline: 29/04/2025, 15:00 CEST).

Applicants should note that information on the core data (e.g., funding requested or institutions) cannot be changed in full proposals, unless explicitly requested by evaluators, by an FPO or by the CSC, or under the conditions laid down in section 6.2.

When applying, keep in mind that the submission system will close at 15:00 CET/CEST of the deadline date established for both Step 1 and Step 2. However, the CS can only ensure responses to email support requests up to 12:00 CET/CEST. The respective email contacts by the CS and NCPs are listed in this document (ANNEX A**Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**).

For any questions regarding the submission, please contact the Water4All 2024 JTC Call Secretariat (water4all.call2024@ptka.kit.edu).

6.2. Changes between Step 1 (Pre-proposal stage) and Step 2 (Full proposal stage) of the Call

Please note that the information given in the pre-proposals is binding. **No major changes regarding the proposals' content will be allowed by the Call Steering Committee (CSC) between the pre-proposals and full proposals**.

Regarding the **administrative details**, a limited number of changes may be allowed, provided they are in line with the general rules of the call and the national/regional funding rules of the FPOs. Participants shall contact the call secretariat via e-mail and their NCPs via the contacts reported in ANNEX A **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**in order to inform them about their request to modify the project proposal data. Requests for changes shall be assessed and allowed by all the FPOs involved in the proposal.
The following changes may be accepted:

- **Minor change of budget** may be allowed by the relevant FPO.
- **Changes in the consortium composition:**
    - No changes of Coordinator (i.e., Principal Investigator of the coordinating entity) will be allowed, except in case of force majeure. A request of change of coordinator must be submitted to the Call Secretariat, at least one week before the deadline for submitting full proposals and it will be discussed on a case-by-case basis by the CSC.
    - Changes in the consortium composition are allowed (maximum 2 changes of Project Partners in proposals with more than 5 partners; maximum 1 change of project partner in proposals with 5 or less partners), provided approval by the concerned Funding Organisations. Please note that the following actions are considered as changes: addition, removal or replacement of a Partner (incl. subcontracted and self-financed partners). Please note that the maximum number of changes applies to "Partner", i.e., the independent legal entity participating in the Transnational RD&I project.

7. Project funding and reporting

7.1. Negotiation of grant agreements

After a positive funding recommendation, the outcome of this process will be communicated by the CS to the Consortium Coordinators, who will then have to inform the Principal Investigator of the project partners. The grants for the funded research projects will be awarded on a national/regional basis by the relevant Funding Organisations according to their terms and conditions. Each Funding Organisation will thus fund its own national /regional research teams within the project.
The project partners must directly contact their NCP (see ANNEX A) in order to start the contract negotiation and accomplish the remaining steps until the research project can start. The Consortium Coordinator is responsible for synchronising the project start with the whole consortium.

7.2. Consortium Agreement

Successful consortia must sign a Consortium Agreement before commencement of the project. This should address matters such as the regulation of intellectual property rights, decision making and actions to be taken in the event of unsatisfactory performance by one or more partners. In some countries/regions, such an agreement might be required for release of the funds. Applicants must comply with the national/regional regulations regarding this issue. Support for the preparation of a Consortium Agreement can be found on the DESCA webpage.

Upon request, this consortium agreement must be made available to the participating funding organisations.

7.3. Project Reporting

In addition to the reporting required by the national/regional rules, Consortium Coordinators will be required to submit a Mid-term Progress Report and a Final Report to the CSC according to common templates which will be provided to them. All partners will have to deliver input for these reports. The monitoring will be conducted during the life span of the project.

Funding recipients must ensure that all outcomes (publications, etc.) of 2024 Joint Transnational Call projects include a proper acknowledgement of Water4All Partnership, the EC, and the respective FPOs.

In addition, each project partner must comply with the reporting requirements of its respective national FPOs. More information on the monitoring and reporting procedures will be provided to the coordinators of the projects recommended for funding.

7.4. Dissemination and exploitation

Water4All will organise a minimum of three events for the projects funded in the frame of the present call (see Table 5). Relevant stakeholders will be invited to these events. Funded projects shall dedicate appropriate resources for dissemination activities, including for participation in activities organised by Water4All.

TABLE 5: MEETINGS OF WATER4ALL FUNDED PROJECTS FROM THIS CALL.

Events	Participants	When
Water4All Kick-off meeting of the selected projects	Coordinators and partners of funded projects, stakeholders, CSC	Spring 2026
Water4All Mid-term Meeting	Coordinators and partners of funded projects, stakeholders, CSC	Autumn 2027
Water4All Final Meeting	Coordinators and partners of funded projects, stakeholders, CSC	Spring 2029

Dissemination of project results is essential, and the dissemination plan should propose communication routes, such as scientific papers, posters, courses or training material, web-based tools, workshops or direct intervention towards end users.

Dissemination to national end-users is necessary in all partner countries. A dissemination plan will be requested for the full proposal and should specify how the planned activities will contribute to the impact of the project.

7.5. Open Access and Open Data

The optimisation of the impact of publicly-funded scientific research is of fundamental importance to improve conditions to i) minimise the time spent searching for information and accessing it, ii) be able to speed up scientific progress, and iii) make it easier to cooperate across and beyond the EU.

Open Access requirements for all scientific publications and long form publications produced by the projects funded by the Joint Transnational Call 2024 will support Green Open Access (immediate or delayed open access provided through self-archiving), or Gold Open Access (immediate open access provided by a publisher for the most important outputs). In the case of Green Open Access, partners will (as soon as possible and at the latest on publication) deposit a machine-readable electronic copy of the published version or final peer-reviewed manuscript accepted for publication in a repository for scientific publications. In addition, partners will ensure open access to the deposited publication and bibliographic metadata. Information should be provided about all the other scholarly objects, tools and instruments that are needed to validate the conclusions of the publication.
In case of any Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issue for some project data and products the consortium may decide to go for Opt Out Option and cover this within the project consortium agreement. Projects can opt out before or after the signature of the consortium agreement (thereby freeing themselves from the associated obligations) on the following grounds:

- Incompatibility with the need for confidentiality in connection with security issues;
- Incompatibility with rules on protecting personal data;
- If there are other legitimate reasons not to provide open access to research data.

Depending on the funding rules of the FPOs, the costs related to the implementation of these provisions may be eligible for reimbursement during the grant.

The funded projects are requested to develop a Data Management Plan, according to the provisions of the HE MGA art. 17, page 110 - 1127. All funded projects will be requested to submit metadata on all the data resources directly generated by the project. A dedicated contact / procedure will be indicated at the launch of the project.

8. 2024 JTC Call Secretariat contact

Anne Petzold & Simon Frank
Water4All JTC2024 Call Secretariat
Project Management Agency Karlsruhe (PTKA)
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[7] HE Model Grant Agreement

List of Annexes to the Call Announcement that will be published on the Water4All call website:

ANNEX A: List of national contact points (NCPs) and eligible topics and modalities by each participating country/region

ANNEX B: List of Water4All beneficiaries that may apply to the 2024 Joint Transnational Call

Stand-alone documents published on the Water4All call website supporting the Call Announcement document:

National/regional funding regulations
Pre-proposal template
Full proposal template
Guidelines for Proposal submission
Frequently asked questions

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