



DEUTSCHE ZENTREN DER
GESUNDHEITSFORSCHUNG

DZG Innovation Fund – Call 2025/2026

Background

The goal of the German Centers for Health Research (DZG) is to combat particularly common diseases more effectively. With the establishment of the DZG Innovation Fund (DZGIF), the DZG aim to strengthen networking between its members, facilitate collaborative research of its scientists across Germany, and to leverage interdisciplinary synergies in order to tackle the challenges posed by the widespread diseases.

Topic 2025/2026: Inter-Organ Metabolomics

Maintaining systemic homeostasis and responding to nutritional and environmental challenges requires the coordination of multiple organs and tissues. To respond to diverse metabolic demands, higher organisms have evolved a system of inter-organ communication through which one tissue can influence metabolic pathways in a distant tissue. Dysregulation of these communication pathways contributes to human diseases such as obesity, diabetes, lung disease, cancer, infection, liver disease, neurodegenerative diseases, mental disorders and atherosclerosis. In recent years, technical advances such as data-driven bioinformatics, metabolomics, proteomics, and lipidomics have helped to understand the complexity of systemic metabolic cross-talk and its underlying mechanisms. This multidisciplinary approach has provided unprecedented insights into the interconnectedness of metabolic pathways and highlighted the dynamic communication and coordination required to maintain homeostasis throughout the body. Looking to the future, this call for proposals aims to promote research between the DZGs in the following areas: (i) exploring the influence of external factors on inter-organ communication, (ii) developing a more detailed picture of metabolic heterogeneity within organs, (iii) investigating dynamic changes in metabolite fluxes and metabolic pathways under different physiological and pathological conditions, to gain a more functional and context-specific understanding of inter-organ metabolism, (iv) developing integrative approaches to decipher the intricate molecular networks that control metabolism, and (v) facilitating the identification of biomarkers, drug targets, and the development of more effective therapeutic strategies for metabolic diseases.

Eligibility

In every application at least 3 DZG must be represented with one principal applicant each. The following are eligible to be a principal applicant:

- DKTK: DKTK Faculty and DKTK Investigators
- DZD: DZD Scientists
- DZHK: DZHK Principal Investigators and DZHK Scientists
- DZIF: DZIF Principal Investigators
- DZL: DZL Principal Investigators
- DZNE: DZNE Principal Investigators
- DZPG: DZPG Scientists



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Funding

Up to 1.350.000,00 EUR for a period of two years (prolongation not possible) are available under the 2025/2026 call for a maximum of two projects. The funds are to be used – unless individual DZG decide otherwise – at institutions that are members of the respective funding DZG.

	Each DZG provides funding of up to EUR (see below) within the 2025/2026 call
DZD	€260.000,00
DZHK	€370.000,00
DZIF	€500.000,00
DZL	€120.000,00
DKTK	€100.000,00
Total	€1.350.000,00

Since the DZNE as a Helmholtz center receives its funding within the framework of the Pact for Research and Innovation of the Helmholtz Association and can therefore not generally financially contribute to the DZGIF the DZNE will financially participate only in-kind.

Since the DZPG does not receive any funding for DZG-wide activities during the start-up phase it will financially participate only in-kind.

Basic criteria

The DZGIF seeks for applications that will exploit the unique potential of DZG broad interdisciplinary expertise for highly innovative, disease- and site-overarching translational research. The financial resources contributed from the DZGIF are intended to provide seed funding, i.e. the project should have a perspective to be financed later from other sources, in particular by third parties.

- At least 3 DZG participating in the project
- Grantees will need to provide joint reports in the context of the annual DZG reporting as well as a joint results report to all funding parties
- Participation in the online partnering day is obligatory to get involved in a project proposal
- All publications resulting from the funded research must acknowledge all involved DZG. Grantees are requested to inform the DZG media teams of upcoming publications or other public-facing activity relating to the grant

Application process

Please submit expression of interest (see template) until 15.05.2024 to office@deutschezentren.de. Everyone who has submitted an EoI will be considered for participation in the online Partnering Day. An optional project outline can also be submitted. There will be the possibility to give a 5-minute pitch on the project idea at the Partnering Day.



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Partnering Day organisation and process

The aim of the online Partnering Day is to promote networking between the scientists of the individual DZG. With the brief presentation of the individual project outlines, participants are given the opportunity to meet potential cross-DZG project partners who are interested in a similar issue or could provide useful technologies.

The Partnering Day will take place online on Friday, June 14th, 2024.

Evaluation process

Proposals will be evaluated based on the scientific quality and translational potential of the project ideas. The evaluation of the proposals is carried out by selected SAB members of each DZG. Based on the evaluations, the DZG board decide on the funding of a maximum of two applications.

DZGIF project schedule

