

New! Alternet Collaborative Project (ACP) call

Scope

In an effort to streamline its approach to biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecosystem services, Alternet has integrated the previous Alternet High Impact Actions (AHIA) and Multi-Site Research (MSR) initiatives into a new Alternet Collaborative Projects (ACP) call. This synergistically merged initiative is designed to leverage the strengths of these former programs, fostering a more effective and impactful response to international challenges.

In summary, the ACP call aims to establish a more comprehensive and responsive approach to research and advocacy in the realms of biodiversity and ecosystems, ensuring broader recognition and comprehension of our work among scientists, policymakers, and the public.

Details

The 2024 call will account for €10,000

2.1. Proposals

Proposals should bring together expertise and knowledge from multiple Alternet institutes to maximize the impact on science and policy related to biodiversity, ecosystems, and their services. They can integrate diverse perspectives and methods of the following components:

1. **Influential Research Publications:** Collaborative, high-impact research papers on critical topics in biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecosystem services, drawing on the combined expertise of various partner institutes. They can include review articles, meta-analyses, and original research, all contributing to significant ecological questions.
2. **Multi-Sites Ecological Studies:** Including field-based ecological research, socio-ecological studies, and analyses of ecological policy. Topics like citizen science, the study of ecosystem services, and nature-based solutions are integral to this component.
3. **Knowledge Dissemination within the Scientific Community:** Including the development of digital platforms and in-person exchanges, e.g. at international scientific conferences.
4. **Outreach to Policy Makers and the Public:** Including concise, accessible messages and informational policy briefs.

Each collaborative project may focus on any one of these components or combine several. Holistic approaches that include advances in scientific knowledge and simultaneously inform policy decisions and public understanding are especially prioritized.

Two types of proposals are accepted:

- **Starting Initiatives** (up to €5,000): short-term research activities typically compact in scope and expected to be completed within one year.
- **Small Projects** (€5,000 to €10,000): suited for more in-depth research that requires a longer timeframe. Such projects can span up to two years.

2.2. Participation

- Project coordinator should belong to an Alternet institute. Project team should be comprised of at least 50% Alternet institute members.
- Field-based research should emphasise pan-European sampling coverage.
- Project leaders should ensure to deliver the project deliverables in time and to clearly acknowledge Alternet support.

2.3. Eligible Costs and Funding Restrictions

The funding is designed to cover a diverse range of research-related expenses, including mobility (travel) and meeting accommodations (e.g. rooms), publication in open access journals, and production of dissemination materials. However, there are specific guidelines and restrictions:

- **Research Specificity:** The proposed research must be distinct and not overlap with existing funded projects. It's essential that the research objectives are clearly defined and represent new initiatives, rather than supplementing ongoing projects. In case the submitted collaborative project is associated with an already existing funded project, the added value and specificity of the project should be explicitly outlined and submitted for funding under the Alternet collaborative project fund.
- **Exclusions:** The funding may not be allocated for conference attendance or solely for travel and accommodation expenses. It is intended to support the direct costs of conducting research.

2.4. Proposal submission

- Please send your proposal to **Tyler Kulfan, secretariat@alterneteurope.eu (Alternet Secretariat)**
- Please **follow the template** when writing your proposal. The proposal should be no longer than six pages, excluding references.

3. Project selection

3.1. Selection committee

The selection committee will be composed of three members of the Alternet Council with no conflict of interest on the submitted proposals (i.e. not leading or participating in a proposal). **Project selection will be done during late February-early March.**

3.2. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring System

Proposals will be evaluated regarding eight criteria, scored from 0 (not competitive) to 5 (outstanding):

- o Alternet representation
- o Pan-European representation
- o Work plan and methods
- o Scientific contribution, including:
 - expected international value
 - expected scientific advances
- o Potential impact on conservation and management policies
- o Dissemination plan
- o Justification of resources
- o Dissemination plan (incl. scientific publications and outreach activities)

The total project score will be the sum of scores across all seven criteria, ranging from 0 to 40. A minimum score of 3 is required for all criteria. Projects not meeting the minimum scores will not be qualified for funding, regardless of their total score.

3.3. Administrative Guidelines for Selected Projects

1. Contract signature: a contract with deliverable timelines will be established with the participants in successful proposals.
2. Project Commencement: Projects that are approved must initiate within one month following their acceptance. This prompt start ensures a timely progression of research activities.
3. Funding Allocation: The funds for each project will be disbursed in two installments. The first 50% will be provided at the project's onset, and the remaining 50% will be released upon the completion and submission of the agreed deliverables.
4. Submission of Deliverables: All deliverables must be submitted to Alternet in accordance with the pre-established schedule. If there are any issues regarding the project's timeline or progress, it is imperative that the project coordinator notifies the Alternet secretariat as soon as possible to discuss potential adjustments or solutions.
5. Invoice Submission Deadline: Invoices for project-related expenses must be submitted within six months of their respective due dates. Invoices received beyond this six-month window will not be accepted, and as a result, the associated costs will not be eligible for coverage under the project's funding.