

DKTK Joint Funding Program - 14th Call for Proposals 2026

Call Information

! Call opens in mid-January 2026

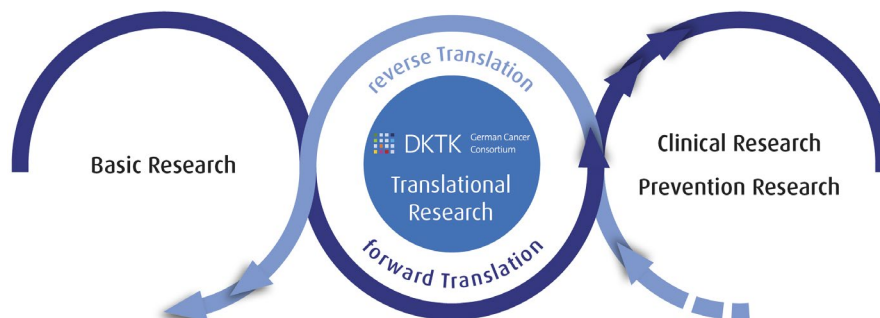
! Deadline for Short Proposals: 17.02.2026 (13:00 CET).

! Submission through the **DKTK Application Portal (access information will be provided in mid-January)**

! Information and FAQs also via the [DKTK Intranet](#)

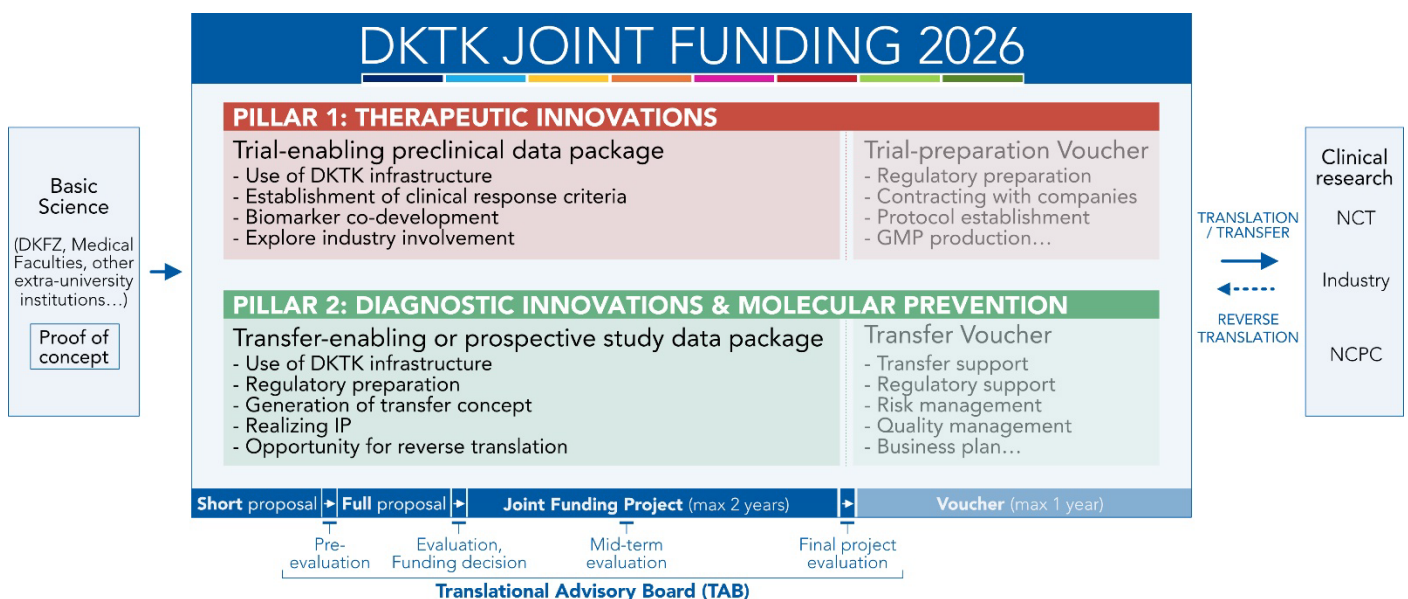
Aims

With this Joint Funding Call, DKTK aims to stimulate the interaction between DKTK partner sites, to bridge the gap between basic and clinical research, and to **accelerate the translation and transfer of scientific discoveries** in the areas of prevention, early detection, diagnosis and therapy into tangible outputs for patients. DKTK seeks to fund **collaborative translational research projects** that focus on the translation and transfer of preclinical research results into medical application by supporting critical steps for the **successful preparation of a clinical trial or transfer activities** (e.g., medicinal products).



This DKTK Joint Funding Call supports translational cancer research projects, which are driven by strong preliminary results and established proof-of concept, for up to 2 years in two areas:

- **Pillar 1: Therapeutic Innovations**, e.g., projects on systemic, local or combined treatments, as well as technical developments, etc.
- **Pillar 2: Diagnostic Innovations & Molecular Prevention**, also including developments in the field of imaging, radiodiagnostics, reverse translational projects, etc.



Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants need to have their **main employment at a [DKTK partner institution](#)** to be eligible for funding.
- **At least 2 DKTK partner sites must be involved** in the proposed research project.
- One **Overall Project Coordinator** has to be nominated as the primary contact person, responsible for proposal submission, project coordination across participating sites and for annual project reporting. The Overall Project Coordinator must be a **DKTK Faculty member, DKTK Investigator or DKTK School of Oncology Fellow**.
- Each participating partner site has to nominate at least one **Local Project Coordinator** as the primary contact and person coordinating the local project activities. Researchers who do not have an active DKTK status may still be listed as Local Project Coordinators, if they qualify to obtain DKTK Investigator status at their partner site. For further detail, see [FAQs](#) or contact the [DKTK Coordination Office](#).
- Non-DKTK researchers may contribute as External Partners, but cannot apply for DKTK funding.
- Means of **patient involvement** must be included to the maximum extent appropriate to the research question. Please note that concrete activities need to be described in the Full Proposal.
- The proposed project has not been submitted elsewhere for funding.
- Research projects selected for DKTK funding should start no later than Q1 2027.

For more information on Requirements, see [FAQs](#).

Modes and Duration of Funding, Obligations

- Maximum project runtime is **2 years** (24 months). Proposed projects must be based on a hypothesis supported by strong preliminary data and proof-of-concept, i.e. meet relevant Entry Criteria (as specified below) to allow successful fulfillment of final Project Evaluation Criteria. Shorter runtimes are in principle possible.
- The total requested budget must not exceed **1.5 Mio €**. Rough planning is carried out as part of the Full Proposals. Detailed budget planning takes place after a project has been prioritized for funding in consultation with the administrative coordinator at the DKTK partner site of the Overall Project Coordinator. After mid-term review, the project budget will be re-examined regarding budget planning.
- PhD positions will not be eligible for funding due to the limited project runtime.
- The (fully external and independent) DKTK Translational Advisory Board (TAB) will evaluate the projects initially, and also the progress of funded projects via a mid-term review and a final review (regarding eligibility for a voucher as detailed below). The DKTK Steering Committee (SC) and the DKTK Coordination Office will monitor projects continuously as well as based on annual progress reports.
- **Envisaged start of funding is Q1, 2027**. A kick-off meeting involving all participating partner sites, the central coordination office and the coordinators of the partner sites must be held within 2 months after project start.
- Supported projects are obliged to address issues of patient consent, biomaterial and data registration with the DKTK BioDataHub, [BDH website](#). Data and biomaterials generated must be made available for future use in cancer research within DKTK and secondary use in other contexts.
- Completed projects with successful final evaluation can be considered to receive a trial-preparation voucher or transfer preparation **voucher for a second funding phase for up to 1 year** (12 months), and **up to 750,000 € budget**, to support additional preparatory work required for translation into a clinical trial or transfer activities.

Proposal Format

- Proposals must be prepared and submitted **using the DKTK Application Portal**. Access information will be provided in mid-January 2026.
- The **Short Proposal** needs to be submitted latest by Tuesday, **17.02.2026 (13:00, CET)**.
- Applicants of positively evaluated Short Proposals will receive information for a Full Proposal.
- Submission of the **Full Proposal** application form is due by Tuesday, **12.05.2026 (13:00, CEST)**.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals need to fulfill predefined **Entry Criteria** to the maximum extent possible within the scope of the proposed research, addressing the availability of preliminary results and proof-of-concept. It should be clearly indicated, if entry criteria are not met or not applicable.

Pillar 1 – Therapeutic Innovations	Pillar 2 - Diagnostic Innovations & Molecular Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mode of Action / Target disease • Validated target (<i>for systemic treatment or combined therapy</i>) • On target activity (<i>for systemic treatment or combined therapy</i>) • In vitro / in vivo efficacy in multiple models • Predictive Biomarker hypothesis • Clinical pharmacology: achievable concentrations / PK in humans (<i>for systemic treatment or combined therapy</i>) • Diagnostic / toxicological data • Pharma interest in supporting trial in case preclinical package looks promising/is available (<i>for systemic treatment or combined therapy</i>) • Target cohort (patient cohort specifications) • IP information, intellectual ownership • Option to enter additional criteria for projects like technology developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of the technological concept or application • Robust experimental proof of concept • Proof of function of the technology in the laboratory • Quantitative risk assessment • Intended positioning defined (Guideline, CE marketing, etc.) • IP secured/clarified • Pathway to application • Option to enter additional criteria for projects like radiodiagnostic developments

Entry Criteria will be matched to Project Evaluation Criteria to monitor progress and evaluate successful realization of funded projects. For details on Evaluation Criteria, see [FAQs](#).

Please, make sure to clearly illustrate which tasks will be performed by which participating site, with a focus on its relevance to guarantee success of the overall proposed project.

General Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

- Potential for significant translational advances in the areas of molecular prevention, early detection, diagnosis or therapy
- Likelihood of the successful preparation for a clinical trial or transfer activity
- Quality of the experimental/technical approach
- Added value contributed by participating DKTK partner site and cross-site collaboration
- Project feasibility based on preliminary data and Entry Criteria

Review Procedure

- The DKTK Translational Advisory Board (TAB) will review eligible Short Proposals.
- Applicants of positively evaluated Short Proposals will be invited to submit a Full Proposal.
- After review of eligible Full Proposals by the TAB and presentation of proposed projects to the TAB, the DKTK SC will take a funding decision based on recommendations by the TAB.
- The TAB will be further involved in a mid-term and final review of funded projects, and will provide advice on potential adaptations.
- Completed projects with successful final evaluation will receive a trial-preparation voucher or transfer preparation voucher. Content and budget for a voucher will be determined together with the TAB and additional experts.

Proposal Deadlines and Timeline

Mid-January	Call opens
17.02.2026 (13:00 CET)	Deadline for Short Proposals
March 2026	Info seminar for Full Proposal applicants
12.05.2026 (13:00 CEST)	Deadline for Full Proposals
June/July 2026	Presentation to the Translational Advisory Board (TAB)
Summer 2026	Notification on funding decision
Q1 2027	Start of funding

Contact

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+49 6221 42 2278/-2302

Information on Data Protection

Name and address of the controller

The controller within the meaning of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other national data protection laws of the Member States of the European Union as well as other data protection regulations is:

German Cancer Research Center - Foundation under Public Law, Im Neuenheimer Feld 280, 69120 Heidelberg, Germany, Telephone: +49 (0)6221 420, Email: kontakt@dkfz.de, Website: www.dkfz.de

Name and address of the Data Protection Officer

Data Protection Officer, German Cancer Research Center - Foundation under public law, Im Neuenheimer Feld 280, 69120 Heidelberg, Telephone: +49 (0)6221 420, Email: datenschutz@dkfz.de

Information on data processing

We only process the personal data of the applicants insofar as it is necessary to ensure the evaluation process of the DKTK Joint Funding Program as well as the subsequent project implementation and execution (of projects selected for funding) and post-processing (all applications). During the evaluation process the applications will be forwarded to internal and external reviewers. Insofar as the processing of personal data of the applicants is necessary for the performance of a contract concluded with the data subject, this is done as pursuant to Article 6 (1) lit. b) GDPR. This also applies to data processing operations that are necessary prior to entering into a contract. Insofar as the processing of personal data is required to fulfil a legal obligation to which DKFZ is subject, this is done in accordance with Article 6 (1) lit. c) GDPR.

The personal data of the applicants will be stored until 6 months after finalization of the evaluation process for applications of projects not selected for funding. The personal data of the applicants of funded projects will be stored until 6 months after receipt of the final progress report. The personal data will be deleted or blocked as soon as the intended purpose of the processing and storage is no longer valid. In addition, data may be stored if the processing of said data is provided for by further European or German legislation or by regulations, laws or other directives that are compatible with the rules of the European Union. A blocking or erasure of data is also carried out when a retention deadline prescribed by the aforementioned standards expires, unless the further storage of the data is required for the conclusion or the performance of a contract.

Rights of the data subject

You are granted the following rights vis-à-vis the data controller:

- You have the right to object the data processing at any time. This has the consequence that we must not continue with data processing as based in this information.
- You are entitled to the right to be informed by the controller about processing of the personal data concerning you.
- You have a right to rectification and/or completion vis-à-vis the controller insofar as the processed personal data concerning you is incorrect or incomplete.
- You may request the controller to have personal data concerning you deleted without undue delay. The right to erasure does not apply insofar as the processing is required to exercise the right to freedom of expression and information, to fulfil a legal obligation, for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or for the assertion, exercise or defense of legal claims.
- You have a right to request the restriction of processing of personal data concerning you.
- You have the right to receive the personal data concerning you.
- You have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority, ("Landesbeauftragte/r für Datenschutz und Informationsfreiheit") of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg.