



Guidelines for proposers

2021 SAF€RA joint call

*Industrial safety in the context of
pandemics and exponential change*

December 2020

SAF€RA is a partnership between 19 research funding organizations from 10 European countries who collaborate on research programming and launch joint calls in the field of industrial safety. It prolongs the work developed in the SAF€RA ERA-NET, which was funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration.

1. Introduction

SAF€RA is a partnership between research funding organizations working in the field of industrial safety in Europe. SAF€RA publishes joint calls for proposals on various topics related to industrial safety and organizes dissemination activities to ensure that research results lead to improvements in safety management. The scope of SAF€RA includes coordination of research on the prevention of major accidents, with off-site consequences and risks to the environment and society, and in particular the economic benefits of industrial safety solutions, safe innovative processes, preparedness and response as well as protection of the environment, new methods to enhance the creation of a safety culture and prudent attitudes, risk reduction strategies, reference technologies for life extension of aged and repaired structures, as well as products and systems required to improve industrial safety.

SAF€RA is a continuation from the ERA-NET project which was funded by the European Commission between 2012 and 2015. The SAF€RA ERA-NET coordinated research investment on industrial safety among a number of EU Member States. After the end of the support by the European Commission in 2015, 19 organizations decided to continue to invest jointly in research and founded SAF€RA. SAF€RA has launched five joint calls between 2014 and 2020.

In 2021, the SAF€RA “fast-track” joint call concerns *Industrial safety in the context of pandemics and exponential change*, with two topics:

- *Topic 1: Lessons learned from Covid-19 and capacity building for resilient response*
- *Topic 2: Nanostructured materials in personal protective equipment and filtration devices*

See section 3 for details on the two topics.

SAF€RA brings dynamism to safety research in Europe by promoting collaboration in research programmes and by fostering lateral thinking as well as favouring innovations. Its objectives include:

- Building up sustainable channels for communication and effective instruments for collaboration between national programme owners and/or managers and promoting the creation of strategic coalitions at a European level.
- Increasing awareness about the importance of research in the field of industrial safety as a major contributor to a dynamic knowledge-based economy as well as working to strengthen the impact of this research at the EU, national and international levels.
- Exploiting synergies and avoiding duplication of research and development among the partners of the Consortium by increased coordination.
- Establishing collaborative research projects between the involved Member States.
- Developing and implementing joint strategic activities to establish a durable European network for cooperation between key actors in the field of industrial safety.

For more information:

- SAFERA's 2021 joint call > <https://call.safera.eu/>
- SAFERA's website > <https://www.safera.eu/>

2. Call objectives

Scope of the call. The scope of the call includes research on the management of industrial risk, avoiding major impacts on the environment or society, as well as research on products and systems required to improve safety in industrial settings. Industries involved include, among others, the process industries, energy, dangerous goods transport, construction and operation of major infrastructure and the services sector. The scope includes occupational safety as long as there is a relation with major accident hazards in industrial settings. For example, if research primarily with an occupational safety perspective aims to prevent an accident sequence which could also lead to off-site consequences, then it is included in the scope.

Most projects funded within this joint call will be relatively small (2 to 4 partners, duration between 12 and 24 months, with budgets typically between 20 and 150 k€ per project partner). The call aims to fund mainly **applied research** carried out in universities and research institutes, though proposals from industry may also be eligible if they contain a significant research component. **Interdisciplinary research** is encouraged. Cooperation and joint activities between different consortia funded within the call will be encouraged. Research proposals which adopt a comparative approach (analyzing similarities and differences between different European countries, between different industry sectors, between large and small organizations, etc.) are encouraged.

General remarks

- The research teams within a consortium should include investigators of complementary scientific disciplines and research areas necessary to address the proposed research aims.
- Given the applied nature of the topics, the participation of **stakeholders** within the project (either as subjects of investigation, or partners contributing to the work) is encouraged.
- Proposals should contain novel, ambitious aims and ideas, combined with well-structured work plans. The scientific methodology should be described in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to assess its quality. Proposals should include references to the current state of the art (scientific/technical) and explain the additional anticipated benefit from the proposed work. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that funding will not be provided for tasks such as literature reviews or state of practice reviews.

3. Call topic

Call title: Industrial safety in the context of pandemics and exponential change

The 2021 fast-track call comprises two topics:

- Topic 1: Lessons learned from Covid-19 and capacity building for resilient response
- Topic 2: Nanostructured materials in personal protective equipment and filtration devices

The topics are described below.

Topic 1: Lessons learned from Covid-19 and capacity building for resilient response

The past year has seen vast changes triggered by Covid-19, affecting our ways of working and of interacting with others, threatening the viability of certain activities, and perhaps modifying the weight attributed to health and safety considerations when compared with other values that are important to society.

While the disruptions caused by the 2019-2020 pandemic will hopefully become much weaker over time, many commentators anticipate a future in which change (technological, social, climatic) is increasingly present and fast-paced. The activities we undertake to produce safety and those we put in place to identify and defend ourselves from threats will need to adapt to this dynamic environment; our resilience will be tested.

This call aims to identify:

- **Lessons to be learned** from the Covid-19 crisis, including problems faced by different organisations and industry sectors, anomalies, near misses and accidents related to effects of the pandemic, as well as success stories. The lessons may concern operational, management and regulatory levels and both precautionary and response activities.
- **Innovative methods and methodologies**, tools, concepts and practices that can help develop resilience and adaptive capacity at a work group, organisational or societal level.

Questions covered include:

- How to develop resilience in companies and societies? Are existing risk management approaches too static? Is the dominant safety paradigm excessively focused on compliance? Are safety authorities willing to move to a model in which anticipation plays a reduced role?
- How to improve safety by building back better?
- What opportunities and threats are posed by the development of digitalisation?
- How to improve supply chain management and provide novel decision-support tools that help manage disruptions?
- In a context of bankruptcies and downsizing, will company safety departments need to adopt “low cost” or frugal safety management strategies, and how will they be perceived by regulators, consumers and other stakeholders?
- How do operating companies and regulators manage risk-risk trade-offs (for example safety/health, safety/production, long-term environmental impact/short-term health impacts)?

These issues can affect industry (operational staff, managers), safety authorities, first responders, and other stakeholders concerned by the safety of high-hazard activities.

Topic 2: Nanostructured materials in personal protective equipment and filtration devices

Nanostructured materials are seeing increased use in personal protective equipment (PPE), in particular for the control of biological hazards. They are also used in filtration devices that have taken on increased importance given new airborne viruses. However, many questions remain concerning their effectiveness, possible risks for users and concerning their impact on the environment.

Questions covered include:

- What is the effectiveness of such engineering nanoparticles and nanostructured materials in PPE?
- Are there any risks for workers and their employers when using such PPE?
- What guidelines can be developed concerning the correct use, cleaning and reuse of filtration devices for use in workplaces, schools and public transport? What potential applications for virus surveillance (biological instrumentation, etc.)?
- How can the risk assessment be managed, at all phases of the product lifecycle (manufacturing, use in industrial or clinical applications, recycling and disposal)?
- What is the long-time performance efficiency of nanomaterial filtration compared to traditional filtration materials in workplaces (e.g. offices)?
- What is the capability of nanomaterial filtration to inhibit microbial growth compared with traditional filtration materials (also in abnormal conditions with significant moisture)?
- How can the safety of air purifiers and filtration devices be managed, like attachment of biological material in nanomaterial filtration and compactness of air purifiers and ventilation channels to indoor air?
- What are the needs for regulation when increasing the use of nanostructured materials in PPE and how to address them?
- What is the behaviour of such PPE in extreme conditions (cold/hot)?
- Can nanostructured materials be used to develop reusable and/or self-cleaning PPE and how to address them in workplace risk assessment?

Research types: The call aims to fund primarily applied research and development projects. Given the nature of research questions concerning safety, multi-disciplinary projects are particularly encouraged. The participation of industrial partners as well as practitioners such as first responders would be appreciated, especially for case studies or pilot cases that will help to demonstrate the feasibility of the envisaged solutions.

4. Funding rules

Funding organizations participating in the joint call will provide funding for a maximum of two years for transnational, collaborative projects, according to the conditions described in Annex 1.

The eligibility rules and funding principles will follow the regulations of the national/regional funding organization(s) to which the application for funding is addressed. Final funding decisions will be made by the national or regional funding agencies and research institutes. The scientific evaluation process will be made at a European level by a panel of independent experts.

Funding will be provided through direct contracts or similar arrangements between participating SAF€RA funding organizations and the selected research teams. This means that each organization receiving funding is subject to the rules and regulations of their respective national/regional funding organization. Note that eligible costs and funding rates vary according to the national/regional funding organization (see Annex 1 for details).

5. Eligibility criteria

Eligible consortium structure. In order to foster transnational collaboration, projects funded within this joint call will involve the collaboration of at least **two research teams in two eligible countries**. All EU member states plus the Republic of Serbia and the United Kingdom are eligible countries; please see Annex 1 for details of the funding available for organizations in each country.

Furthermore, additional consortium partners, not eligible for SAF€RA funding, may participate in a project on the basis of self-financing. Such partners should state the source of funding for their contribution to the proposal and the conditions under which their funding will be available.

Eligible organizations. The funding scheme targets institutional collaboration: private individuals may not apply independently. Proposals are primarily expected from research teams from universities or public research/expertise organizations. However, some funding organizations participating in the present call can also fund researchers from industry (SMEs or large firms) or from NGOs¹ (see Annex 1 for details).

Other comments:

- Most funding organizations are only able to fund research undertaken within their country or region. Check Annex 1 for details.
- Consortia may not request all their funding from the same SAF€RA funding organization.
- The **duration of funding** requested should be compatible with that supported by the funding organization(s) requested during application. All projects will concern durations between 12 and 24 months. The funding durations requested from each funding organization may be different (but should be clearly specified in the response form).
- The **expected funding per project partner** is typically in a range between 20 k€ and 150 k€

¹ NGO: Non-governmental organization.

(check Annex 1 for available budgets and acceptable project size for each funding organization).

- Some funding organizations are able to provide funding only if applicants are able to provide **co-funding** from industry or from another research funding organization. Check Annex 1 for details.
- The roles of each partner within the consortium should clearly add value to the objectives of the proposed project.

The list of funding organizations participating in the call is provided in Annex 1.

6. Application procedure

The fast-track joint call will use a **single-stage application process**, according to the schedule outlined below.

Action	Date
Joint call is launched	December 8 th 2020
Deadline for submission of proposals	30 th March 2021
National funding decisions transmitted to applicants	End of May 2021
Contracts established, projects start	June to September 2021

Organizations submitting a project are invited to use the proposal form (maximum of 15 pages excluding annexes, in English) available on the call website. Applications must be made by email to applications@safera.eu, before the deadline of March 30th 2021 at 16:00 CET. Applicants will receive a confirmation email within one working day. Applications should not be sent directly to the participating national/regional funding organizations.

Project coordinator. Researchers submitting a proposal must designate a project coordinator, who will lead the consortium through the application procedure and is fully responsible for the overall project coordination. All communication with the Call Secretariat will be through the project coordinator, who should disseminate information to all parties to the proposal.

Confidentiality. Proposals and any information relating to them shall be handled in confidence, and only be made accessible to the organizations involved in the funding and the experts involved in the evaluation process. Proposals shall not be used for any purpose other than the evaluation of the applications, making funding decisions and monitoring of the project.

Projects selected for funding shall have a summary of their project published on the SAFERA website, and all relevant project deliverables will be disseminated by SAFERA, as a complement to dissemination activities undertaken by the projects.

7. Call management

Two boards, the Call Steering Committee and the Evaluation Panel, will manage the evaluation process of the joint call with the support of the Call Secretariat. The process includes the evaluation of the proposals and the final selection and award of research funding.

The **Evaluation Panel** is a panel of internationally recognized scientific experts within the disciplines identified as being relevant for the call topic, responsible for the evaluation of submitted proposals. Evaluation Panel members will not submit or participate in proposals within the call, and will accept a confidentiality agreement. The work of the Evaluation Panel will be organized so as to avoid conflicts of interest.

The **Call Steering Committee** is composed of a representative from each SAFERA funding organization participating in the joint call. All decisions concerning the call procedures will be made by the Call Steering Committee. It will supervise the progress of the call and the evaluation of proposals. The Call Steering Committee will make funding recommendations to the national/regional funding organizations regarding the proposals to be funded, based on the final ranking list provided by the Evaluation Panel. It will accompany the entire lifespan of the Call, evaluate the performance of the projects and resolve potential disagreements which may arise during the lifetime of the projects.

8. Evaluation process

A centralized evaluation of the proposals will be performed by the Evaluation Panel and the Call Steering Committee. Based on the result of the evaluation, projects will be recommended (or not) for funding by the organizations concerned. Note that the national/regional organizations will make the final funding decisions.

The **evaluation criteria** are:

- Compatibility with the call topics
- Scientific or technological excellence
- Expected outcomes (scientific & operational)
- Project implementation

These criteria and the associated weightings are described in more detail in the *Guidelines for evaluators* document, which applicants are free to consult on the SAFERA call website.

Each proposal will be allocated to at least two external reviewers and one Evaluation Panel member with expertise relevant to the application. Based on the proposals' ranking established by the Evaluation Panel and on available funding, the Call Steering Committee will recommend the projects to be funded to the national/regional funding organizations.

Only proposals judged to be of high quality will be funded. If the number of proposals considered to have high quality, as judged by the Evaluation Panel, corresponds to a total requested funding which is smaller than the available budget, only part of the funds will be used. Projects not evaluated as being of high quality by the Evaluation Panel will not be funded in the context of this

SAF€RA joint call.

For each proposal, the Call Steering Committee will communicate the final decisions and the evaluation report to the project coordinator.

9. Common SAF€RA activities

Reporting. The coordinators of all funded projects must submit an interim and a final (within three months of the end of the project) scientific progress project report to the Call Secretariat. All reports must be in English and use a common report form that will be provided. The research partners are jointly responsible for the delivery of the reports, and the Call Secretariat will only accept reports delivered on behalf of the consortium, via the project coordinator.

In addition, each project partner will be responsible for the necessary reporting to their funding organization according to national/regional rules in order to obtain and maintain funding during the lifetime of their portion of the project.

Project review. As a complement to the national/regional project review process, the transnational cooperation aspects will be monitored at a SAF€RA level. The project coordinator is responsible for providing concise reporting according to the requirements (publishable summary at project start, interim concise reporting and final reporting, participation in questionnaires). Any substantial change in an ongoing project must be reported promptly to the involved funding organizations. The project partners should be aware that changes might have effects on funding.

Progress seminars. Funded research projects will be required to participate once a year in a seminar organized by SAF€RA partners. The seminars will be organized so as to facilitate interaction between researchers from different projects and to disseminate research results to interested parties. Funding for travel of a project representative to the seminars (which will be organized in a location in Europe or as an online event and last a full working day) should be included in proposal budgets.

Dissemination. Researchers funded within the context of this call will be required to acknowledge the support of SAF€RA and the specific funding organization in their publications, exhibitions, lectures and press information concerning results of SAF€RA-funded projects. In addition, electronic copies of all relevant publications and deliverables must be sent to the Call Secretariat.

A public database of projects funded within SAF€RA and the results of the research is maintained by the SAF€RA funding organizations. All research projects funded within this call must submit all relevant data created during the lifetime of the project to this database.

10. Support

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) are listed on the SAF€RA joint call website. In addition, all funding organizations participating in the call will provide assistance to project proposers in case of questions. General inquiries concerning the call should be addressed to the Call Secretariat, at call-secretariat@safera.eu.

Annex 1 – Specific requirements of the participating funding organizations

The following tables provide information on the available budgets, funding durations and other requirements of each participating funding organization. **Applicants must contact the national/regional funding organization for further information on eligibility.**

Concerning funding duration and available funding per applicant: applicants may request funding for a task included within a larger project, whose duration is less than the total project duration. In such cases, please identify clearly the scope of the larger project in which your requested funding is included, and specify precisely the scope of the task for which funding is requested.

Austria

Organization	Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)
Contact persons	Alexandra Kuhn (alexandra.kuhn@ffg.at)
Eligible applicants	All legal entities in Austria are eligible for funding.
Budget	300 k€ for projects addressing topic 2.
Funding duration	Between 12 and 24 months
Other requirements	<p>Consortia must include at least one company based in Austria. (For clarity, this means that a consortium consisting of one research organization outside Austria, funded by another SAFERA member, and one Austrian company, funded by FFG, is possible.)</p> <p>Individual enterprises must account for a maximum of 70% of the eligible project costs (shares of affiliated companies count as one enterprise).</p> <p>Cooperation between a company and one or more research institutes: research institutes must account for at least 10% of the eligible costs.</p> <p>Obligation to submit in parallel to the FFG eCall system: https://ecall.ffg.at. Applicants must submit a specific annex, which must be written in English or German.</p>

Czech Republic

Organization	Czech Occupational Safety Research Institute (VÚBP)
Contact persons	Pavel Danihelka < danihelka@vubp-praha.cz >
Budget	Equivalent of 200k€ in person-months for VÚBP personnel, for projects addressing topic 1 and community resilience issues.
Funding duration	Between 12 and 24 months

Finland

Organization	Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) – Finland
Contact persons	Carita Aschan < carita.aschan@ttl.fi >
Budget	200k€ in person-months for FIOH personnel for projects addressing topics 1 and 2.
Funding duration	Between 12 and 24 months
Other requirements	Industrial cooperation in projects is required. Co-funding is required for projects addressing topic 1.

Organization	Finnish Work Environment Fund (FWEF) - Finland
Contact persons	Kenneth Johansson < kenneth.johansson@tsr.fi >
Budget	300k€ for projects addressing topic 1.
Funding duration	Between 12 and 24 months
Other requirements	Co-funding and industrial cooperation are required. Projects will follow a “fast-track” process within the standard FWEF application procedure.

Germany

Organization	Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung und prüfung (BAM) – Germany
Contact persons	Claudia Eggert < claudia.eggert@bam.de >
Budget	Person-month funding for a PhD candidate based in BAM (24 person-months), for a project addressing topic 2.
Funding duration	24 months

Italy

Organization	Italian Workers' Compensation Authority (INAIL) – Italy
Contact persons	Paolo Bragatto < p.bragatto@inail.it >
Eligible applicants	Italian universities or recognized Italian Research Institutes.
Budget	100 k€ (50 k€ per year) for projects addressing topic 1.
Funding duration	24 months
Other requirements	Co-funding covering at least 40% of the total cost is required.

Republic of Serbia

Organization	Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD)
Contact persons	Milica Tasevska <milica.g.tasevska@mpn.gov.rs>
Eligible applicants	Researchers working for a research organization based in Serbia are eligible.
Budget	40 k€ (maximum of 20 k€ per year) for projects addressing either topic 1 or topic 2.
Funding duration	12-24 months
Other requirements	Co-funding from companies may be required. Proposals selected for funding will be required later to submit their application in Serbian language.

Spain – Basque country

Organization	Instituto Vasco de Seguridad y Salud Laborales (OSALAN) – Basque country
Contact persons	M ^a Nieves de la Peña, tel. +34 944032145, e-mail: mn-pena@euskadi.eus
Eligible applicants	All legal or physical entities in the Basque Country are eligible for funding, as long as they have not been found guilty in legal cases related to occupational health and safety within the last five years, and have no debts due to the public treasury or the social security system. The organization must comply with occupational risk regulation.
Budget	100 k€ (50k€ per year) for projects addressing topic 1. Funding per project per year between 10 and 50k€.
Funding duration	12-24 months
Other requirements	In addition to compatibility with the call topic, projects must have some relation to occupational health and safety. Projects which are accepted for funding will need to prepare a summary of their proposal in Basque language or Spanish, including the title of the project, the objectives, the workplan, methodology and a detailed budget.