

Research Program in Environmental Toxicology and Ecotoxicology

CALL FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS 2024

Solutions for better access to clean water in a changing climate

Download proposal template and send your
proposal to contact@fondationevertéa.org between
February and June 2024 (deadline June 30th) in an email
entitled
“RT2E2024 – Water & Related Issues”

The evertéa Foundation

The evertéa Foundation (formerly the Rovaltain Foundation), a Foundation for Scientific Cooperation in Environmental Toxicology and Ecotoxicology research, was created in July 2013 by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Its purpose is to support research and training in Health & Environment and to promote the dissemination of knowledge in this field.

To achieve this goal, the evertéa Foundation finances research projects through a framework validated by the Foundation's International Scientific Advisory Board: the Research Program in Environmental Toxicology and Ecotoxicology (RT2E).

Water resources represent a major challenge of the future. In addition to human activities, e.g. industrial activity, agriculture, climate change will affect not only water resources, but also the water quality and the transfer of contaminants. Indeed, a global increase in temperature of at least 2.5°C is expected by 2050. This rise in temperature will affect many aspects of our aquatic environment, including drying up lakes and rivers, extreme pulse events like intense rainfalls and floods, affecting the fate, mobility and toxicity of contaminants and finally modifying water quality parameters.

In this context, the aim of the RT2E 2024 call is to **encourage the development of innovative research projects around water-related issues, e.g. water quality (including contamination), quantity, water cycle disbalances.**

This Call for Proposals issued by the evertéa Foundation will finance up to three projects for a period of two-years with a maximum budget of 20K euros per project.

This call targets projects that take into account the consequences of climate change and address one or more of the following items:

- Study of water decontamination, remediation, potabilization in order to reduce pollution in water at chemical and biological levels for a better access to clean tap water.
- Study of the impacts of organic, inorganic and microbial contaminants as well as salts affecting water quality.
- Study of the effects of changes in water quality and physicochemical parameters (temperature, etc.) on aquatic ecosystems.

In this context, examples of projects that would be particularly appreciated include:

- Proposals integrating the exposome concept, including the socio-exposome.
- Proposals targeting the geochemical cycle of contaminants.
- Proposals addressing a water-soil-air continuum.
- Proposals dealing with modelling, artificial intelligence, or machine learning.
- Application of digital platforms in the assessment of anthropogenic contributions to climate change leading to water scarcity.

N.B. The call for projects mainly focuses on freshwater but may also include estuarine environments. The call is open to ecotoxicological, toxicological, epidemiological, ecological or social sciences research projects. Projects including solutions, risk assessment, prediction and modelling tools would be particularly welcome.

Characteristics of the proposals

Research projects proposed under the RT2E program must be innovative. Projects such as pilot studies are encouraged. Proposals must have the potential to contribute to the development of future research projects through co-financing or a clearly demonstrated leveraging effect.

Research projects may be led by a single team or involve several partner teams. Public/private/industry/voluntary sector collaborations are welcome but only a French public team can receive funding as project leader.

Review of project proposals

The main steps of the selection procedure are as follows:

- The call for proposals is open from February 20th 2024; proposals will be accepted until June 30th, 2024.
- Examination of the eligibility of project proposals by the evertéa Foundation according to the criteria presented below.
- Peer review by external experts selected by the evertéa Foundation (July 2024 - Oct. 2024).
- Evaluation of project proposals by the International Scientific Council (SC) of the evertéa Foundation, based on the external reviews (Nov. 2024).
- Publication of the list of projects selected for funding (Dec. 2024).
- Finalisation of the scientific, financial, and administrative process for the selected projects (2025).

Eligibility of proposals and commitment of the project leader

The evertéa Foundation's examination of the eligibility of project proposals will be based on the criteria set below:

- The call for research projects is open to French research teams from higher education and research institutions, research organisations and public institutions with a research mission. National or international partners are welcome. Partners of another nature are also allowed, provided that they bring clearly established added value in the project. The call is also open to companies in the social and solidarity economy, as partners.
- The funds allocated to the project will be paid to the project leader; he/she will manage the project's funds for the entire consortium and will compile and submit the scientific and financial report at the end of the project.
- The project leader must not be a member of the evertéa Foundation (board of directors, scientific council, etc).
- The duration of the project, including the preparation and submission of the final report, must not exceed 24 months.
- The financial support provided by the evertéa Foundation will not exceed 20,000 euros.

- The project leader must participate in the promotion and demonstration activities organised by the evertéa Foundation during the project period and during the 12 months following its closure (maximum 2 solicitations).
- Proposals and reports must be written in English.

Evaluation of proposals

Projects submitted under the RT2E framework are evaluated by external experts identified by the evertéa Foundation as well as by the Scientific Council. The evaluation is carried out based on the criteria set below:

- Scientific quality of the project, in particular its innovative nature and the integration of different disciplinary fields.
- Feasibility and justification of methodological choices. In particular, the exposure concentrations, if applicable, must be justified, as well as other exposure parameters, e.g. time of exposure, temperature, route of exposure, models used to evaluate exposure and effects. Furthermore, environmentally realistic exposure scenarios will be prioritized. Similarly, for climate change aspects, the temperature/pH of exposure must be consistent with an IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) scenario.
- Ability of the consortium to carry out the proposed project according to the proposed schedule will be evaluated. The CV of the principal investigator, included in the proposal template, should demonstrate how their past experience fits with the proposed project. The project must include a paragraph on the relevance of the consortium (½ page).
- The quality and expertise of the team in terms of its relevance to the objectives established in the project.
- The adequacy of the financial demand in relation to the scope of the project.
- The potential leverage effect of the project for starting new collaborative research and implementation activities.

Based on the assessments provided by the external reviewers and the Scientific Council, a ranking of the projects will be established and submitted to the Board of Directors of the Foundation.

Ethics - animal experimentation

Projects requiring the use of animal testing within the framework of European Directive 2010/63/EU must demonstrate how they abide by the relevant regulations in force at the national level, particularly in terms of obtaining experiment authorisations. The organisation responsible for approving these experiments should be clearly indicated in the project proposal. Where the experimental project has already been granted approval by the competent authorities, the authorisation number must also be indicated in the proposal.

Funding rules

The financial support granted to the projects will not exceed 20,000 euros. Eligible expenses are those strictly necessary for the implementation of the project. They include:

- Staff costs, namely the wages of fixed-term contracts, vacations, social charges, internship bonuses and payroll taxes included.
- Operating expenses including laboratory costs (purchase of products or consumables, access to equipment), publication costs, travel expenses for permanent or temporary staff assigned to the project (in particular, participation in promotional events organised by the Foundation), conference registration fees related to the project.
- Subcontracting, the cost of which must remain less than 30% of the total amount of the grant, unless the project leader is able to justify an exception.

NB: If the project is co-funded, (1) the nature and amount of co-financing must be specified and (2) applicants have to explain what would happen if they do not receive the co-funding, i.e. whether the project will still be realized and the planned outcome of the proposal achieved. Finally, if the project completion depends on other parameters besides the evertéa Foundation funding, these constraints must be specified in the text and in the budget template.