



Towards more effective and accessible European Partnerships in Health Research

BioMed Alliance response to the Call for Evidence on Horizon Europe - European Partnerships to be implemented as joint undertakings

Introduction

The BioMed Alliance welcomes the European Commission's initiative to simplify and strengthen the framework for institutionalised European Partnerships in research and innovation through the proposed Single Basic Act for Joint Undertakings¹. This reform is an important opportunity in the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034) to improve how EU research and innovation investments contribute to Europe's competitiveness and strategic priorities across key sectors, including health.

In practice, however, public-private partnerships under Horizon Europe² have become complex and difficult to navigate for healthcare professionals and researchers, who both contribute to and benefit from these initiatives. This reduces accessibility and limits participation, which in turn weakens the translation of research results into clinical practice and real-world deployment. BioMed Alliance highlights structural barriers to participation in institutionalised European Partnerships and calls for clearer governance, improved accessibility, and stronger stakeholder engagement to improve the impact of EU research and innovation in healthcare.

Value of public-private cooperation in health

Public-private cooperation in health plays a catalytic role in European research and innovation by combining complementary expertise from industry, academia, healthcare professionals, and patients to advance medical innovation and improve healthcare delivery.

The Innovative Health Initiative (IHI)³ is one of the most prominent European examples of this model. It combines EU funding under Horizon Europe with contributions from industry partners to support collaborative health research across Europe. Within such frameworks, healthcare professionals and academic researchers benefit directly from access to funding opportunities, research infrastructure, and cross-border collaboration networks, which can strengthen both research capacity and clinical relevance.

Medical societies, particularly at European level, can further enhance this ecosystem by connecting healthcare professionals across countries and disciplines, supporting coordinated engagement in research activities, and facilitating the dissemination and uptake of results into clinical practice.

Overall, public-private cooperation in health enables:

- shared expertise between industry, academia, healthcare professionals, and patients
- development of new treatments, diagnostics, protocols, drugs, and devices
- improved translation of research outcomes into clinical and healthcare practice

¹ [Horizon Europe – European Partnerships to be implemented as joint undertakings](#)

² [Horizon Europe the EU's funding programme for research and innovation](#)

³ [Open calls | IHI Innovative Health Initiative](#)



Biomedical Alliance in Europe

At the same time, experience from healthcare professionals and researchers shows that participation in these initiatives remains challenging. Key barriers relate to administrative complexity, unclear governance arrangements, and limited clarity on roles and expectations ([see table below](#)). Addressing these barriers is essential not only to improve inclusiveness, but also to maximise the impact of EU investment across the innovation-to-deployment chain and to strengthen Europe's competitiveness in health innovation.

Evidence from practice: barriers and recommendations to participation in public-private partnerships

This section presents key barriers to participation in public-private partnerships, together with corresponding recommendations. These insights were drawn from a BioMed Alliance workshop on public-private cooperation in health (*'Demystifying public-private cooperation in health: how can we facilitate healthcare professional and researcher involvement?'*⁴), involving healthcare professionals, researchers, and industry stakeholders within the IHI ecosystem. It provides relevant evidence from practice for the design of future institutionalised European Partnerships, particularly in relation to accessibility, governance clarity, and stakeholder participation.

Barriers	Recommendations
1. Lack of clarity on the potential role of academic medical societies, which play a role in research, networking and dissemination, but also contribute to the development of diagnostic and treatment guidelines and post-graduate education while respecting conflict of interest. On the other hand, as non-for-profit organisations, medical societies sometimes have limited (in-house) resources and rely heavily on volunteers, who also have obligations towards their employers (hospitals and/or universities) and research funding bodies.	• Develop a "Charter for PPPs" with clear expectations regarding the role of societies, funders and industry. • Balance (sub)specialty/local initiatives with collective/society-level projects • Promote the added value of medical societies in public-private partnerships.
2. Issues around the communication between different partners, including unclear roles and expectations, intellectual property protection and difficulties in managing conflicts of interest.	• Develop an application guide for medical societies, including best practise sharing from successful earlier IMI/IHI projects. • Create a guide for all stakeholders of conflict-of-interest rules. • Encourage academic recognition of investment in collective/transversal-level initiatives, both locally and within medical societies. • Identify a principal investigator from academia for each project.

⁴ [Workshop report: Demystifying public-private cooperation in health: how can we facilitate healthcare professional and researcher involvement? - Biomedical Alliance in Europe](#)



Biomedical Alliance in Europe

3. Problems related to bureaucracy and regulatory complexity, including variable interpretation of rules and administrative complexity in application and reporting processes.

- Improve data management practices through shared learning and templates.
- Raise awareness of regulatory complexity and barriers among policy makers.
- Ensure awareness of the need to address sustainability issues from project inception.

Conclusion

Public-private cooperation in health remains a key driver of research and innovation, enabling collaboration between industry, healthcare professionals, researchers, and patients to develop and implement new medical solutions. However, as highlighted in this contribution, several structural barriers continue to limit participation and reduce the full potential of these partnerships.

Addressing these challenges through clearer governance, improved accessibility, and stronger stakeholder engagement will be essential to ensure that institutionalised European Partnerships under Horizon Europe and future EU frameworks are more inclusive, effective, and better able to translate research into healthcare outcomes. BioMed Alliance stands ready to contribute further to this process.