

Call for services

Provision of PPIE consultancy service of the READI project

Objectives of the procurement procedure	To select two consultants to support Penta Foundation ETS in key activities of the project READI related to patient and public involvement & engagement (PPIE) and support in development of educational/communication materials with a particular focus on pediatric infectious diseases and infections in pregnancy and targeting the general public.
Project	<p>READI - Research in Europe and Diversity Inclusion</p> <p>READI's main objective is to enhance the representativeness of underserved populations in clinical studies by fostering a more cohesive and integrated clinical study ecosystem, with the ambition of achieving full inclusion by placing the patient at the center.</p> <p>This project is supported by the Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking (IHI JU) under grant agreement No 101166227. The JU receives support from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme and COCIR, EFPIA, EuropaBio, MedTech Europe, Vaccines Europe, and Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and Breakthrough T1D. This project is also supported by UKRI (UK Research and Innovation).</p>
Expected starting date	5th May 2025
Expected duration of the collaboration	12 months, with potential for extension

Background

Fondazione Penta ETS (hereon **Penta**) coordinates, promotes and sponsors research and activities in paediatric infectious diseases. To date, Penta has hosted 42 studies and taken part in 33 European Union (EU)-funded projects.

Penta is the Partner of the project **READI - Research in Europe and Diversity Inclusion** (<https://ihi-readi.org>).

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The Penta Foundation, as one of the READI project partners, is launching this call for consultancy services to support key project activities related to patient and public involvement & engagement (PPIE) and the development of educational and communication materials with a particular focus on pediatric infectious diseases and infections in pregnancy, targeting the general public.

Description of the service

In collaboration with the Network, Education & Training (NET) Team of Penta, the consultant(s) will play a crucial role in the different project work packages (WPs).

The READI **WP4 - Training activities** focuses on identifying and addressing gaps in training resources for various stakeholders involved in clinical studies, particularly in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented and underserved patient populations. A comprehensive mapping of existing training materials will be conducted, followed by a gap analysis to identify areas needing improvement. Based on these findings, tailored training programmes will be developed for key stakeholder groups, including healthcare providers, research teams, patient advocates, industry representatives, and the general public. The consultant(s) will support Penta activities related to patient and public involvement & engagement, ensuring that training materials are adapted to their needs and that they are effectively included in the learning ecosystem.

The READI **WP6 – Community Connectivity** aims to strengthen stakeholder connections and build community clusters that help overcome barriers to participation in clinical research for underrepresented and underserved populations. These clusters will bring together diverse stakeholders, such as patient organizations, community groups, and social and civil services, to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in clinical research. A key focus is on fostering trust and

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addressing factors such as cultural backgrounds, geographic accessibility, and health disparities. The consultant(s) will support Penta activities 1) to establish and strengthen collaborative networks composed of diverse stakeholders, such as patient organizations, community organizations, ethnic/cultural associations, social and civil services, and healthcare institutions; 2) to promote inclusivity of US/UR populations by creating community clusters that connect different stakeholders; 3) to use cluster connectivity to increase trust and awareness of clinical research within US/UR populations.

The READI **WP9 focuses on stakeholder engagement, communication, and dissemination to maximize the impact and sustainability of the READI project.** Activities include mapping diverse stakeholder needs, facilitating engagement with relevant organizations, and aligning with global clinical study initiatives. The work package also seeks to drive awareness, encourage adoption of project outcomes, and ensure long-term sustainability through strategic collaborations. The consultant(s) will support patient and public involvement & engagement efforts of Penta, helping to promote visibility, inclusivity, and accessibility of READI initiatives to key non-healthcare stakeholders.

The consultant(s) will also support related activities of other Work Packages linked to public involvement & engagement, and research collaboration in pediatric infectious diseases and maternal infections.

Requirements of the candidates

The ideal consultant should have:

- **Extensive expertise in patient and public involvement & engagement** within research collaboration projects, particularly in EU-funded initiatives like READI.
- **Experience in Citizen Science initiatives**, with a proven ability to integrate public and patient perspectives into research.
- **Strong background in pediatric infectious diseases and infections in pregnancy**, particularly in the context of public engagement and inclusion in clinical research.
- **Demonstrated ability to develop training programs and educational resources** tailored to patients, patient advocates, and the general public.
- **Experience working with digital platforms**, virtual learning environments, and digital literacy training, ensuring accessibility for underserved and underrepresented populations.
- **Understanding of barriers to participation in clinical research** among underserved and underrepresented (UR/US) populations and strategies to improve trust, recruitment, and retention.
- **Proven ability to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement**, including collaboration with patient advocacy groups, community organizations, and public health initiatives.
- **Excellent communication and collaboration skills**, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholders, including patients, community representatives, and policymakers.



- **Training and Capacity Building:** The consultant should have experience in developing and/or implementing training programs, preferably in the field of public health. They should be able to identify training needs, develop bespoke training materials, and coordinate training programs.
- **Survey Development and Data Analysis:** The consultant should have skills in developing surveys and analyzing the collected data. Data analysis is a plus.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** The consultant should have excellent collaboration and communication skills. They will need to work with consortium experts, site team leads, and focal country leads, requiring clear and effective communication.
- **Reporting Capacity:** The consultant should have strong reporting skills, with the ability to prepare clear, concise, and comprehensive reports for stakeholders. They should be able to track project progress, analyze data, and communicate findings in an organized manner.
- **Cultural and Local Expertise:** the consultant should have an understanding of the healthcare systems, and the cultural, social, and political context in different countries.
- **Language Proficiency:** Proficiency in English is a must.

Duration and Location

- **Start Date:** 5th May 2025 (expected)
- **Duration:** 12 months, with potential for extension
- **Location:** Remote work

Budget and Remuneration

The candidates are expected to contribute to the project tasks for a variable period ranging from **4 to 8 days per month (1 day = 8 hours)**, depending on the nature of the activities, workload, and the status of milestone and deliverable completion. The total number of days the candidates may dedicate to the project during the contractual period shall not exceed **96 days**.

Each candidate must specify their **daily cost rate** in their national currency to allow Penta to evaluate the most competitive offer, ensuring both **best value for money** and **compliance with the call for tender**.

Submission of application, evaluation and selection of consultants

Evaluation is done by Fondazione Penta ETS. The application of the candidate should be submitted via email to Penta's NET Team at network@pentafoundation.org by **24th March 2025, 23:59 CET**. The email subject line should read **Call for READI PPIE Services**.

The application, written in English, should include:

- **Cover letter and the CV.** These documents must highlight the candidate's unique skills and relevant past work related to the topic of this call. Additionally, they should demonstrate the outlined requirements through practical examples of the candidate's previous work.
- The **financial proposal** specifying expected daily rate.
- **Methodology** outlining how the candidate plans to achieve the objectives of WP4, WP6, WP9, and related work packages as described above

Following the evaluation of this document, shortlisted candidates will be invited for an online interview as the next step in the selection process.

Applications must be submitted in accordance with instructions provided in this document no later than the date stated in the table below.

Step	Date
Call notice issue	5 th March 2025
Deadline for questions from candidates	17 th March 2025
Deadline for submission of applications	24th March 2025
Interviews	From 31 st March to 11 th April 2025
Result of the selection	By 16 th April 2025
Expected starting date of the consultancy	5th May 2025

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria shown in the table below will be applied for evaluating proposals received.

Evaluation Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Relevant Experience and Qualifications	0 to 5	50%
Financial proposal (<i>best value for money</i>)	0 to 5	40%
Proposed Methodology and Approach	0 to 5	10 %

Score	Description
0	No answer or totally irrelevant response
1	A very poor answer, indicating a proposal that fails to meet the very basic needs and requirements of Penta, or requires an unacceptable compromise
2	A poor answer, indicating a proposal that fails to meet some of Penta's basic needs and requirements, and which demonstrates significant weaknesses or requires major compromises from Penta.
3	A satisfactory answer, indicating a proposal that meets Penta's basic needs and requirements, but which demonstrates tangible weaknesses or requires some minor compromises from Penta

4	A good answer, indicating a proposal that generally meets Penta’s needs and requirements, with only very minor weaknesses or issues
5	An excellent answer, indicating a proposal that fully meets Penta’s needs and requirements with no weaknesses or issues

Contract duration

Contract will start when both parties have signed the contract and will end after successful execution of all activities outlined above. The maximum duration of the contract shall not exceed the overall READI project duration.

Working Methodology

The selected Consultant(s) will work under the coordination of Penta, who is coordinating all activities in close collaboration with the project coordinator. Regular telephone conferences will be established across the project needed. Penta will request regular updates from the Consultant(s) about the status of the activities in order to follow up on its development and to contribute to regular reports to the project coordinator.

Conditions for this call

Penta reserves the right to withdraw this call at any time and may choose not to award a contract as a result of this process. In any event, Penta will not be liable for any costs incurred by candidates in the preparation or submission of the application, nor those which arise from potential interviews during the process.

Penta reserves the right to hold negotiations with the candidates. Successful candidates will be expected to enter into a formal contract with Penta.

Penta will treat all candidates’ responses as confidential during the procurement process. Penta may use any information within a candidates’ response to the call for any reasonable purpose connected with this call for services.

Privacy Notice

Pursuant to article 13 of the EU Regulation 2016/679 (“GDPR”) we inform you that personal data (“Data”) acquired in the context of this selection will be processed and stored with and without the use of electronic means, in compliance with the security measures provided by the GDPR, by the staff of the Foundation involved in the selection process for the purposes strictly related and instrumental to the management relations for the execution of the pre-contractual relationship. The provision of Data is aimed at the proposal of its application for the provision of the service of making a video production to promote the READI project. The provision of Data is not mandatory, however, the non-availability of the Data or their incomplete provision will make it impossible for the Foundation to proceed with the selection.

The legal basis for the processing is that provided for in Article 6(1)(b) of the GDPR ("processing is necessary for the performance of a contract to which the data subject is party or the



performance of pre-contractual measures taken at the request of the same"). In the context of this selection, Data will not be transferred to a third country or international organization.

The data subject has the right to request access to the Data concerning him/her, rectification and updating of the same, if incomplete or erroneous, and deletion if processed in violation of the law, as well as to obtain portability and restriction of processing, in the cases provided for by the GDPR. The data subject has also the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Authority. The Data will be kept for the period necessary to achieve the purpose of the processing.

- Data controller: Fondazione Penta ETS based in Corso Stati Uniti 4, Padua, Italy, legal@pentafoundation.org
- Contact details of the Data Protection Officer (DPO): dpo@pentafoundation.org

Additional Information

For any additional information related to this call, the contact persons and e-mail will be:

- Matteo Bason at matteo.bason@pentafoundation.org and
- Penta Network network@pentafoundation.org