

# Call for Proposal



DZIF recognizes the importance of start-up companies in the translational infection research ecosystem in Germany, as they play a key role in conducting the early high risk/high reward product development stages. Here, company formation, incl. licensing of intellectual property, as well as the creation of a development plan and business concept are essential steps on the way to obtaining external finance and funding.

To this end, we are launching a staged initiative that specifically supports company creation based on initial DZIF funding. The focus of this initiative is on indications with high and unmet medical need in the field of anti-infectives.

The special and unique feature of this new initiative is, that it provides a tailored all-round collaborative support during an initial evaluation phase which, if successful, leads to a targeted financial support by DZIF for company formation and further financing. The overall key goal is the development of marketable applications from the best ideas out of the DZIF institutions leading to company foundations.

## **What do we offer:**

- Phase 1 (6-12 months): Strategic support and mentoring towards generation of a business concept (incl. project evaluation and positioning, budget creation up to next milestones and value inflection points) and a respective development plan
- Initiation and support in investor discussions and life science pitch events
- Phase 2 (up to 12 months): Funding (as individually elaborated during the evaluation phase) in the range of approx. 500k€ to de-risk the project and enable future financing
- Support in setting up a company

Selected projects will be incubated under the guidance of a team of technology transfer experts, including PDU-TPMO, led by Dr. Holger Zimmermann as DZIF-sponsored industry expert.

During an incubation period, anticipated technology/scientific validation gaps will be identified. A business plan will be worked out, including definition of milestones, timelines, budget needs, and market potential in preparation for an investor roadshow. Funding will be made available to the member institution from which the company is founded, with the view to facilitate a seed finance round. Prerequisite for eligibility for the “DZIF Start-Up Fund” is an executed term sheet from a private investor/investment group to participate in a company seed investment round.

## **Timelines:**

- Submission Deadline: 30.11.2025
- Notification of selected teams: 31.12.2025
- Pitch event - final selection from shortlisted projects/teams: mid Feb 2026
- Phase 1 (incubation towards participation in business plan competitions and investor talks): Mar 2026 – Feb 2027
- Phase 2 (funding phase): 2027-2028 (as applicable)

**Requirements for application:**

- At least one applicant must be a DZIF PI
- Availability of a commercial asset and business idea (incl. e.g. a patent (application), relevant know-how or a compelling service concept)
- Availability of a team of co-founders, whereby two individuals will be expected to (partly) transfer to the company after successful incorporation
- Written commitment by the Tech Transfer Office of the member institution to license or transfer the Intellectual Property or asset

Applications are requested in the attached form. Please address your application to [startup@dzif.de](mailto:startup@dzif.de).

**The deadline for participation in this call for proposal is November 30, 2025.**