Call for Proposals:
Join the Biospecimen Sourcing Initiative (BSI) as a Technical Partner

Deadline extension notice:
Please note that the following deadlines have been extended:

- **Application submission deadline: 12 August 2026**
- **Notification of Intent deadline: 25 July 2026**
- **Deadline for submission of questions: 1 August 2026**

All deadlines throughout this document have been updated accordingly.

Summary

CEPI is pleased to announce a call for proposals (CfP) aimed at identifying and selecting technical partners for the Biospecimen Sourcing Initiative (BSI). This CfP seeks organisations willing to enter a long-term partnership with CEPI to enable rapid, ethical, and coordinated access to high-quality biospecimens during outbreaks and public health emergencies, as well as non-emergency times.

Why apply to become a BSI partner?

Successful applicants will:

- Join a **pre-qualified global partnership** mobilised rapidly during outbreaks.
- Gain **priority access to CEPI-funded service orders** for specimen collection, storage, logistics, or reference material development.
- Participate in **capacity strengthening**, implementation of shared SOPs, and harmonising quality systems.
- Increase visibility and connectivity across CEPI-wide networks.
- Contribute directly to **equitable access** for epidemic countermeasures.

Strategic context

The BSI is a core enabling component of **CEPI's 3.0 strategy**, which places strong emphasis on **speed, scale, equitable access, geographic diversification, and sustainability** across the end-to-end countermeasure ecosystem. By strengthening global readiness to ethically source, verify, and share biospecimens, the BSI directly supports CEPI's ambition to accelerate the development of vaccines and other biologic countermeasures for emerging and epidemic threats.

The BSI aims to reduce barriers to enable rapid sharing of novel biological materials among collaborating partners, and especially during times of outbreak. In line with **CEPI's 3.0 ecosystem approach**, existing systems—including national regulations, international standards, and established repository efforts—will **not be replaced or duplicated**. Instead, the BSI will operate as a **coordinating and enabling framework** for participants, strengthening interoperability (within the BSI and with external networks), shared operating practices, and collective learning across partners while respecting national ownership and existing mandates.

Objective

The objective of this CfP is to identify and pre-qualify organisations to form the initial cohort of BSI partners. **Selected partners will enter into a long-term collaboration framework with CEPI and may be mobilised through funded service orders when biospecimen needs arise.** Projects may entail biospecimen collection, the development of reference standards and antibodies, or similar supportive activities. Organisations of all sizes and capability levels are encouraged to apply, particularly those located in LMICs.

How to apply

To apply, please complete the application template linked on the CEPI CfP website as requested and submit the application via email by the deadline (see details 3.5). The deadline for submission of proposals is **12 August 2026, 23:59 GMT.** Applicants are invited to complete the notification of intent form linked here at the earliest opportunity and, where possible, no later than **25 July 2026**. Submission of this form is not mandatory; nonetheless, it would be greatly appreciated, as it will assist in planning and managing the application review process.

Questions may be submitted during the application process. Please note, the cut-off date for questions (to be submitted through this Support Form) is **1 August 2026.**

After submission, applications will be assessed for eligibility and capabilities by a panel of reviewers. CEPI will then conduct financial and compliance due diligence reviews for selected applicants, during which site assessment visits may be conducted.

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1 Introduction

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) is an international coalition of governments, academic, philanthropic, private, public, and intergovernmental institutions whose vision is to create a world in which epidemics and pandemics are no longer a threat to humanity. Our mission is to accelerate the development of vaccines and other biologic countermeasures against epidemic and pandemic threats so they can be accessible to all people in need. CEPI operates under the laws of Norway as a nonprofit international association and has offices in Oslo (HQ), London, and Washington, DC. More details about CEPI and our mission can be found on our website.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and its global disruption, CEPI launched the 100 Days Mission to dramatically accelerate vaccine availability in response to future pandemic threats. The goal is to have vaccines ready for initial authorisation and large-scale manufacturing within 100 days of identifying a pandemic pathogen, helping to rapidly contain emerging threats when combined with strong surveillance and nonpharmaceutical interventions.

To support its mission, CEPI is setting up the Biospecimen Sourcing Initiative (BSI), a global public health initiative in which partners voluntarily collaborate to facilitate the rapid development of reagents and protocols to address public health epidemics that may not be developed otherwise. The BSI's purpose is to preposition a vetted, consistent, and equitable access framework to rapidly source, verify, archive, and distribute biological material during the time of novel pathogen presentation (e.g., disease outbreak or epidemic) or non-emergency times. The BSI operates within a governance framework that establishes guiding principles, management structures, decision-making procedures, and mechanisms for partnership. Routine operations are managed by a dedicated team, with strategic input provided by a steering committee, a scientific advisory board, collaborating interest groups, and oversight from CEPI leadership. Values of the BSI include rapid response, transparency, accountability, and equitable access. The BSI will operate in a manner that is collaborative and complementary to other laboratory networks and systems internal or external to CEPI.

CEPI may update or supplement its policies and requirements applicable to BSI partners to align with or complement any internationally recognised pathogen access and benefit-sharing framework, including any Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) system adopted under the WHO Pandemic Agreement. BSI partners will be expected to operate in a manner consistent with these principles, including transparency, responsible sharing, and equitable distribution of benefits arising from the use of shared biospecimens. More information on the BSI can be found on the CEPI website.

2 Objective

The objective of this CfP is to identify and pre-qualify organisations to form a cohort of BSI partners. Selected partners will enter a long-term collaboration framework with CEPI and may be mobilised through funded service orders when biospecimen needs arise.

Through this partnership model, the BSI contributes to CEPI 3.0 priorities by strengthening global preparedness, enabling rapid response, supporting equitable access, supporting product development, and reinforcing geographically distributed capacity for biospecimen sourcing and use.

The CfP aims to provide opportunities to partners who bring strong contextual insight, local relevance, and commitment to CEPI's mission and the BSI's values. More specifically, the objective is to select BSI partners to cover three focus areas: collection partners, regional partners, and developers of reference standards and antibodies used to characterise and validate pandemic countermeasures and support product development. Collectively they are referred to as BSI partners or technical partners in this CfP.

Across all focus areas, CEPI particularly values partnerships that strengthen local and regional capacity, support sustainable participation of institutions in outbreak prone settings, and contribute to more equitable global access to biospecimens and resulting countermeasures, consistent with CEPI 3.0 priorities.

Focus Area 1: Collection Partners

The role of collection partners will be to develop protocols, seek ethical approvals, engage communities, and recruit and enroll participants, as well as to collect, process, store, and transport specimens. Collection partners are also responsible for appropriate handling, storing, disseminating, and managing related data. Collection partners are not required to have end-to-end biobanking capacity at the time of application and may operate independently or in coordination with a regional partner.

It is not necessary for applicants to this CfP to have all these capabilities at the time of submission.

Focus Area 2: Regional Partners

Regional partners will provide leadership to collection partners in their geographic region and coordinate with local collection sites. Based on their capabilities, regional partners may additionally serve as physical biorepositories and technical resources for collection partners, but applicants should apply under the role that best reflects their primary function within the BSI. Depending on their capabilities they might provide long-term storage, quality systems for biospecimen management, and logistics support.

Focus Area 3: Developers of Reference Standards and Antibodies

Developers of reference standards and antibodies are the recipients of collected biospecimens and will develop materials to support the characterisation of pandemic countermeasures such as diagnostics and vaccines. Ideally, these partners will have a demonstrated track record in developing WHO-endorsed reference standards and/or antibodies. However, prior WHO endorsement of previously developed materials is not a mandatory requirement.

All BSI partners are responsible for following applicable statutes, regulations, and requirements.

Selecting a focus area
Applicants are requested to select one or more focus areas and apply under the role that best reflects their specific expertise:

- **Focus Area 1: Collection Partners** with primary strength in participant engagement and biospecimen collection.
- **Focus Area 2: Regional Partners** with core capabilities in coordination, storage, infrastructure, quality systems, and logistical support.
- **Focus Area 3: Reference Standard Developers** whose primary contribution lies in downstream characterisation and development of reference material.

CEPI may facilitate matchmaking among selected applicants across roles based on overall portfolio needs.

3 Guidance for Applicants: Eligibility, Benefits, and Submission

3.1 Who Can Apply?

This CfP is open worldwide to legal entities that have relevant expertise and at least 2 years of operational experience as an organisation to join the BSI. Applicants must address their capability to collect, store, and transport specimens and engage communities, or develop reference standards and antibodies in accordance with national laws and international guidance and adhere to standards of safety as well as ethical, biosecurity, and scientific oversight.

It is neither an exclusion criterion nor a requirement to be a current or past CEPI partner of any of CEPI's networks (e.g., Centralised Laboratory Network [CLN] or Preclincal Model Network [PMN]).

Before submitting an application, applicants should take note of these **eligibility criteria**:

- Commit to CEPI's Equitable Access principles, or have a clear pathway to achieve such access.
- Comply with applicable CEPI policies, which can be found on CEPI's website. See also section 11 of the application template for more details.
- Demonstrate at least 2 years of operational experience as an organisation.

The technical, operational, ethical, and organisational criteria that applicants are expected to meet are listed in section 3.2. Minimum expectations will be defined by alignment with biobanking standards and the ability to collect and manage high-quality specimens. Additional strengths will be considered as "value-added" capabilities.

Applicants should note that CEPI may disclose the contents of proposals to third parties involved in the assessment process (external reviewers), as well as to CEPI's investors for the purposes of oversight and monitoring of CEPI's activities, provided that such parties are bound by appropriate confidentiality agreements and do not have conflicts of interest. Personal data included in applications will be handled according to CEPI's Privacy Notice. All application information will be considered confidential and proprietary.

Any costs incurred by applicants in the development and submission of proposals to this CfP will not be reimbursed by CEPI.

3.2 What CEPI Seeks in an Applicant

To support the goals of the BSI, CEPI encourages applications from organisations that demonstrate:

A. Technical Capabilities

- Ability to collect, process, store, and transport human biological specimens safely and ethically. Or capability to identify, assess, and onboard biospecimen collection sites (e.g., hospitals, biobanks, surveillance partners). Additional experience with safe and ethical handling of animals' specimens is beneficial but not required.
- Experience operating biobanking infrastructure or strong plans to develop these capabilities.
- Familiarity with relevant biobanking standards (e.g., ISO 20387 or equivalent), or a clear pathway to align with them.
- Established quality systems covering biospecimen handling, data integrity, and biosecurity.

B. Ethical and Regulatory Readiness

- Ability to obtain and manage ethical approvals for biospecimen collection in their jurisdiction.
- Compliance with national and international regulations related to biospecimen collection, storage, transfer, and data protection.
- Clear governance mechanisms for participant protection, informed consent, and responsible data handling.

C. Operational Experience

- Demonstrated capability to recruit/engage participants during an outbreak or public health event.
- Experience with or plans for sample logistics, shipping, cold chain management, and secure storage.
- For future regional partners: capacity to provide technical support, coordination, or biorepository services to local collaborators.

D. Local Relevance and Contextual Strength

- Strong relationships with local communities, institutions, or health systems.
- Understanding of local barriers to specimen collection and strategies to address them.
- Contextual insights that support equitable access and capacity strengthening.

E. Commitment to CEPI Values

- Willingness to align with CEPI's Equitable Access Policy.
- Collaboration mindset: ability to work transparently within a global, public health–oriented ecosystem.
- Openness to data sharing (within ethical and legal constraints) and contribution to collective research outputs.

F. Ability to Participate in Reference Standard Development (where applicable)

- Experience with characterising biological materials, or
- Interest and potential to develop capability in producing reference materials for diagnostics, assays, or research use.

Partners located in outbreak-prone regions, particularly in LMICs, are strongly encouraged to apply. In assessing applications, CEPI will consider **trade-offs between technical maturity, contextual relevance, and geographic diversity**, in line with CEPI 3.0 strategic planning. Strong local relevance, ethical readiness, and potential for capacity strengthening may be considered alongside existing infrastructure and experience to ensure a balanced and resilient BSI partner portfolio.

We welcome all applications that align with the collaborative spirit of the BSI. The intent is to foster mutual capacity-strengthening across the initiative. The information provided in the application will help identify both existing strengths and areas for future growth among interested partners. For example, collection partners without storage capacity are still encouraged to apply. Any plans to expand the relevant capabilities shall be described in the application template.

3.3 What to Expect: The Value of Joining the BSI

The value of joining the BSI includes:

- **Partnership with CEPI**, a leading global health organisation dedicated to epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response.
- **Inter- and intra-collaborative research and learning opportunities among BSI partners**, enabling knowledge sharing and collective advancement.
- **Funding and co-funding support from CEPI** when called upon to execute specific priority projects on CEPI's behalf.
- **Opportunities to collaborate with CEPI-wide networks**, including CLN, PMN, Vaccine Manufacturing Facility Network (VFMN), Clinical Networks, Regulatory & Quality Networks, as well as GS-LEARN, strengthening connectivity and impact across the global health ecosystem.
- Participation in the BSI enables partners to **contribute directly to CEPI 3.0 outcomes**, including faster epidemic response, strengthened regional capability, and equitable access to countermeasures, while operating within emerging global norms on pathogen access and benefit-sharing.

Up to 20 geographically diverse partners are expected to form part of the BSI initially. They will enter into long-term bilateral agreements with CEPI.

Please note that there is no guaranteed funding amount associated with this CfP. However, the purpose of this call is to establish a standing pool of partners that CEPI intends to actively mobilise through funded service orders as biospecimen and reference material needs arise. The application form therefore does NOT include a budget template. The purpose of this CfP is to identify and select the BSI partners, who will be funded to perform work when the need for biospecimen collection or reference material development arises. When this need arises, CEPI will issue Service Orders based on the nature of the task at hand.

The BSI is committed to rapid, coordinated, and equitable access for all partners, participants, and communities. As a unique initiative designed to support the development of reference standards and new countermeasures—including diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines—the BSI will make a vital contribution during the emergence

of novel or known pathogens with pandemic potential. Specimens collected, stored, and shared through the BSI may contribute to products of commercial value; however, CEPI will not sell or take profit from the transfer of BSI specimens to commercial entities.

To support equitable access, agreements governing specimen use will aim to make resulting products accessible to the communities and countries involved in specimen collection and sharing, where appropriate. All collaborators are expected to ensure open access to research data, outcomes, and publications produced with BSI funding, thereby fostering open knowledge sharing.

3.4 Indicative Timeline

Indicative CfP Dates	
CfP Launch	13 May2026
Notification of Intent	25 July 2026
Deadline for Submitting Questions	1 August 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	12 August 2026 No later than 23:59 GMT
Proposals Evaluation	August–September 2026
Financial, Legal, and Compliance Due Diligence	Starting September 2026
Technical Due Diligence (incl. site assessment visits)	Starting September 2026
Contract Negotiation	October–March 2027
Partnership Agreements Fully Executed	March 2027

CEPI reserves the right to change the timeline or cancel the CfP prior to signing agreements without obligation to cover any cost for the applicants' work on the proposals or application process.

3.5 Submission Guidance

For submissions to be accepted, applications must adhere to the following requirements:

- **Deadline**: It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is submitted ahead of the deadline on **12 August 2026 at 23:59 GMT**, via email to BSI.CFP@path.org. Please note that CEPI has contracted PATH with the procedural management of this CfP. Submissions will be made to PATH at the provided email. Applications submitted directly to CEPI will not be considered for review. Further details are provided in section 4.1.
- **Template:** Applicants must use the application template for this CfP, which can be downloaded from the CEPI website.
- **Language**: All correspondence and documents relating to this CfP must be written in English.
- **Details expected**: Proposals should contain sufficient detail for the review of the proposed contribution to the BSI. The completed application template is the ONLY document required for submission. Bullet points are acceptable. Hyperlinks to additional resources should NOT be included and will not be reviewed.
- **Evidence**: Any claims made within the proposal must be supported by evidence written into the proposal text. Applicants must be able to provide such evidence upon CEPI's request or during site assessment visits but

should NOT submit it proactively as annexes to the application.
- **Associated expenses**: The applicant shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the proposal, including any costs associated with the contract negotiation.

Submissions that do not meet all the above criteria will generally not be considered for review. Regardless of eligibility at any stage of a funding CfP, CEPI reserves the right to consider and to decline proposals at its discretion based on programmatic needs and priorities. This discretion will be exercised to ensure strategic alignment, fairness, and the long-term effectiveness of the BSI partnership portfolio.

Notification of Intent: Applicants are invited to complete the notification of intent form linked here at the earliest opportunity and, where possible, no later than **25 July 2026**. Submission of this form is not mandatory; nonetheless, it would be greatly appreciated, as it will assist in planning and managing the application review process.

Inquiries: The cut-off date for submitting questions is **1 August 2026**. For any questions or concerns regarding this CfP, contact us using the Support Form. Specific questions submitted will be addressed on an updated FAQ document by **5 August 2026**.

4 Evaluation Process

4.1 CfP Management

CEPI has contracted PATH to manage the CfP process and receive the proposals and any potential questions on behalf of CEPI (proposals submitted to BSI.CFP@path.org and questions submitted through the Support Form). PATH is a nonprofit global health organisation whose mission is to advance health equity through innovation and partnerships. The preliminary eligibility screening will be carried out by PATH. This will be followed by the proposal evaluation, to be carried out by an expert panel composed of CEPI internal and external reviewers, with relevant experience and technical skill sets in biobanking, access, and product development. The reviewers will evaluate the eligible proposals against the review criteria outlined in this CfP. Neither CEPI nor PATH will engage experts with any conflict of interest.

4.2 Preliminary Screening

- Submitted proposals will initially be screened by PATH to determine if the eligibility requirements outlined under section 3.1 have been met.
- Applicants will be notified by email to confirm the receipt of their proposal for evaluation.
- Applicants may be asked to provide additional information, as needed, to clarify proposals for evaluation.

4.3 Proposal Evaluation

The proposal evaluation will be carried out by the expert panel described in section 4.1 and focuses on the assessment of technical, operational, ethical, and organisational criteria that applicants are expected to meet as listed in section 3.2. Minimum expectations will be defined by alignment with biobanking standards and

the ability to collect and manage high-quality specimens. Additional- strengths will be considered as "value-added" capabilities.

4.4 Due Diligence

- Applicants selected for further due diligence will be notified and invited to enter the due diligence process. CEPI will conduct financial, legal, and compliance, and technical due diligence reviews before awards are made.
- Site assessment visits may be conducted as part of the technical due diligence process to better understand the applicant's capabilities and capacity.

4.5 Notification of Results

- Following the selection decision and successful due diligence process, applicants will receive a notification via email.
- Note that CEPI is not able to provide additional feedback to applicants receiving a non-selection decision beyond what is stated in the notification email.

4.6 Agreements

- CEPI aims to sign long-term agreements with successful applicants.
- Applicants will be expected to comply with CEPI's Third Party Code of Conduct (the "Code") and other applicable CEPI policies, which aim to ensure that CEPI-funded projects, procurement activities, and other engagements are executed in line with CEPI's values, adhering to the highest standards of ethical conduct, compliance, and transparency, whilst supporting CEPI's mission.
- Please note that at any stage of the funding call, CEPI, at its sole discretion, retains the right to select any applicant it deems appropriate and, even if an applicant meets all the stated criteria, CEPI reserves the right not to select them for the opportunity.

5 Annex

Annex 1: Biospecimen Sourcing Initiative (BSI): Mapping Activities to Standards (see separate document)