

## NEWSLETTER

25<sup>th</sup> April, 2023

### **PIANOFORTE is launching its first open call for proposals**

The PIANOFORTE Partnership is pleased to announce the launch of its first open call for proposals on Monday 24 April 2023 to support research projects aimed at improving knowledge and promote innovation in the field of radiation protection.

This 1<sup>st</sup> call addresses 3 main topics:

- Topic 1:  
Developing a knowledge base for a better understanding of disease pathogenesis of ionising radiation-induced cancer to improve risk assessment.
- Topic 2:  
Individualised diagnostic as well as therapeutic procedures with regard to optimisation of the benefit/risk ratio.
- Topic 3:  
Development of risk assessment and risk management approaches and technological capabilities to cope with scenarios arising from threats due to war or armed conflicts situations or natural disasters taking into consideration social, ethical and legal issues.

The main aim of this open call is to support transnational research projects that combine innovative approaches in the field of radiation protection in line with the research priorities of PIANOFORTE.

The call text, rules of participation, proposal template and guidelines for applicants are available at [PIANOFORTE Open Call 2023](#)

The Pianoforte Partnership will hold a **virtual information session** about its first call for proposal on **May 10, 2023**. Register now and join us to get the answers to all your questions about the call.

> [Register by mail](#) to receive the link to the webinar.

### **Stakeholder engagement activities in the frame of the PIANOFORTE 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call**

Several tasks of WP3 have been working on the capitalisation of views and opinions of the radiation protection community, in particular with regard to the research topics prioritisation for the 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call.

After an initial stakeholder mapping and the preparation of a general stakeholder-related recommendation on the Open Calls ([deliverable D3.4](#)), a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed ([deliverable D3.6](#)). The plan safeguards the systematic involvement of stakeholders and ensures an end-user-oriented impact of PIANOFORTE.

In view of the prioritisation of research topics for the 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call, the PIANOFORTE Stakeholder and Advisory Board ([deliverable D3.5](#)) was consulted and invited to comment on the proposed call topics and their ranking. The large group of external stakeholders was addressed in the course of a public consultation, namely the Topical Online Meetings. The meetings formed the basis for the inclusion of the external stakeholders' needs into the process of research topic prioritisation.

In January 2023, the feedback from the Stakeholder and Advisory Board as well as the outcomes of the Topical Online Meetings have been analysed and summarised in a report for the further use in the prioritisation process ([deliverable D3.1](#)).

### **Report on the status of modern Proton Therapy in Europe**

The considerable increase of the Proton Therapy (PT) offer in Europe has brought several benefits to the radiotherapy field, including new strategies with higher conformity. However, its efficacy (and efficiency) in therapeutic and financial contexts is broadly discussed. PIANOFORTE has produced a report on the status of PT, considering the justification of the current (and further) investments ([deliverable D3.7](#)).

The report identifies knowledge gaps from Physical and Clinical perspectives and provides an overview of the literature that is paving the way of progress in this field. In particular, the technological evolution of proton accelerators, techniques for range uncertainty reduction, image guidance strategies, biological optimization, dosimetry, out-of-field doses (and the risk of secondary cancer) and new techniques such as ultra-high dose rate are examined. Further research is essential to bring down equipment cost, to consolidate clinical strategies and improve treatment efficacy by demonstrating the cases in which PT yields clinical advantages, and to make this technique accessible to a broader group of patients. To do so, European efforts to increase PT capacity should be coordinated and integrated in European-wide clinical studies, following homogenised guidelines for data exchange and quality control.

### **PIANOFORTE Stakeholder survey 2023**

As part of the PIANOFORTE partnership's work to align stakeholder interests across Europe, an electronic survey has been developed that provided an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to express their views about specific issues in radiation protection and opinions about research priorities needed for improvements in society. Another goal of the survey was to promote and make available information about the partnerships' stakeholder activities to stakeholder networks across Europe to highlight the envisioned openness to external inputs to the scientific community.

The PIANOFORTE survey has been launched as web-based survey in English language, from November 2022 to January 2023. The responses were obtained from 440 stakeholders, 29 European countries, Canada, China, Colombia, India and the US. The preliminary analysis of the survey results showed a high percentage (69%) of respondents that previously did not participate in any similar survey. A detailed analysis of survey responses is ongoing.