



Call for Proposals for
**"European Research Projects on
Neuroinflammation"**

Submission deadline for pre-proposals: March 10, 2014

Proposal template

Electronic proposal submission

For further information, please visit us on the web

<http://www.neuron-eranet.eu>

or contact

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1. Purpose

Maintenance, improvement and restoration of human health are of fundamental importance and worldwide priority. Biomedical and health research provide an important basis for the improvement of healthy living. Disorders of the brain are major causes of morbidity, mortality and impaired quality of life. Around one billion people suffer from disorders of the central nervous system. In Europe, disorders of the brain account for approximately one-third of the burden of all diseases. Therefore, neuroscience research and its translation into diagnostic and therapeutic outcomes are fundamental.

To address this, the 'Network of European Funding for Neuroscience Research' (NEURON) has been established under the ERA-NET scheme of the European Commission (<http://www.neuron-eranet.eu>). The aim of the ERA-NET NEURON is to coordinate research efforts and funding programmes of European countries in the field of disease related neuroscience.

Under the umbrella of NEURON, six transnational joint calls have been launched on different topics from 2008 to 2013. The seventh joint transnational call (JTC-7) is now launched in the field of neuroinflammation. The following funding organisations have agreed to fund the joint call for multinational research projects in this scientific area. The call will be conducted simultaneously by the funding organisations in their respective countries and coordinated centrally by the Joint Call Secretariat.

- Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Austria
- Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO), Belgium
- Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS, Belgium
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (CIHR-INMHA), Canada
- Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS), Québec (Canada)
- French National Research Agency (ANR), France
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany
- The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS), Iceland*
- Chief Scientist Office, Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH), Israel
- Ministry of Health (MOH), Italy
- Latvian Academy of Sciences (LAS), Latvia
- National Research Fund (FNR), Luxembourg
- National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR), Poland
- Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal
- Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Romania
- Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), Slovakia
- Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO), Spain
- Swedish Research Council (SRC), Sweden
- Medical Research Council (MRC), United Kingdom

* Pending final decision.

2. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to facilitate multi-national, collaborative research projects that will address important questions relating to neuroinflammation. The call will accept proposals ranging from understanding basic mechanisms of disease through proof-of-concept clinical studies in humans. These may include research on the role of inflammation in neurological or psychiatric disorders, or associated with traumatic brain injury, pathogen infection or toxicity in the nervous system. **Research dealing primarily with cerebrovascular or neurodegenerative diseases without specifically focussing on the neuroinflammation aspect will not be eligible for this call.**

The ERA-NET NEURON funding organisations particularly wish to promote **multi-disciplinary work** and to encourage **translational research proposals** that combine basic and clinical approaches.

Research proposals should cover at least one of the following areas:

- a) Fundamental research on the role of neuroinflammation on the pathogenesis and/or aetiology of neural diseases. This may include the development of innovative or shared resources and technologies.
- b) Research to develop new strategies for diagnosis, therapy, and rehabilitation procedures for diseases in which neuroinflammation constitutes a relevant process of the pathology.

One of the aims of NEURON is to provide support to young researchers, and to facilitate their integration as independent PIs into the consortia, an experience that would be a valuable step forward in their research careers.

The individual components of joint applications should be complementary and contain novel, ambitious ideas to answer key questions or lead to a step-wise change in understanding. There should be clear added value in funding the collaboration over the individual projects.

Clinical studies up to the point of proof of concept are eligible for funding¹.

3. Application

3.1 Eligibility

Joint transnational research proposals may be submitted by research teams working in universities (or other higher education institutions), non-university public research institutes, hospitals, as well as in commercial companies, particularly small and medium-size enterprises. The eligibility of the afore-mentioned institutions, together with details of eligible costs (e.g., personnel, material, consumables, travel money, investments), are subject to the administrative requirements of

¹ Eligibility and funding requirements for clinical trials vary between the partner countries. Clarification may be obtained from the individual funding agencies.

individual funding organisations and will therefore differ. Please note that, for some funding organisations, commercial companies are not eligible or are only eligible under certain conditions (e.g., only in partnership with academic institutions in the consortium). Clarification should be obtained from the individual funding agencies (see contact details below).

Only transnational projects will be funded. Each consortium submitting a proposal must comprise a minimum of three research groups eligible for funding by organisations listed in this call text (see above), all three groups must be from different countries. The total number of research groups in a consortium must not exceed five. Therefore, the maximum number of countries involved in one consortium is five. Not more than two research groups should be from the same country.

Research groups not eligible to their national funding organizations or from countries which are not involved in this call may participate in projects only if their participation clearly provides an added value to the consortium and if they present evidence on secured budget for their part in the project. In any case, the total number of research groups in one consortium must not exceed five.

It is obligatory that the coordinator of a consortium is eligible to be funded by one of the organisations listed in this call text.

Each consortium should have the critical mass to achieve ambitious scientific goals and **should clearly demonstrate added value** from working together. One project co-ordinator among the project partners who represents the consortium externally will be responsible for its internal scientific management. *Although applications must be submitted jointly by groups from several countries, the individual research groups will be funded by the individual NEURON funding organisation(s) of their respective countries. Eligibility criteria are the matter of individual partner funding organisations.*

Therefore, applicants are strongly advised to follow the instructions contained in the country-specific eligibility tables which are published on the NEURON webpage and to contact their national/regional funding organization to confirm eligibility matters before submitting an application.

3.2 Financial and legal modalities

Projects may be funded for a period of up to three years and according to individual funding organisations' regulations. Eligible costs may vary according to the corresponding funding organisations' regulations. Each group will be subject to the rules and regulations of its respective national/regional funding agency.

3.3 Submission of joint transnational proposals

There will be a **two-stage procedure** for joint applications: **pre-proposals** and **full proposals**. In both cases, one joint **proposal document** (in English) shall be prepared by the partners of a joint transnational proposal, and must be submitted to the Joint Call Secretariat by one spokesperson, the co-ordinator.

Pre-proposals must be submitted in electronic format no later than **March 10, 2014** (14:00:00 CET) via the **electronic submission** system.

NOTE: Full proposals will only be accepted from those applicants **explicitly invited** by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit them.

3.4 Further information

For further details, please refer to the respective submission forms available through the NEURON website. If you need additional information, please contact the Joint Call Secretariat, or your funding agency representative (see Annex for contact data).

4. Evaluation and decision

The review process will be in two stages.

4.1 Formal check of proposals

The Joint Call Secretariat will assess proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (e.g. date of submission; number of participating countries; inclusion of all necessary information in English). The Joint Call Secretariat will also forward the proposals to the national/regional funding organisations, which will perform a formal check of compliance with their respective regulations. Proposals not meeting the formal criteria will be rejected at this stage.

The Call Steering Committee may reject proposals if they are clearly outside the scope of the call.

Proposals passing these check points will be forwarded to the joint Peer Review Panel for evaluation.

4.2 Peer-review of proposals

The reviewers will carry out the evaluation according to specific evaluation criteria:

1. Relevance to the aim(s) of the call
2. Scientific quality of the proposal (innovation potential, methodology)

3. Feasibility of the project (adequacy of project work plan and related risk analysis, budgetary and other resources, time schedule)
4. International competitiveness of participating research groups in the field(s) of the proposal (previous work in the field, expertise of the research groups)
5. Quality of collaborative interaction between the groups, and added value, from both scientific and transnational perspectives, of the research consortium. Consortia not meeting these criteria will be downgraded.
6. Potential of the expected results for future clinical and other health relevant applications.

4.3 Decision

4.3.1 Pre-proposals

Eligible pre-proposals will be reviewed via a written (remote) peer review process. Based on the scores in the written reviews a ranking list will be set up. By mid May 2014, the coordinators of the top proposals will be invited by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit a full proposal **no later than June 24, 2014**.

4.3.2 Full proposals

The international Joint Peer Review Panel will establish a ranking list of the fundable proposals by scientific assessment. Based on this ranking list the Call Steering Committee will determine the projects to be funded, taking into account the national budgets available. These recommendations will inform the final decisions which will be made by the funding agencies and will be subject to budgetary considerations.

5. Funding procedure / Responsibilities / Reporting requirements

5.1 Funding procedure

Projects can be funded for a period of up to three years and according to funding organisations' regulations. Funding is expected to start early in 2015.

Successful research groups will be funded directly by the respective funding organisations.

Funding will be administered according to the terms and conditions of the responsible funding organisations, taking into account all other applicable regulations and legal requirements.

5.2 Responsibilities

Each project must nominate a project coordinator, who represents the consortium externally and is responsible for its internal management (e.g., application, Consortium Agreement, reporting, etc.) to the ERA-Net NEURON Joint Call Secretariat. Within a joint proposal, each group leader will be the contact person for the relevant national/regional funding organisation. The coordinators of funded projects together with the respective funding agencies shall make every effort to seek a common start date for all research groups in the consortium.

After the evaluation and selection procedures are completed, each consortium selected to be funded is required to draft and sign a Consortium Agreement (CA) suitable to their own team. The CA will agree a common project start date, manage the delivery of project activities, finances and intellectual property rights (IPR), and avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project. All consortia are strongly encouraged to sign the CA before the official project start date, the CA must be signed within the first six months after the project start date.

5.3 Reporting Requirements

On behalf of the research consortium, the project coordinator will be required to submit a brief annual scientific progress report on the project and one final report in the end, to the Joint Call Secretariat. Group leaders may be required to submit reports separately to their national funding organisation; reporting guidance will be forwarded by the relevant funding organisation, as applicable.

Annual reports should be submitted within four months calendar year. Annual reports do not need to be submitted if the project ends in the first three months of the following year (i.e., between January and March). In this case, the submission of a final report will suffice. However, instead of submitting the final report within the usual six month period (see below), the final report will be required within four months of project completion.

The deadline for submitting final reports is six months after the end of the project. It is the task of the coordinators to determine a formal end date for project completion. This is required, as partners may be granted extensions of differing duration. Coordinators will be informed about this procedure by the Joint Call Secretariat and will receive the report template in due course.

The coordinator will be asked to present 2 progress updates, one intermediate and one final status symposium. Group leaders will be asked to participate in the final status symposium. Travel budgets should be planned and managed accordingly.

Funding recipients must ensure that all outcomes (publications, etc.) of transnational NEURON projects include a proper acknowledgement of ERA-NET NEURON and the respective funding partner organisations, and are in line with the relevant publication requirements.

Annex

Please note that country specific requirements might apply to this call. We strongly advise you to contact your national/regional representative prior to submitting a pre-proposal:

Country (Region)	Contact person(s)	Links to national/regional calls mentioning particular requirements
Austria	Dr Herbert Mayer	Austrian Science Fund (FWF) herbert.mayer@fwf.ac.at www.fwf.ac.at
Belgium (Flanders)	Dr Olivier Boehme Geertrui Poelaert	Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) Egmontstraat 5 1000 Brussel www.fwo.be eranet@fwo.be
Belgium	Dr. Arnaud Goolaerts	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS rue d'Egmont 5 1000 Bruxelles Tél. +32 (0)2 504 93 28 arnaud.goolaerts@frs-fnrs.be
Canada	Dr Elizabeth Theriault Jeff Warren	Canadian Institutes of Health Research - Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction (CIHR-INMHA) Elizabeth.Theriault@ubc.ca 604 827-4744 http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/8602.html Strategic Program Design and Analytics Research and Knowledge Translation Portfolio, CIHR Jeff.warren@cihr-irsc.gc.ca 613-948-2813
Canada (Québec)	Dr Anne-Cécile Desfaits Karine Genest	Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS) AnneCecile.Desfaits@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-0463 Karine.Genest@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-2114 #1275 www.frqs.gouv.qc.ca
France	Dr Natalia Martin Dr Serena Battaglia	French National Research Agency (ANR) Health & Biology Department natalia.martin@agencerecherche.fr +33 1 73 54 81 33 serena.battaglia@agencerecherche.fr +33 1 78 09 80 14 www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr
Germany	Dr Alexander Klein	Programme Management Agency (PT-DLR) – Health Research, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) alexander.klein@dlr.de +49 228 3821 1877 www.gesundheitsforschung-bmbf.de
Iceland	Dr Katrin Valgeirsdottir	RANNIS – The Icelandic Centre for Research katrin@rannis.is +354 515 5800
Israel	Dr Benny Leshem	Chief Scientist Office - Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) chief.scientist@moh.health.gov.il. www.health.gov.il/

Italy	Dr Gaetano Guglielmi	Ministero della Salute g.guglielmi@sanita.it www.ministerosalute.it/
Latvia	Dr Uldis Berkis	Latvian Academy of Sciences www.lza.lv uberkis@latnet.lv +371-67409242 +371-29472349
Luxembourg	Dr Frank Glod	Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR) frank.glod@fnr.lu www.fnr.lu/
Poland	Marcin Chmielewski	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) Section for Research Projects BIOMED marcin.chmielewski@ncbr.gov.pl phone: + 48 22 39 07 109 fax.: +48 22 20 13 408 www.ncbr.pl
Portugal	Dr Anabela Isidro	Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT) Departamento das Relações Europeias, Bilaterais e Multilaterais Anabela.Isidro@fct.pt phone: Tel:+351 21 391 15 52 www.fct.pt
Romania	Mrs. Luciana BRATU Mrs. Simona Cristina STOIAN	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) luciana.bratu@uefiscdi.ro Tel: +40 21 307 19 35, Fax: +40 21 307 19 11 simona.stoian@uefiscdi.ro Tel: +4 021 30 23 893
Slovakia	Dr Jan Barancik	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) Department for International Cooperation barancik@up.upsav.sk +421 2 5751 0137 www.sav.sk
Spain	Dr Julio Barbas	Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (MINECO) Subdirección de Proyectos Internacionales neuron@mineco.es
Sweden	Prof. Mats Ulfendahl	Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) Box 1035 SE-101 38 Stockholm, Sweden mats.ulfendahl@vr.se www.vr.se
UK	Dr Jacqui Oakley	Medical Research Council (MRC) jacqui.oakley@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk