



Call 2017
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Biomedical research conducted
by young researchers



fondazione
cariplo

www.fondazionecariplo.it

DEADLINE: APRIL 18TH, 2017

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY YOUNG RESEARCHERS

BACKGROUND

A distinctive character of the Italian research system is the lack of support towards young researchers and the absence of training frameworks that successfully elicit their independency and leadership abilities.

A natural outcome of this situation is the well-known "brain drain" phenomenon. Furthermore, young talents trained abroad seldom if ever decide to move back to Italy. The Italian system is thus losing an entire generation of young researchers who are facing a country with limited financial resources, an inefficient turnover, and a failing meritocracy system. Therefore, it has become by now a priority to give back to young talents and worthy researchers the right to contribute to scientific research with original and independent initiatives.

In order to encourage the creativity of young researchers, through a "bottom-up" approach, this call for proposals – within the biomedical research field - aims at clarifying the molecular mechanisms underlying human diseases.

AIMS

This call for proposals is meant to support research projects concerning the identification and understanding of the molecular basis of a human disease. Applicants are requested to carefully specify the disease and the molecular mechanism they intend to investigate. All human diseases are eligible for this call, with the exception of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. (Indeed, funding opportunities for projects focusing on this pathology are provided by ARISLA Foundation - www.arisla.org. Cariplo Foundation has contributed, among others, to fund ARISLA Foundation.).

The originality of the research project, its methodological approach and the expected outcomes will be key elements in the selection process. Specifically, applications should be supported by a clear rationale, conceived on the basis of compelling preliminary data.

Through this call, Cariplo Foundation has the objective of offering young researchers the opportunity to develop independent careers, conducting research projects under their own responsibility, without the control of a supervisor. It is thus recommended that a clear leadership of the young principal investigator (PI) emerges from each application, without any ambiguities on his/her effective role in conducting the proposed project.

Finally, embracing the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation¹, Fondazione Cariplo aims to promote initiatives fostering communication and interaction between researchers and civil society. In particular, researchers must propose a communication plan inclusive and open to all stakeholders differently implicated in the research. Planned activities are meant to facilitate the activation of a dual exchange between science and society. The communication plan is considered an integral part of the research proposal.

GUIDELINES

Eligible applicants

This call for proposals is addressed to young researchers who decide to perform their research activities at a hosting institution which is eligible to receive funding from the Foundation. Beyond the general requirements set out in the "*Guidelines for presentation*", the hosting institution must directly carry out scientific research in the specified field of interest and have adequate staff and equipment for its realization.

Moreover, it is mandatory that the lead hosting institution, and more specifically the operational headquarters of the project, be located within the geographical area of interest of Cariplo Foundation (Lombardia plus Novara and Verbania districts). This requirement does not pertain to potential partners.

The hosting institution must provide the PI with appropriate workspaces, laboratories, equipment, qualified staff (e.g. lab technicians), as well as any other resources needed to adequately carry out the project.

By submitting a proposal, applicant organizations accept the "portability of the grant". This means that PIs always maintain the rights to require the transfer of the research project to a new eligible institution, for as long as the research objectives

¹ The European movement on the theme of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is constantly evolving, as emerges from the debate which has recently led to the so called "Rome declaration on RRI" (http://www.sis-rri-conference.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/RomeDeclaration_Final.pdf). In light of the available literature, it is possible to describe RRI as a dynamic and iterative process which intends to match research and innovation to values, needs and expectations of the society. Moreover, RRI aims at actively involving all the stakeholders taking part to activities of research and innovation, making them mutually responsible with respect to both the research process and its results.

are preserved. Any change in the host institution depends on Fondazione Cariplo approval according to the guidelines of this call of proposals.

Finally, Fondazione Cariplo will not accept applications submitted by PIs (both leader PIs and partner PIs) of projects still ongoing and funded in previous calls in the Scientific Research Area (with the exception of calls in partnership with other granting agencies). A project is considered ongoing unless the final grant reports – both the scientific and the economic one – have been uploaded on our website before the deadline of this call.

Eligible projects

To be eligible, proposals must:

- be submitted by a PI with:
 - i) between 2 and 7 years of experience since completion of the PhD²;
 - ii) no more than 40 years old on the deadline of this call;
 - iii) at least one publication as first or last author in a peer reviewed journal;
- guarantee that the PI will dedicate to the proposed research project at least 50% of his/her total working time;
- guarantee that the PI will be last author on all publications derived from the project;
- meet the scientific priorities indicated in this call for proposals;
- prepare a plan of communication activities with the civil society, coordinated by one of the researcher fully included in the research team (for more detail see the “*Communication Guidelines*”).

Moreover, any proposal with the following characteristics will be considered ineligible:

- purely descriptive projects;
- studies essentially aimed at developing novel methodologies and/or technologies;

- projects having an exclusive pharmacological and/or clinical focus;
- funding requests aimed at setting up new research centres and/or laboratories and/or animal facilities.

In addition, Fondazione Cariplo will not consider eligible a project that has been already submitted to this specific Call twice.

Projects should provide the approval of the Ethical Committee³. In case of animal trials Fondazione Cariplo requires a copy of the Ministry of Health authorization. By all means the authorization has to be notified to Fondazione Cariplo before the final report on the project.

The total cost of the project can only include costs related to the realization of the proposed studies, respecting the eligibility criteria and the thresholds listed below:

- A03 - “*Equipment and software*”
This entry cannot exceed 20% of the additional costs⁴. It covers fully the costs for newly acquired equipment and software. It is indispensable that researchers clearly motivate these costs in accordance to the specificity of the project. In this category can also be included renting costs as well as building expenses for the installation of the new equipment.
- A04 - “*Other amortizable costs*”
This entry can only include patent costs.
- A06 - “*Temporary staff*”
This entry can only include research personnel costs. The cost of administrative staff is not allowed.
- A07 - “*Sub-contractors and consultants*”
This entry should also include audit⁵ costs, where applicable⁶.
- A08 - “*Materials and supplies*”
This entry cannot include costs related to stationery and photocopies.
- A09 - “*Overheads*”
This entry cannot exceed 10% of the additional costs⁷.

2 The call is addressed to applicants eligible for an ERC (European Research Council) starting grant. PIs with 2-7 years of experience since completion of their medical specialty are also eligible. For candidates with both PhD and medical specialty, eligibility will be determined considering the degree they earned first.

3 In case the approval is not available by the Call's deadline, the leading organization will be requested to send it together with the preliminary fulfillment, penalty the grant revocation.

4 Sum of: A03, A04, A06, A07, A08, A10.

5 Exclusively certificated auditor are considered eligible.

6 With the sole aim of ascertaining whether the obligation to perform a financial audit applies or not, the amount which has to be considered is obtained multiplying the eligible costs detailed in the Budget (sum of entries A06, A07, A08, A09 and A10) by the coefficient 1.25 (which represents an estimate of the co-funding generally guaranteed by the hosting institution, mainly in the form of permanent staff). It is also recommended to refer to chapter 10 of the “Grant management and reporting guide” and to the “Guidelines for audit”; both documents are available on the “Grant management and reporting” page of Cariplo Foundation's website.

7 See footnote 4.

- A10 - "Travel, publication and dissemination costs"

This entry cannot exceed 10% of the additional costs⁸ and can only include travel expenses and conference participation fees for the research personnel involved in the project, scientific publications and activities of communication with the civil society.

The grant will cover 100% of project costs. Requested funding should range from 100,000 to 250,000 euros. When filling in the forms, note that the total cost of the project will have to coincide with the requested funding.

Please note that it is not required to explicit organizations' co-funding expressed in terms of personnel costs in the budget form.

Evaluation criteria

Besides the overall scientific quality of the proposal, the evaluation will take into account the following elements:

- the level of analysis of the state of the art;
- the robustness of preliminary data;
- the clarity of the project aims and strategies;
- the originality and innovation of the project;
- the adequacy of the experimental plan;
- the expected results and their impact on the scientific community;
- the potential benefits for human health;
- the scientific and managerial leadership of the PI;
- track record and adequacy of the PI and team competencies (leading organization and partner);
- the expected impact of the project on the PI's career;
- the adequacy of budget and duration of the project;
- quality of the communication plan also in relation to Responsible Research and Innovation⁹ principles.

Application submission

Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on April 18th 2017. Leading organizations must submit applications accessing the online platform available on Fondazione Cariplo's website. First-time applicants need to register and require their username and password.

Fondazione Cariplo will consider ineligible applications submitted on paper or using forms different from the specific ones available online.

In order to apply for this grant, applicants are required to fill in integrally all the online forms organized as below:

- Leading organization details [fill in the form with in details; or check and update your organization's details if already registered];
- Project section;
- Additional information;
- Budget section.

In addition the Leading organization must upload all compulsory documents as it is indicated in the Guidelines for Presentation:

- project form [in English]¹⁰;
- detailed budget [in English]¹¹;
- Project Dissemination Form [in English]¹²;
- Partnership agreement¹³;
- Documentation of the applicant organizations¹⁴;
- publication[s] having the PI as first or last author, as PDF files.

Please note that the "Project Form", the "Budget Form" and the "Dissemination Form" are the only documents subjected to meritocratic analysis.

Before submitting a proposal, applicants are kindly invited to carefully read the documents listed below and available on Cariplo Foundation's website at www.fondazione-cariplo.it:

⁸ See footnote 4.

⁹ See footnote 1.

¹⁰ Project form phase I can be downloaded from the online section "Complementary Data".

¹¹ Detailed budget can be downloaded from the online section "Complementary Data".

¹² The detailed dissemination form shall be prepared in accordance with the template relating to the call that can be downloaded from the section Additional Information under Online Forms.

¹³ In case the project involves partners. dulistica on line.

¹⁴ Applicants are advised to read the document 'Guidelines for Grantseekers' available on Fondazione Cariplo's website.

- *Guidelines for presentation;*
- *Grant management and reporting guide;*
- *Communication Guidelines;*
- *Acknowledgement guidelines for academic papers;*
- *Intellectual property rights policy;*
- *Open access policy.*

By submitting a proposal, applicants acknowledge, agree and accept that the award of the grant requires the irrevocable acceptance of all policies mentioned above and respect of aforementioned Guide and Guidelines.

Evaluation process

All proposals submitted before the deadline and according to the formal requirements described above will follow a two-step evaluation process:

I. Formal Preliminary Control

Fondazione Cariplo will check that all proposals are submitted correctly. This means that it will be checked the eligibility of the applicants as well as the presence of all necessary documents and the coherence with the guidelines. In parallel a panel of external and independent reviewers will check the scientific coherence in accordance to the Call indications. Proposals respecting these requirements will access the last step of the evaluation process. Proponents will receive a formal letter explaining in detail the reasons for the exclusion. This information will also be available online on Fondazione Cariplo's web platform.

II. Peer Review

Eligible applications will be evaluated by independent experts in a peer review process ensuring scientific expertise and impartiality. Each proposals will be analyzed by 3 independent reviewers selected for their expertise in the specific research milieu of the project. Reviewer-project matching will be made according to the indications provided by applicants in the keywords selection. This logic is meant to ensure the identification of the most suitable reviewers for the project.

The final score given to the project reflect scores and weight:

1. DESCRIPTION (weight 5%)
2. APPROACH (weight 20%)
3. INNOVATION (weight 15%)
4. OUTCOMES (weight 20%)
5. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, TEAM AND ORGANIZATION (weight 25%)
6. DISSEMINATION (weight 5%)
7. BUDGET and PROJECT DURATION (weight: 10%)

The final ranking ultimately represents the list of the best projects worth of funding.

At the end of the review process, all applicants will receive official communication together with reviewers' feedback. All these documents will also be available in the dedicated area on Fondazione Cariplo's website.

AVAILABLE BUDGET

The budget available for this call for proposals consists of 4 million euros.