

**DEADLINE: APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2014**

## BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY YOUNG RESEARCHERS

### BACKGROUND

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

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

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

### AIMS

This call for proposal is meant to support projects aiming at clarifying the molecular basis of a human disease. Applicants are requested to carefully specify the disease and the specific molecular mechanism they intend to investigate. All human diseases are eligible to this call with the exception for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Funding opportunities for projects focusing on this pathology are provided by Fondazione ARISLA -[www.arisla.org](http://www.arisla.org). Fondazione Cariplo has contributed, among others, to fund Fondazione ARISLA.

The originality of the research project, its methodological approach, and the expected concrete results in the medium term will be key elements in the selection process. Applications should be supported by a clear rationale that lies on research hypotheses resting on valid preliminary data.

The Foundation will support experimental laboratory research based on sound clinical data, where appropriate. This is in order to achieve a more tangible valorization of the knowledge arisen from the research project through improvements in the prevention practices, diagnoses and treatments. It should be noted that the involvement of clinical partners does not represent a binding requirement.

This call is meant to offer young researchers an opportunity to develop independent careers and conduct their own research

without the participation of a supervisor. Thus it is strongly recommended to avoid speculative approaches while setting up the research team.

### GUIDELINES

#### Eligible applicants

Beyond the general requirements set out in the "*Guidelines for presentation*", this call for proposals is open to young researchers with appropriate scientific track record conducting their research at a host institution.

The host institution must provide the project investigator (PI) with appropriate workspaces, laboratories, equipment, and whether necessary also qualified staff (e.g. lab technicians) as well as any other resources required by the PI to carry out the research<sup>1</sup>. So, the host institution must have adequate staff and equipment to carry out the research project (Fondazione Cariplo reserves the right to verify the satisfaction of these conditions).

With regards to the eligibility, it is mandatory that the host institution and more specifically the project's operational headquarters fall within Fondazione Cariplo's geographical area of interest (Lombardia and Novara and Verbano Cusio Ossola districts).

#### Eligible projects

The Foundation will select a limited number of projects. To be eligible projects must:

- be submitted by a PI with:
  - i) 2-12 years of experience since completion of the PhD or equivalent degree<sup>2</sup>
  - ii) a scientific track record proving his/her research achievements
  - iii) at least one publication as first or last author in a peer-reviewed journal
  - iv) evidences of presentations in well-established international conferences, patents, awards, if any.

<sup>1</sup> The commitment of the host institution should be certified by a statement of support. The form to fill in can be found online in the Dati Complementari section

<sup>2</sup> Within this call young researchers include applicants eligible for an ERC starting or consolidator grant. Principal investigators with 2-12 years experience since completion of their medical specialty are also eligible. For candidates with both PhD and medical specialty, eligibility will be determined based on the degree they earned first.

- guarantee a commitment of the PI on the research project that is equal or superior to 50% of his/her total working time.
- subscribe in the host institution statement of support<sup>3</sup> the specific section for the portability of the grant. Portability means that whether the host institution might fail to provide the PI appropriate conditions to conduct the research, he/she is free to transfer to another eligible host institution both the grant and the research activities.
- guarantee that all publications derived from the project indicate the PI as last author.
- meet the scientific priorities indicated in the call for proposals.

In order to guarantee transparency and objectivity during the selection process, the Foundation will enforce a peer review process relaying on a panel of external, independent and international reviewers. At the end of the evaluation process, feedback on the projects will be sent to all applicants.

The grant will cover 100% of project costs. Requested funding should range from 100,000 to 250,000 euros. The Foundation foresees exclusively the costs related to the research that satisfy the following eligibility criteria and caps:

- A3 - "Equipment and software"  
this entry cannot exceed 20% of the total additional costs<sup>4</sup> and can exclusively include costs related to newly acquired software programs or equipment. It is expected that applicants ascribe only amortizable costs.
- A4 - "Other amortizable costs"  
this entry can include only patent costs.
- A6 - "Temporary staff"  
this entry must include only research personnel costs. The cost of administrative staff is not allowed.
- A7 - "Subcontractors and consultants"  
auditor costs should be included in this entry.
- A8 - "Materials and supplies"  
stationery and photocopy costs cannot be included in this entry.
- A9 - "Overheads"  
this entry cannot exceed 10% of the total additional costs<sup>5</sup>.

- A10 - "Others"

this entry cannot exceed 5% of the total additional costs<sup>6</sup> and must include only travel expenses and conference fees for the research personnel involved in the project, meeting costs, and finally scientific and public dissemination costs.

Applicants are strongly advised that the following costs are not eligible:

- A1 - "Purchase of property"
- A2 - "Property repairs, renovations, restorations"
- A5 - "Permanent staff"

All the costs associated to "senior staff" (professors, tutors, supervisors), technicians and administrative staff will not be allowed.

#### Review criteria

Besides the quality of the research proposal, other elements will be considered during the evaluation process. These include:

- the level of analysis of the state of the art;
- the solidity of preliminary data;
- the clarity of the project aims and strategies;
- the nature of expected biomedical results as well as their impact;
- potential benefits of the research in terms of human health;
- the originality and innovation of the project;
- leadership of the principal investigator;
- logical match between the PI competences and the nature of the experimental plan;
- track record of the PI and the research team;
- involvement of young researchers besides the PI;
- collaboration with national or international research centres and the ability to build partnerships and networks;
- expected impact on the PI career;
- a clearly motivated budget and a reasonable duration of the project;
- the plan to disseminate results within and outside the research community.

#### Ineligible projects

It will be considered ineligible any proposal that:

- is submitted by a PI not meeting the stated requirements

<sup>3</sup> See note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Sum A3, A4, A6, A7, A8, A10.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 4.

- fails to prove a clear leadership of the PI and/or raise questions with regards to whom is going to play the leading role
  - fails to prove the support of the host institution
  - is purely descriptive
  - represents a clinical study on drug[s]
  - exclusively addresses clinical issues
  - requests funding to set up new research centres/labs and/or animal facilities
- Letter of support from the legal representative of the host institution;
  - Documentation of the hosting institution;
  - Statement of support of the hosting institution<sup>9</sup>;
  - Publication[s] as first or last author in PDF format.

## AVAILABLE BUDGET

The total budget allocated to this call for proposals consists of 3 million euros.

Before submitting their proposals, applicants are kindly invited to carefully read the documents listed below that can be easily found in Fondazione Cariplo's website at [www.fondazionecariplo.it](http://www.fondazionecariplo.it) and include:

- *Guidelines for presentation*;
- *Grant management and reporting guide*;
- *Intellectual property rights policy*;
- *Open access policy*.

By submitting their proposals, applicants acknowledge, agree and accept that the award of the grant requires the acceptance of the Foundation policies.

In order to apply for a grant under this call for proposals, it is strongly recommended to:

- Carefully fill in all the online forms that specifically include:
  - *Anagrafica dell'organizzazione capofila* (new applicants should fill the form ex novo, while organizations already registered should check and update, when necessary, their detail);
  - *Modulo progetto* (in Italian);
  - *Dati Complementari* (in English);
  - *Piano economico*.
- Upload all the requested documents according to the *Guidelines for presentation*:
  - Detailed Project<sup>7</sup>;
  - Detailed Budget<sup>8</sup>;

<sup>7</sup> The detailed project must be prepared in accordance with the template relating to the call that can be downloaded from the online section *Dati Complementari*.

<sup>8</sup> The detailed budget must be prepared in accordance with the template relating to the call that can be downloaded from the online section *Dati Complementari*.

<sup>9</sup> See note 1.