



Call for Proposals for  
**"Novel Methods and Approaches towards  
the Understanding of Brain Diseases"**

**Submission deadline for pre-proposals: March 09, 2012**

[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

The maintenance, improvement and restoration of human health are of fundamental importance and priority in all countries. Biomedical and health research provide an important basis for the improvement of healthy living. Among the many diseases affecting human health, disorders of the brain are major causes of morbidity, mortality and impaired quality of life. According to estimates, more than one billion people suffer from disorders of the central nervous system. In Europe, disorders of the brain account for approximately one-third of the total burden of all diseases. Thus, neuroscience research and its translation into diagnostic and therapeutic measures are of high priority.

In this context, 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 goal of the ERA-Net NEURON is to coordinate the research efforts and funding programmes of European countries in the field of disease related neuroscience.

Under the umbrella of NEURON, four transnational joint calls have been launched on different topics from 2008 to 2011. The fifth joint call has been focused on innovative methods and approaches towards the understanding of brain diseases. 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 (JCS).

- Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Austria
- Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO), Belgium
- Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS), Canada (Québec)
- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland
- National Funding Agency for Research (ANR), France
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany
- Chief Scientist Office, Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH), Israel
- Ministry of Health (MOH), Italy
- National Research Fund (FNR), Luxembourg
- National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR), Poland
- Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), Portugal
- Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Romania
- Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN), Spain
- Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII), Spain

## 2. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to enable multinational collaborative research projects that address the developments and advances in methods and approaches to understand the brain and its diseases. The scope of this call is not the funding of technology development per se, and it does not lie within the funding of infrastructure. Research projects must be hypothesis-driven and combine cutting-edge technological developments with a clear, substantial research question. There is no sharp restriction concerning the specific methodologies or approaches used in the applications, although a clear justification is required that clearly shows why the approach/methodology is novel or that existing methodology will be applied to a new research area. These may include (without excluding others): Imaging techniques (including optical, MR and PET techniques), molecular, (epi)genetic and “omics” approaches, stem cells and neural differentiation in relation to cell therapy, gene targeting in the brain, molecular modelling techniques, electrical and magnetic brain stimulation, and behavioural and epidemiological methodology.

The ERA-Net NEURON funding organisations particularly wish to promote integrated methodologies and approaches and multidisciplinary work and to encourage translational research proposals that combine basic and clinical approaches.

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.

In any case the individual components of joint applications should be complementary and contain novel, ambitious ideas. There should be clear added value in funding the collaboration over the individual projects.

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

## 3. Application

### 3.1 Eligibility

Joint transnational research proposals may be submitted by research groups working in universities (or other higher education institutions), non-university public research institutes, hospitals, as well as commercial companies, in particular small and medium-size enterprises. The eligibility of the afore-mentioned institutions, together with details of eligible costs (personnel, material, consumables, travel money, investments,...), are subject to the individual administrative requirements of individual funding organisations and may therefore vary. Clarification may be obtained from the individual funding agencies (see contact details below).

Only transnational projects will be funded. Each consortium submitting a proposal must involve a minimum of three and a maximum of five research groups from at least three different countries of funding organisations participating in this call (see list above). Research groups from countries whose funding organisations are not partner in the ERA-Net NEURON may participate in projects if they are able to secure their own funding. They must state clearly in the proposal if these funds are already secured or if not, how they plan to obtain funding in advance of the project start.

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.

*Whilst applications will be submitted jointly by groups from several countries, individual research groups will be funded by the individual NEURON funding organisation(s) respective of their country. Eligibility criteria are the matter of individual partner organisations.*

**Therefore, applicants are strongly advised to contact their national/regional funding organization and confirm eligibility matters before submitting an application.**

### 3.2 Financial and legal modalities

Projects can be funded for a period of up to three years and according to funding organisations' regulations. Eligible costs may vary according to the corresponding funding agency's regulations. Each group is 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 (JCS) by one spokesperson, the co-ordinator.

Pre-proposals have to be submitted in electronic format by the deadline no later than **March 09, 2012** via the **electronic submission** system.

**NOTE:** Full proposals will be accepted only 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**

According to the two-stage application procedure for joint proposals (pre-proposals and full proposals), there will also be a two-stage review procedure.

### **4.1 Formal check of proposals**

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

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

Proposals passing these checks will be forwarded to the joint Peer Review Panel (PRP) 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, 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 of the research consortium. Consortia not meeting this criterion 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

The pre-proposals will be reviewed in a written (remote) peer review process. Based on the scores in the written reviews a ranking list will be set up. By mid May, the coordinators of the top proposals will be invited by the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS) to submit a full proposal **no later than June 25, 2012**.

### 4.3.2 Full proposals

The international Joint Peer Review Panel will establish a ranking list of the proposals with a threshold above what is fundable based on 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. Based on these recommendations, final decisions will be made by the funding agencies and will be subject to budgetary considerations.

## 5. Funding procedure / Responsibilities / Reporting requirements

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 2013.

The research groups of successful collaborative projects 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 frameworks.

Each project must nominate a project coordinator, who represents the consortium externally and is responsible for its internal management towards the ERA-Net NEURON (such as controlling, reporting, intellectual property rights (IPR) issues). Within a joint proposal, each group leader will be the contact person for the relevant national/regional funding organization.

The project coordinator will be required to submit a brief annual scientific progress report on the project, on behalf of the research consortium, to the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS). It may also be necessary for group leaders to submit reports individually to their funding body should it be required. Participation in an intermediate and a final status symposium of the coordinator and group leaders will be expected.

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.

## Annex

Please note that country specific requirements might apply to this call. For further information follow the links below or contact your national/regional representative:

<b>Country (Region)</b>	<b>Contact person</b>	<b>Links to national/regional calls mentioning particular requirements</b>
Austria	Dr. Herbert Mayer	Austrian Science Fund (FWF) herbert.mayer@fwf.ac.at www.fwf.ac.at
Belgium (Flanders)	Dr. Olivier Boehme	Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) Egmontstraat 5 1000 Brussel www.fwo.be olivier.boehme@fwo.be
Canada (Québec)	Dr. Nathalie Champagne	Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS) nchampagne@frsq.gouv.qc.ca www.frsq.gouv.qc.ca
Finland	Dr. Mika Tirronen	Academy of Finland (AKA) mika.tirronen@aka.fi www.aka.fi/fi/
France	Dr. Jenifer Clark	National Funding Agency for Research (ANR) Health & Biology Department jenifer.clark@agencerecherche.fr +33 1 78 09 80 78 www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr
Germany	Dr. Petra Lüers	Programme Management Agency (PT-DLR) – Health Research, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) petra.lueers@dlr.de +49 228 3821 1194 www.gesundheitsforschung-bmbf.de
Israel	Dr. Nava Levine	Chief Scientist Office - Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) nl@013.net.il www.health.gov.il/
Italy	Dr. Gaetano Guglielmi	Ministero della Salute g.guglielmi@sanita.it www.ministerosalute.it/
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 (NCBiR) Section for Research Projects BIOMED m.chmielewski@ncbir.pl phone: + 48 22 24 42 858 fax.: +48 22 20 13 408 www.ncbir.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	Dr. Leon Zagrean	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development & Innovation Funding (EAHERDIF) , leon_zagrean@cnmp.ro phone/fax +40213120880

Spain I	Dr. Julio Barbas	Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) julio.barbas@micinn.es <a href="http://www.micinn.es/">http://www.micinn.es/</a>
Spain II (ISCIII)	Ms. Maria Druet  Mr. Juan E. Riese, PhD, MBA  Mr. Gaspar Giner–Abati Bache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Maria Druet Subdirección General de Evaluación y Fomento de la Investigación Instituto de Salud Carlos III Monforte de Lemos, 3 E-28029 Madrid – Spain E-mail: mdruet@isciii.es; Tel.: [++34] 91 82 22530.</li> <li>• Mr. Juan E. Riese, PhD, MBA Oficina de Proyectos Europeos Subdirección General de Programas Internacionales de Investigación y Relaciones Institucionales Instituto de Salud Carlos III Monforte de Lemos, 3 E-28029 Madrid – Spain email: jriese@isciii.es; Tel.: [++34] 91 82 22181</li> <li>• Mr. Gaspar Giner–Abati Bache Subdirección General de Evaluación y Fomento de la Investigación Instituto de Salud Carlos III Monforte de Lemos, 3 E-28029 Madrid – Spain email: gginer-abati@isciii.es; Tel.: [++34] 91 82 22477</li> </ul>