



Call for Proposals for

"Development and advancement in methods and technologies towards the understanding of brain diseases"

Submission deadline for pre-proposals: March 9, 2009

[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 by the World Health Organisation (World Health Report 2001), 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. With increasing average life-expectancy of the population especially in highly industrialized countries this percentage will continue to rise, as the incidence of neurodegenerative conditions increases with age. 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, a first transnational call was launched in January 2008 on the topic of neurodegenerative diseases of the central nervous system. The topic for the second joint transnational call was selected in the field of innovative technologies in neuroscience. The following funding organisations have agreed to fund the second 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
- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland¹
- National Research Agency (ANR), France
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany
- Chief Scientist Office, Israel Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH), Israel
- Ministry of Health (MOH), Italy
- National Research Fund (FNR), Luxembourg
- National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR), Poland
- National Centre for Programme Management (CNMP), Romania
- Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN), Spain
- Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) , Spain

¹ Provided the positive decision of the Academy Research Councils at the end of January 2009.

2. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to enable multi-national, collaborative research projects that will address the development and advancement in methods and technologies towards the understanding of the brain and its diseases. The scope of this call is not the funding of pure technology development *per se*. The focus of this call explicitly does not lie on the funding of infrastructure. Research projects have to be hypothesis-driven, combine cutting-edge technological developments with a clear, substantial research question. There is no sharp restriction concerning the specific technologies or methodologies used in the applications. These may include (without excluding others): Imaging techniques (including optical, MR and PET techniques), molecular and genetic approaches, stem cells and neural differentiation in relation with cell therapy, gene targeting in the brain, electrical and magnetic brain stimulation, and molecular modelling techniques. Neurodegenerative diseases pose an outstanding problem of ageing societies. Proposals addressing these diseases are especially welcome although the call is not restricted to this area.

The call may receive proposals within the breadth of research from understanding basic mechanisms of brain function and disease through to clinical studies in man. Clinical studies are eligible up to the point of 'proof of concept'². The ERA-Net NEURON partners particularly wish to promote **multidisciplinary working** and to encourage **translational research proposals** that combine basic and clinical approaches (from bench to bedside).

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.

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

² Eligibility and funding requirements for clinical trials vary between the partner countries. Clarification may be obtained from the individual funding agencies.

Only transnational projects will be funded. Each proposal must involve a minimum of three research groups from three different participating NEURON partner countries and a maximum of five research groups. Research groups from countries whose funding organisations are not partner of 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 start of the project.

Each consortium should have the critical mass to achieve ambitious scientific goals and **should clearly demonstrate added value** from working together. One project coordinator 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 funding organization and confirm eligibility matters before submitting an application.

3.2 Financial and legal modalities

Funding is available for projects of a duration of three years and is subject to national regulations. Eligible costs may vary according to the corresponding national funding agency's regulations. Each group is subject to the rules and regulations of its respective national 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 9, 2009** 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 national 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 funding organizations which will perform a formal check of compliance with their respective regulations. Proposals not meeting the formal criteria will be rejected. Proposals passing both 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. International competitiveness of participating research groups in the field(s) of the proposal (previous work in the field, expertise of the research groups)
4. Feasibility of the project (adequacy of project work plan, budgetary and other resources, time schedule)
5. Quality of collaborative interaction between the groups, and added value, on both levels scientific and transnational, 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. The coordinators of the top proposals will be

invited by the Joint Call Secretariat (JCS) to submit a full proposal approximately 6 weeks thereafter.

4.3.2 Full proposals

The international Joint Peer Review Panel will establish a ranking list of the proposals. Based on this ranking list, the Call Steering Committee will suggest the projects to be funded. Based on these recommendations, final decisions will be made by the national funding agencies and will be subject to budgetary considerations.

5. Funding procedure / Responsibilities / Reporting requirements

Projects can be funded for a period of three years. Funding is expected to start at the end of 2009 or early in 2010.

The national research groups of successful collaborative projects will be funded directly by the respective national funding organisations. Funding will be administered according to the terms and conditions of the responsible national funding organisations, taking into account all other applicable national 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 national group leader will be the contact person for the relevant national funding agency/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. It may also be necessary for national group leaders to submit reports individually to their national funding body should it be required.

Funding recipients must ensure that all outcomes (publications, etc.) of transnational NEURON projects include a proper acknowledgement of ERA-Net NEURON and the respective R&D funding bodies.

Annex

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

Country	Contact person	Links to national calls mentioning particular requirements
Austria	Dr. Herbert Mayer	Austrian Science Fund (FWF) herbert.mayer@fwf.ac.at http://www.fwf.ac.at
Finland	Dr. Jukka Reivinen	Academy of Finland (AKA) jukka.reivinen@aka.fi http://www.aka.fi/fi/
France	Dr. Véronique Briquet-Laugier	National Research Agency (ANR) Health & Biology Department Veronique.briquet-laugier@agencerecherche.fr www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr
Germany	Dr. Rainer Girgenrath	PT-DLR Programme Management Health Research rainer.girgenrath@dlr.de http://www.gesundheitsforschung-bmbf.de
Israel	Dr. Nava Levine	Chief Scientist Office - Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) nl@013.net.il http://www.health.gov.il/
Italy	Dr. Massimo Casciello	Ministero della Salute m.casciello@sanita.it http://www.ministerosalute.it/
Luxembourg	Dr. Frank Glod	Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR) frank.glod@fnr.lu http://www.fnr.lu/
Poland	Dr. Izabela Rzepczynska	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR) eranet-neuron@ncbir.gov.pl http://www.ncbir.gov.pl/?lang=pl (+48)515061529
Romania	Mrs. Lucia Popescu	National Centre for Programmes Management (CNMP) Tel/Fax: +4/021.311.95.92 lucia_popescu@cnmp.ro www.cnmp.ro/int
Spain I	Dr. Julio Barbas	Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) julio.barbas@micinn.es http://www.micinn.es/
Spain II	Ignacio Baanante Balastegui	Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII) Underdirectorat General For Research Assessment and Promotion (SGEFI) Fund for Health Research (FIS) ibaanante@isciii.es Tel.: (+34) 91 822 2406 Fax: (+34) 91 387 7766 http://www.isciii.es/htdocs/index.jsp