



Call for Proposals for

"European research projects on neurodegenerative diseases of the central nervous system"

Submission deadline: April 07, 2008

For further information, please visit us on the web

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

or contact

Dr. Rainer Loose
NEURON Joint Call Secretariat
PT-DLR
Programme Management Health Research
on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
Heinrich-Konen-Strasse 1
D-53227 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49-(0)228-3821-200
Fax: +49-(0)228-3821-257
E-mail: neuron-eranet@DLR.de

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, the following funding organisations have agreed to fund the first joint transnational call for transnational research projects on neurodegenerative diseases. 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
- National Research Agency (ANR), France
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany
- Chief Scientist Office, Israel Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH), Israel
- National Research Fund (FNR), Luxemburg
- Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW), Poland¹
- National Authority for Scientific Research - Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (ANCS - MECT), Romania
- Ministry of Education and Science (MEC), Spain
- Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII), Spain
- Swedish Research Council (SRC), Sweden
- Medical Research Council (MRC), UK

Possible partners:

- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland²
- Ministry of Health (MOH), Italy³

¹ The implementation of the call will be conducted by the The National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR).

² Provided the positive decision of the Academy Research Councils in February 2008.

³ Subject to formal commitment in February 2008.

2. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to enable transnational, collaborative research projects that will address important questions relating to human neurodegenerative diseases of the central nervous system. Cerebrovascular diseases (e.g. stroke) are not included in the present call. The call may receive proposals within the breadth of research from understanding basic mechanisms of disease through to proof-of-concept clinical studies in man. The ERA-Net NEURON funding organisations particularly wish to promote **multi-disciplinary working** and to encourage **translational research proposals** (from bench to patient bedside) that combine basic and clinical approaches.

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

- a) Fundamental research on the pathogenesis and aetiology of neurodegenerative diseases. This may include the development of innovative or shared resources and technologies. The relevance of the research to disease must be clearly indicated.
- b) Research to develop new strategies for (early) diagnosis, therapy, and rehabilitation procedures for neurodegenerative diseases.

Projects may include, **for example**, identification, characterisation and validation of biomarkers, biological targets, development of innovative screening systems, generation of novel model systems, gene or cell therapies. Clinical studies are eligible up to the point of proof of concept.

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 subprojects.

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).

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.

The composition of the consortium should be appropriate for the aims of the research project and **clearly demonstrate added value by the international collaboration**. 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 management.

Whilst applications will be submitted jointly by groups from several countries, individual components (subprojects) will be funded by the individual NEURON funding organisation(s) respective of the country from which applicants have applied. Subproject applications are therefore subject to eligibility criteria of individual funding organisations. **Therefore, applicants are strongly advised to discuss their intentions and confirm eligibility with their respective funding organisations in advance of 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

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 coordinator, in **electronic format** by the **deadline no later than April 07, 2008**, and in a signed paper version **(1 original + 4 copies) no later than April 14, 2008**.

Proposals must include the following information, provided on the respective forms (proposal template, template for financial data, electronic application) available through the NEURON website:

- Names and full affiliations of the project coordinator
- Names and full affiliations of the subproject leaders and other personnel participating in the joint project.
- Scientific abstract (max. ½ page)
- Lay abstract (max ½ page)
- Background and present state of the art in the research field and rationale (max. 2 pages)

- Work plan highlighting the originality and novelty (aims, methodology, involvement of participants, time plan, project coordination and management; max. 8 pages)
- Financial plan for each subproject provided on the respective table available within the electronic application data sheet.
- Justification of requested budget (also specifying co-funding from other sources necessary for the project, if applicable; max. 1 page)
- Added value of the proposed collaboration (max. 1 page)
- Possible exploitation of expected project results including data management and data sharing (max. ½ page)
- Handling of intellectual property rights (IPR) (e.g. any barriers to sharing materials or results), both within and outside the research consortium (max. ½ page)
- Description of patents and ongoing projects of each participating group related to the present topic, indicating funding sources and possible overlaps with proposal (max. ½ page per subproject)
- Ethical and legal issues (e.g. informed consent, data protection, use of animals), if applicable, according to national regulations
- Brief CVs for each participating subproject leader with a list of up to five relevant publications within the last five years demonstrating the competence to carry out the project (max. 1 page each)

3.4 Further information

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

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). The JCS will also check the scientific eligibility of the proposal (e.g. conformity with the disease spectrum of the call).

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 consideration for funding.

4.2 Peer-review of proposals

The PRP members 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
6. Potential of the expected results for future clinical and other health relevant applications

4.3 Decision

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 2008 or early in 2009.

Subprojects of successful collaborative projects will be funded directly by the respective national funding organisations who will also meet the necessary administration and management costs. 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.

A single project coordinator, who represents the research consortium towards the ERA-Net NEURON and externally, will be responsible for its internal management. Although he or she bears the overall scientific responsibility for the project towards NEURON, each principal investigator of a subproject is fully responsible for the research outcome towards the NEURON partner organisation respective of the country from which he or she has applied.

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 subproject leaders to submit reports individually to their national funding body should it be required.

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. Mika Tirronen	Academy of Finland (AKA) mika.tirronen@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 Loose	PT-DLR Programme Management Health Research rainer.loose@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/
Luxemburg	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	Prof. Dr. Leon Zagrean	CAROL DAVILA University of Medicine and Pharmacy/Neuroscience lzagrean@univermed-cdgm.ro http://www.mct.ro/ancs_web/index.php
Spain I	Dr. Julio Barbas	Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) julio.barbas@mec.es http://www.mec.es/
Spain II	Dr. Rafael De Andrés Medina	Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII) Fund for Health Research (FIS) rdam@isciii.es tel: (++34) 918222508 http://www.isciii.es/htdocs/index.jsp
Sweden	Dr. Leif Järlebank	The Swedish Research Council (SRC) leif.jarlebank@vr.se http://www.vr.se/
UK	Dr. Joanna Latimer	Medical Research Council (MRC) joanna.latimer@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk http://www.mrc.ac.uk/index.htm