

## GRANT FOR FERTILITY INNOVATION (GFI)

### HOW TO APPLY

Applications for the GFI 2016 grant will be open from 1st of July until 30th of November 2015.

The following information outlines the application and selection process for researchers who wish their projects to be considered for GFI 2016. For more detailed application information, please refer to the GFI Application Instructions and GFI Program Description and Program Rules.

#### 1. Who is eligible to apply for a Merck Serono Grant for Fertility Innovation?

Researchers from around the world may apply for a grant if they are involved in innovative translational research projects associated with the processes and technologies applied between the time of oocyte retrieval and embryo transfer, which could potentially provide an improvement in implantation, pregnancy and take home baby rate. Applicants must be aware that to be eligible to apply they must have completed a pilot study utilizing their technology, with positive outcomes in the improvement of implantation, pregnancy and take home baby rates.

#### 2. How to apply

Step 1: Evaluate if your project fulfills the criteria of inclusion by asking the following questions:

- Is your project proven in a pilot to improve take home baby rate?
- Is your project innovative?
- So, does your project have a scientific rationale?
- Is your project feasible to apply in a clinical environment?
- Is your project applicable in a clinical environment?

Step 2: Applicants should send an e-mail expressing their interest to [gfi@merckgroup.com](mailto:gfi@merckgroup.com) They will then receive an automatic reply inviting them to complete a questionnaire and a brief description of their research project.

Step 3: Applicants should submit their completed questionnaire and details of their project to [gfi-proposals@merckgroup.com](mailto:gfi-proposals@merckgroup.com). In response they will receive an acknowledgement of the completion of their submission, which concludes the initial application process. If the applicant does not receive a request to complete the questionnaire or an acknowledgement of the completion of the initial application process ('Thank You' message), they must assume that their application has not been received by the GFI administrator, and should therefore resubmit their initial enquiry to [gfi-proposals@merckgroup.com](mailto:gfi-proposals@merckgroup.com).

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### 3. The review process

The Merck Serono GFI Scientific Committee - formed by an internal committee of Merck Serono reproductive endocrinologists, embryologists and PhDs in reproductive biology - undertakes a rigorous process of review and assessment of eligible projects, before validating its selection of grant Awardees. The names of the applicants and their institutions are completely blind to the members of the GFI Scientific Committee to avoid any bias and to keep the scientific merit of the proposals as the key criteria for selection.

All proposals are evaluated in three rounds of selection and rated from 1-5 (with 5 being the highest) against each of the following criteria:

1. Support to increase take home baby rate
2. Innovative research
3. Scientific rationale
4. Feasibility to apply in the clinical environment
5. Practical utility

A final score is then calculated and the projects ranked accordingly. After each round of selection, Merck Serono will contact successful applicants individually to inform them of the status of their application and eventually request additional information. All projects that pass to the second round of review will have to submit the formal protocol, a detailed budget, their CV and a signed document, confirming their acceptance of the GFI rules and regulations for advanced applications.

Data protection information: By submitting the information requested in the questionnaire, you understand and agree that Merck Serono may share personally identifiable data about you with outside companies or agents working on our behalf, as well as company's subsidiaries and affiliates, to help process the submissions. All these companies and agents are required to comply with the terms of our privacy policies. Some of this data may be stored or processed on computers located in other jurisdictions, such as the United States, whose data protection laws may differ from those in the jurisdiction in which you live. In such cases, we will ensure that appropriate protections are in place to require the data processor in that country to maintain protections on the data that are equivalent to those that apply in Germany.

#### **4. How is the awarding of the grant formalised?**

The awarding of the grant is subject to the signature of a contract between the Awardee and Merck Serono, which documents the conditions of the grant and the further collaboration between Merck Serono and the Awardee(s).

#### **5. Do Awardees have to get involved in publicity surrounding the GFI?**

Merck Serono retains the exclusive right to make any press release or any kind of public communication about the GFI project, the grant(s) and the Awardee(s).

#### **6. What happens to applications that are not successful?**

Merck Serono treats all submissions confidentially and information relating to submissions which are not selected for a grant is destroyed. Merck Serono does not keep copies of the submissions.

#### **7. Which are the timelines for the review process?**

- 1st round of review will be completed by December 30th
- 2nd round of review will be completed by February 15th
- 3rd and final round of review will be completed by March 30th