



Call for Proposals for
**RESEARCH PROJECTS ON SYNAPTIC DYSFUNCTION IN
DISORDERS OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM**

Submission deadline for pre-proposals: 14 March 2017, 14:00 CET

Electronic proposal submission



For further information, please visit us on the web

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

or contact

NEURON Joint Call Secretariat:
National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)
Maria Druet

Phone: +34 918 222530

E-Mail: mdruet@isciii.es

1. Purpose

Maintenance, improvement and restoration of human health are of fundamental importance and worldwide priority. Biomedical and health research provide an important basis for the improvement of healthy living. Disorders of the brain are major causes of morbidity, mortality and impaired quality of life. Around one billion people suffer from disorders of the central nervous system. In Europe, disorders of the brain account for approximately one-third of the burden of all diseases. Therefore, neuroscience research and its translation into diagnostic and therapeutic outcomes are fundamental.

To address this, 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 aim of the ERA-NET NEURON is to coordinate research efforts and funding programmes of its partner countries in the field of disease related neuroscience.

Under the umbrella of NEURON, a joint transnational call (JTC-2017) is now launched in the field of Synaptic dysfunction in disorders of the central nervous system. The following funding organizations have agreed to fund the joint call for multinational research projects in this scientific area. The call will be conducted simultaneously by the funding organizations in their respective countries and coordinated centrally by the Joint Call Secretariat.

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| • Austrian Science Fund (FWF) | Austria |
| • Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS) | Belgium |
| • Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) | Belgium |
| • Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS) (Québec) | Canada |
| • Academy of Finland (AKA) | Finland |
| • French National Research Agency (ANR) | France |
| • Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) | Germany |
| • Chief Scientist Office, Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) | Israel |
| • The National Technological Innovation Authority | Israel |
| • Ministry of Health (MOH) | Italy |
| • State Education Development Agency (VIAA) | Latvia |
| • The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) | The Netherlands |
| • The Research Council of Norway (RCN) | Norway |
| • National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) | Poland |
| • Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development & Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) | Romania |
| • Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) | Slovakia |
| • National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) | Spain |
| • Ministry of Economy Industry and Competitiveness | Spain |
| • Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) | Switzerland |
| • The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) | Turkey |

2. Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to facilitate multinational, collaborative research projects that will address important questions related to the synaptic dysfunction of the central nervous system. Defective synaptic communication is at the origin of numerous neurological and mental disorders – synaptopathies - such as epilepsies, migraine, autism spectrum disorders, schizophrenia, mood disorders and others. The synaptopathies are often characterized by common alterations of proteins and molecular pathways affecting either neurons or glia at synapses and altering pre- and/or post-synaptic function. The present call will accept proposals addressing the disease-related synaptic dysfunction with approaches ranging from understanding basic mechanisms of disease to proof-of-concept therapeutically-driven clinical studies in humans.

The ERA-NET NEURON funding organizations particularly wish to promote **multi-disciplinary work** and **translational research proposals** that combine basic and clinical approaches. Therefore, the participation of clinicians is encouraged.

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

- a) Fundamental research on the pathogenesis and/or aetiology of synaptopathies. This may include the development of innovative or shared resources and new technologies for prevention, diagnosis or therapy of disease.
- b) Clinical research, including the exploitation of existing clinical data sets, to develop new strategies for prevention, diagnosis, and therapy for diseases in which synaptic dysfunction plays a key role.

The research proposals should focus on common neurological and mental disorders or cross-disease approaches. They may encompass the entire lifespan.

The individual components of joint applications should be complementary and contain novel, ambitious ideas to answer key questions or lead to a step-wise change in understanding. There should be a clear added value in funding the collaboration over the individual projects.

Clinical studies up to the point of proof of concept are eligible for funding¹.

Excluded from this call are research projects focused on:

- 1) Peripheral nervous system diseases,
- 2) Purely basic research projects focused on synaptic function without a clear objective of addressing the synaptic dysfunction in the context of neurological and mental disorders,
- 3) Primarily neurodegenerative disorders, since they are addressed by the “EU Joint Programme - Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND)”.

¹ Eligibility and funding requirements for clinical trials vary between the partner countries. Clarification may be obtained from the individual funding agencies.

3. Application

3.1 Eligibility

Joint transnational research proposals may be submitted by research teams working in universities (or other higher education institutions), non-university public research institutes, hospitals, as well as in commercial companies, particularly small and medium-size enterprises. The eligibility of the afore-mentioned institutions, together with details of eligible costs (e.g. personnel, material, consumables, travel money, investments), are subject to the administrative requirements of individual funding organizations and will therefore differ. Please note that, for some funding organizations, commercial companies are not eligible or are only eligible under certain conditions (e.g. only in partnership with academic institutions in the consortium). Clarification should be obtained from the individual funding agencies (see contact details below). It is advised to read carefully all national annexes regarding eligibility and funding by the respective funding agencies.

Only transnational projects will be funded. Each consortium submitting a proposal must be comprised of a minimum of three research groups eligible for funding by organizations listed in this call text (see above). The eligible research groups must be from at least three different countries. The total number of research groups in a consortium is limited to five. No more than two research groups can be from the same country.

The ERA-NET NEURON strives to strengthen the European Research Area by including as many partner countries as possible in its funding scheme. Therefore, consortia including partners from countries that are to date underrepresented in this funding scheme (Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey) may increase the total number of partners to six.

Research groups not eligible to their national funding organizations or from countries which are not involved in this call may participate in projects only if their participation clearly provides an added value to the consortium and if they present evidence on secured budget for their part in the project. Such research groups are not considered in the minimum number of three research groups mentioned above. In any case, the total number of research groups in one consortium must not exceed five, or six if one of the underrepresented countries listed above is comprised.

Each consortium should have the critical mass to achieve ambitious scientific goals and **should clearly demonstrate added value** from working together. Each project must nominate a project coordinator who represents the consortium externally and is responsible for its internal management (e.g. the application procedure, the consortium agreement, reporting). The consortium coordinator must be eligible to be funded by one of the organizations listed in this call text.

Only projects that fulfil the legal and ethical international/EU and national and institutional standards will be funded. Funding for this kind of projects will be dependent on a positive vote from the

responsible ethical and legal committee(s). All procedures involving human beings will conform to the Helsinki Declaration.

Although applications must be submitted jointly by groups from several countries, the individual research groups will be funded by the individual NEURON funding organization(s) of their respective countries. Eligibility criteria are the matter of individual partner funding organizations.

Inclusion of a partner in a proposal who is not eligible for funding according to the specific regulations of their respective funding agency may result in the rejection of the entire proposal without further review.

Therefore, applicants are strongly advised to follow the instructions contained in the country-specific eligibility tables which are published on the NEURON website and to contact their **national/regional funding organization to confirm eligibility** before submitting an application.

3.2 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 by one spokesperson, the coordinator.

Pre-proposals must be submitted in electronic format no later than **14 March, 2017** (14:00:00 CET) via the **electronic submission** system.

Any fundamental changes between the pre- and full proposals concerning the composition of the consortia, objectives of the project or **requested** budget will be accepted on permission of the Call Steering Committee, which may be granted in exceptional cases if detailed justification is provided to the Joint Call Secretariat.

NOTE: Full proposals will be accepted only from those applicants **explicitly invited** by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit them.

3.3 Further information

For further details, please refer to the respective submission forms available through the NEURON web site. If you need additional information, please contact the Joint Call Secretariat, or the representative of your funding organization (see Annex for contact data).

4. Evaluation and decision

The review process will be in two stages.

4.1 Formal check of proposals

The Joint Call Secretariat will check the proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (e.g. date of submission; number of participating countries; inclusion of all necessary information in English). The Joint Call Secretariat will also forward the proposals to the national/regional funding organizations, which will perform a formal and eligibility check of compliance with their respective regulations.

The Joint Call Secretariat and national/regional funding organisations will perform cross-checks in parallel submissions to other joint transnational calls (e.g., E-RARE, JPND, EuroNanoMed, ERA-CoSysMed and others) and national calls. Applicants shall avoid applying for same research activities to different calls. Double funding is not allowed.

Proposals not meeting the formal criteria will be rejected at this stage. Proposals passing these check points will be forwarded to the joint Peer Review Panel for evaluation.

4.2 Peer-review of proposals

The reviewers will assess if the projects are within the scope of the call and carry out the evaluation according to specific evaluation criteria:

1. Excellence
 - Scientific quality of the approach and methodology
 - Novelty of the scientific concept/hypotheses
 - Competence and experience of participating research partners in the field(s) of the proposal (previous work in the field, specific technical expertise)
2. Impact
 - Potential impact of the expected results on clinical and other health related applications
 - Added-value of transnational collaboration
3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation
 - Feasibility of the project
 - Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, resources, time-frame and related risk analysis
 - Quality and added-value of collaborative and multi-disciplinary interactions within the consortium
 - Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures

4.3 Decision

4.3.1 Pre-proposals

Eligible pre-proposals will be reviewed using the above mentioned evaluation criteria via a written (remote) peer review process. Based on the scores in the written reviews a ranking list will be set up. Preferably, each pre-proposal will be reviewed by at least three reviewers. By mid May 2017, the coordinators of the selected proposals will be invited by the Joint Call Secretariat to submit a full proposal **no later than 29th June, 2017, 14:00 CET**.

4.3.2 Full proposals

The international Peer Review Panel will evaluate the full proposals based on the above mentioned evaluation criteria and establish a ranking list of the fundable proposals by 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 organizations and will be subject to budgetary considerations.

5. Funding procedure / Responsibilities / Reporting requirements

5.1 Funding procedure

Projects can be funded for a period of up to three years and according to funding organizations' regulations. Funding is expected to start **early in 2018**.

Successful research groups will be funded directly by the respective funding organizations.

Funding will be administered according to the terms and conditions of the responsible funding organizations, taking into account all other applicable regulations and legal requirements.

5.2 Responsibilities

Within a joint proposal, each group leader will be the contact person for the relevant national/regional funding organization. The coordinators of funded projects together with the respective funding organizations shall make every effort to seek a common start date for all research groups in the consortium.

After the evaluation and selection procedures are completed, each consortium selected to be funded is required to draft and sign a Consortium Agreement (CA) suitable to their own team. The CA will determine a common project start date, manage the delivery of project activities, finances and intellectual property rights (IPR), and avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project. All consortia are strongly encouraged to sign the CA before the official project start date; the CA must be signed within the first six months after the project start date.

5.3 Reporting Requirements

On behalf of the research consortium, the project coordinator will be required to submit a brief annual scientific progress report on the project and one final report in the end, to the Joint Call Secretariat. Group leaders may be required to submit reports separately to their national funding organization; reporting guidance will be forwarded by the relevant funding organization, as applicable.

Annual reports should be submitted by April, 30, the following year. Annual reports do not need to be submitted if the project ends in the first three months of the following year (e.g. between January and March). In this case, the submission of a final report will suffice. However, instead of submitting the final report within the usual six month period (see below), the final report will be required within four months of project completion.

The deadline for submitting final reports is six months after the end of the project. It is the task of the coordinators to determine a formal end date for project completion. This is required, as partners may be granted extensions of different duration. Coordinators will be informed about this procedure by the Joint Call Secretariat and will receive the report template in due course.

The coordinators will be asked to present a progress report during an intermediate status symposium. The attendance is obligatory for all coordinators and Principal Investigators (PIs). Early-career scientists working on the projects are welcome to join the status symposium together with the PIs. Accordingly, travel expenses to attend the symposium should be encumbered in the proposal budget plans.

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 organizations, and are in line with the relevant publication requirements.

Annex I. Contact details

Please note that country specific requirements might apply to this call. **Compliance with the national/regional regulations specified in the country specific information is mandatory. We strongly advise you to contact your national/regional representative prior to submitting a pre-proposal:**

Country (Region)	Contact person(s)	Funding organizations contact Details
Austria	Dr Herbert Mayer	Austrian Science Fund (FWF) herbert.mayer@fwf.ac.at Tel. +43-1-5056740-8212
Belgium (Wallonia)	Dr Arnaud Goolaerts	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS) rue d'Egmont 5 1000 Bruxelles Tél. +32 (0)2 504 93 28 arnaud.goolaerts@frs-fnrs.be
Belgium (Flanders)	Dr Olivier Boehme Toon Monbaliu	Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) Egmontstraat 5 1000 Brussel www.fwo.be eranet@fwo.be +32 2 550 15 70
Canada (Québec)	Dr Anne-Cécile Desfaits Karine Genest	Fonds de recherche du Québec-Santé (FRQS) AnneCecile.Desfaits@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-0463 Karine.Genest@frq.gouv.qc.ca 514-873-2114 #1275 www.frqs.gouv.qc.ca
Finland	Dr Hannele Lahtinen Dr Sirpa Nuotio	Academy of Finland http://www.aka.fi/en/funding/apply-now/ Hannele Lahtinen +358 295 33 5055, hannele.lahtinen@aka.fi Sirpa Nuotio +358 295 33 5082, sirpa.nuotio@aka.fi
France	Dr Sheyla Mejia-Gervacio	French National Research Agency (ANR) Health & Biology Department NeuronCalls@agencerecherche.fr +33 178 09 80 14
Germany	Dr Sascha Helduser	Project Management Agency (DLR-PT) – Health Research, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) Sascha.Helduser@dlr.de +49 228 3821 1116 www.gesundheitsforschung-bmbf.de
Israel	Dr Ahmi Ben-Yehudah Dr Ayelet Zamir	Chief Scientist Office - Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH) http://www.health.gov.il/Subjects/research/International_cooperations/Pages/default.aspx ahmi.by@moh.gov.il +972-2-508-2161 ayelet.zamir@moh.gov.il +972-2-508-2168

Israel	Mrs. Ayala Karniol Mrs. Lior Ben Artzi-Gershon	The Israel-Europe R&D Directorate (ISERD) on behalf of The National Technological Innovation Authority ayala@iserd.org.il lior@iserd.org.il
Italy	Dr Gaetano Guglielmi	Ministero della Salute g.guglielmi@sanita.it www.ministerosalute.it/
Latvia	Dr Uldis Berkis	State Education Development Agency www.viaa.gov.lv Uldis.Berkis@viaa.gov.lv Office: +371-67785406 Mobile: +371-29472349
Netherlands	Dr. Rob Heinsbroek	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) www.nwo.nl r.heinsbroek@nwo.nl Tel: +31 70 3440987
Norway	Dr Alexandra Bjørk-Skaflestad	The Research Council of Norway (RCN) alb@rcn.no Tel.: +47 22 03 72 24
Poland	Dr. Marcin Chmielewski	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) Section for Research Projects BIOMED marcin.chmielewski@ncbr.gov.pl phone: + 48 22 39 07 109 fax.: +48 22 20 13 408 www.ncbr.pl
Romania	Mrs. Mihaela Manole	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) Mihaela.manole@uefiscdi.roTel: +4 021 30 23 863
Slovakia	Dr Jan Barancik Mrs. Katarina Bibova	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) Department for International Cooperation barancik@up.upsav.sk +421 2 5751 0137 bibova@up.upsav.sk +421 2 5751 0136 www.sav.sk
Spain	Mrs. Maria Druet	National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII) SG de Programas Internacionales de Investigación y Relaciones Institucionales phone: +34 91 822 2530 mdruet@isciii.es
Spain	Dr David Gonzalez Martinez	Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad Subdirección de Proyectos Internacionales neuron@mineco.es
Switzerland	Dr Véronique Planchamp	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Division Biology and Medicine veronique.planchamp@snf.ch Tel: +41 31 308 22 22
Turkey	Dr Recep Emrah Çevik	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) www.tubitak.gov.tr emrah.cevik@tubitak.gov.tr

Annex II. Anticipated amount of funding provided by each partner

The intended contribution by each participating funding organization to be used for the joint trans-national call for research projects is listed below.

Partner Country	Funding body	Anticipated amount of funding (for 3 years)	Anticipated number of fundable research groups
Austria	Austrian Science Fund (FWF)	600.000	2
Belgium	Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS)	200.000	1
Belgium	Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO)	200.000	1
Canada (Québec)	Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS)	\$CAD450, 000 (€320,000)	2
Finland	Academy of Finland (AKA)	600.000	2-3
France	French National Research Agency (ANR)	1 500 000 €	6-7
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)	3.000.000€	Up to 10
Israel	Ministry of Health (CSO-MOH)	Up to 210,000€ 100,000€ per project, for maximum two projects. An additional 10,000€ will be given if Israeli re-searcher is a con- sortium coordinator.	Up to 2 pro- jects
Israel	National Technological Innovation Authority	500.000 €	N/A
Italy	Ministry of Health (MOH)	tbd	tbd
Latvia	State Education Development Agency (VIAA), Latvia	210.000	1 project
The Netherlands	The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)	250.000	tbd
Norway	The Research Council of Norway (RCN)	500.000	1-2
Poland	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR)	500 000 EUR Up to 250 000 EUR per project, regardless of the number of Polish research groups in the project consortium.	1-3
Romania	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development & Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)	350.000	1-2

Slovakia	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)	120.000€	1
Spain	National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)	250.000	2-3 project
Spain	Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness	600.000	3-4
Switzerland	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)	3-4	tbd
Turkey	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK)	350.000	2-3