

Call 28 for research proposals on “Innovative and sustainable models of patient-centered and patient-driven care in rheumatic and musculoskeletal disorders ”.

Introduction

The Foundation for Research in Rheumatology (FOREUM) recognizes the need for innovative and sustainable models of care in the field of rheumatic and musculoskeletal disorders (RMDs). We are pleased to announce the next call for research proposals focused on developing and implementing scientific research-based patient-centered and patient-driven approaches to improve the care and well-being of individuals living with RMDs. This call aims to stimulate impactful scientific research that revolutionizes the way care is delivered, ensuring that it is tailored to individual needs and supports long-term sustainability.

We encourage scientific proposals that address the following areas:

1. Patient-Centered Care:
 - Develop and evaluate models of care that prioritize the individual needs, preferences, and goals of people living with RMDs.
 - Investigate interventions that enhance patient engagement and shared decision-making, empowering individuals and families to actively participate in patient’s care.
 - Explore scientific strategies to improve communication and collaboration between healthcare professionals and patients, fostering a strong partnership.
2. Patient-Driven Approaches:
 - Support scientific projects that enable patients to play a more active role in managing their condition and accessing the necessary care and resources.
 - Support scientific projects that enable patients to play a more active role in developing research questions (tailored on the specific needs of their peers – people living with RMDs), thus becoming future partners in the research process.
 - Investigate the impact of patient-led scientific initiatives, support networks, and peer-to-peer interventions on the overall well-being and quality of life for people with RMDs.
3. Sustainable Care Models:
 - Propose and evaluate science-driven innovative care delivery models that optimize resources, increase efficiency, and promote long-term sustainability.
 - Investigate scientific strategies to address the ethical considerations, information sharing, and privacy issues associated with implementing technology-driven care models.
 - Propose scientific models that can have a broad implementation across European countries.

Eligibility

FOREUM primarily encourages collaboration across Europe and therefore requires multi-center project applications involving partners from at least three different countries. Any given institution shall be allowed to lead on only one application. However, that institution, or its staff may participate in other projects as collaborators. The call shall be open to participants from EULAR membership countries. Also, the Principal Investigator should come from a **EULAR membership country**. Centers from non-EULAR membership countries can participate as partners in exceptional cases (e.g. specific scientific expertise), but will not be eligible to receive research funding. Members of the FOREUM committees and EULAR Executive Committee are not allowed to submit or to participate in applications.

Budget

The call is designed to fund a range of research projects. An individual proposal may be funded with **up to** a maximal amount of **600.000 Euro for a 3-year funding period**, provided the expenditure is appropriately justified. Collaborating partners should have a substantial part of the budget to appropriately conduct research. Projects will be subjected to an interim evaluation of progress and

will have to offer a written final report. Submitted publications can be used as part of the report.

How to apply

Applications should be made electronically (email to info@foreum.org). Necessary application forms can be downloaded at www.foreum.org.

Letter of intent

All applicants considering submission of a proposal are invited to send a short 'scientific letter of intent' by **5 November 2023** to FOREUM (email to info@foreum.org) accompanied by a 'lay (non-scientific language for the general public) summary letter of intent', for review by patients. The structure and required content of the letter of intent are described in the 'Letter of intent template' available from www.foreum.org. Letters of intent should not only include information on the study question and its novelty, but also the agreement of the participating centers to collaborate in data analyses or to provide aggregated or raw data in line with national regulations and their governing boards. Letters of intent will be assessed by members of the FOREUM Scientific Committee on these aspects:

- Relevance to the subject matter of the call
- Feasibility
- Novelty and importance for the field of rheumatology
- Design and processes

Applications deemed meritorious of full application will be selected on a competitive basis. Please note that the lay summary is a critical part of our evaluation as the views of people with RMDs are central in our decision-making process. Trained Patient Research Partners will evaluate the lay summary on these aspects:

- Relevance to the call and importance for patients
- Appropriateness of the research design and methods
- Active participation of people with Rheumatic or Musculoskeletal Diseases
- Burden for patients participating in this study

The Secretariat will respond by **12 February 2023** as to whether the proposal meets the scope, priority and requirements of the call such that a full application will be invited.

Full project proposal

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal; they will be sent the full project proposal template. To facilitate review by patients, additionally a lay (non-scientific language for the general public) summary must also be completed at this stage. Both forms will be provided to applicants invited to submit a full proposal. Full research proposals must be submitted electronically by **11 April 2023** to the FOREUM Secretariat.

Participation of patient research partners

Participation of patient research partners is strongly recommended for all research projects to provide experiential knowledge, with the aim of improving the relevance, quality and validity of the research process.

For more information, please read the material on http://www.eular.org/pare_patient_research_partners.cfm

Additionally, **equality** considering participation of patient research partners is essential to ensure that research focuses on what matters most to patients, is conducted in an ethical and respectful manner, and ultimately may contribute to improved health outcomes

Equity

FOREUM is dedicated to equal opportunities, gender equality, and inclusion.

Evaluation and decision

The proposals will be independently peer-reviewed to evaluate their feasibility, novelty, design, relevance, and potential impact relative to the subject matter of the call. In addition, the involvement of patient-related research partners will be evaluated. Based on this peer review, the

FOREUM Scientific Committee will make a funding recommendation to the FOREUM Executive Committee, which will make funding decisions in June 2023. Final decisions will be communicated by the FOREUM Secretariat by beginning of July 2023.

Ethical aspects

FOREUM expects a high standard in the conduct of research it funds. For researchers this includes scientific integrity and adherence to the principles of good research practice. Patients subjected to investigation shall be included with due adherence to the declaration of Helsinki. Declaration of Interest forms will be completed by all successful applicants.

Management of the call

The FOREUM call and approval process will be administered by the FOREUM Secretariat, together with the FOREUM Scientific Committee.

Call Timeline

Call issued	25 September 2023
Closing date for Letter of intent	05 November 2023
Decisions on Letter of intent announced	12 February 2024
Closing date for full proposals	14 April 2024
Decisions on full proposals announced	01 July 2024