

Open Call for Innovative Medicine in RMDs

Introduction

FOREUM Foundation for Research in Rheumatology announces a program to support innovative concepts to improve the diagnosis and treatment of Rheumatic Musculoskeletal Diseases (RMDs). This program is designed as an open research call seeking for the best and most visionary approaches to better understand RMDs and to improve the life of patients with RMDs. As such, the call is not limited to a specific disease within the RMD spectrum but rather intends to target fundamentally new concepts that have potential to gain concept-changing insights into RMDs. Rapid improvements in molecular biotechnology, imaging and computer sciences have started to influence today's medicine in so far unprecedented manner. These developments open entirely new possibilities for the RMD field, which are appreciated by FOREUM and have instigated to announce this open call to foster innovative medicine approaches.

Scope

FOREUM seeks to support projects in the following areas:

- New approaches such as, but not limited to molecular biotechnology, imaging and computer sciences that improve diagnosis, phenotyping and treatment of RMDs
- Conceptually innovative but also, with respect to budget and timelines feasible experimental medicine studies that use novel technologies to create new hypothesis with respect to disease stratification, early diagnosis and better treatment
- Concepts that address new frontiers in RMDs that have so far escaped widespread attention or where there is current high unmet need for improving science and disease management

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 the global scientific community; however, we stipulate that the Principal Investigator should come from a [EULAR membership country](#). Similarly, whereas participating centers may be from outside Europe to provide necessary expertise, the majority of contribution should be from EULAR member countries. Members of the FOREUM committees and EULAR Executive Committee are not allowed to submit or to participate in applications.

Budget

This 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 March 5th 2019 to FOREUM (email to info@foreum.org) accompanied by a 'lay summary letter of intent', for review by patients. For applying, please use the templates that are available at 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. 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. The Secretariat will respond by April 1st 2019 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 Proforma template. To facilitate review by patients, additionally a Lay Summary Proposal 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 May 17th 2019 to the FOREUM Secretariat.

Participation of patient research partners

Participation of patient research partners is strongly recommended for clinical research projects and should be considered for all other 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

Evaluation and decision

The full project proposals will then be externally, independently peer-reviewed to evaluate their feasibility, novelty, design, relevance and potential impact relative to the subject matter of the call. 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 2019. Final decisions will be communicated by the FOREUM Secretariat by July 1st 2019.

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.

Timeline

Call issued:	28 January 2019
Closing date for Letter of intent:	5 March 2019
Decisions on Letter of intent announced:	1 April 2019
Closing date for full proposals:	17 May 2019

Decisions on full proposals announced: 1 July 2019
Projects to begin by: 1 September 2019

Inquiries

For general inquiries please contact the FOREUM Secretariat at info@foreum.org.