



ITMO Neurosciences,
sciences cognitives, neurologie, psychiatrie



La science pour la santé
From science to health



CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2020/2021

Research projects

“Vision-related diseases: origins and treatments”

This call for proposals is organized by the Multi-Organism Thematic Institute Neurosciences, cognitive sciences, neurology and psychiatry (ITMO NNP) from the national alliance for life science and health (AVIESAN), in partnership with the National Union for Blind and Visually Impaired People (UNADEV).

Inserm was entrusted with its management.

AVIESAN – UNADEV – AAP « Les maladies de la vision : origines et traitements », 2020-2021



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1. Background and goals of the call for proposals

Within the frame of the partnership with UNADEV (National Union for Blind and Visually Impaired People), ITMO NNP launch a call for proposals which aims to fund research in the field of “vision disorders” led by individual teams or consortia of up to three teams. The call for proposals 2020-2021 will focus on the topic of “Vision-related diseases: origins and treatments”.

This call for proposals is open to all research teams affiliated to members or partner members of AVIESAN (see list in appendix).

2. Areas covered by the call for proposals

The understanding of the organization and the normal and pathological function of the visual system over lifespan represents a major challenge and a societal issue. The call for proposals 2020-2021 covers research in the following areas:

- Function of the visual system (at the molecular, cellular and tissue level)
- Visual information processing, from retina to brain
- Normal and pathological development, plasticity of the visual system
- Mechanisms involved in vision-related diseases
- Clinical research
- Regenerative and compensatory approaches and advance therapies

3. Rules for participation

a. Projects duration

The project duration is set between 12 to 36 months. Projects are to begin during the first semester of 2021 for 2020 laureates and at the latest in the second semester of 2021 for 2021 laureates.

b. Eligible team(s) and coordinator

Eligible team(s)

- Each project should involve one or up to three teams, members or associated members of AVIESAN, as defined in the restrictive list in appendix of the present Call for proposals.
- Participation of industrial partners is allowed if they provide their own funding in the project.

Coordinator

- The project coordinator shall be an employee holding a permanent position of a public research organization, a public higher education establishment or a public health institution and carry her/his research activity within an organization member or associated member of AVIESAN.
- The coordinator and associated teams leaders shall remain in work during the whole project duration. (Researchers emeritus, or gaining this status during the requested contract duration, are not eligible.)
- In addition to scientific and technical coordination, the coordinator is responsible for the production of required documents (scientific and financial reports), organization of meetings, progress of the project and communication of the results.

c. Managing organization(s)

- Each team shall state which institution will be the administrator for the allocated funds for the project.
- The Managing organization(s) will be contractually bound to Inserm for the execution of the contract and the transmission of all scientific and financial reports described in the agreement.
- If the project involves several teams receiving each a share of the allocated funds, the Managing organization(s) for these teams will sign a single agreement with Inserm.
- The bank identity statement of each Managing organization shall be annexed to the Fund attribution act.

4. Eligibility requirements and projects assessment criteria

Once the eligibility requirements checked, files will be assessed by a committee of international experts, whose members cannot be involved in the projects. Projects not meeting the eligibility requirements, described in point 4a, will not be evaluated. Once the list of selected projects published, the evaluation committee's composition will be published on both the ITMO NNP and UNADEV websites. The judgment of the experts, made anonymous, will be sent by ITMO NNP on request from the project coordinator. A single evaluation will be organized for the call for proposals 2020-2021. Projects will be interfiled and the list of selected projects will be defined. Based on the ranking of the projects some will be funded in 2020 and other in 2021.

a. Eligibility requirements

To be eligible, projects shall meet both the requirements mentioned above in point 3b and the following requirements:



- The application file shall be complete, include all required documents and abide by the application procedure listed at point 16.
- The project shall meet the goals of this call for proposals and fall within the areas mentioned in point 2.
- The project duration must be set between 12 to 36 months. Prorogation of the convention can be granted only once, by request of one of the parties and after approval by the second signatory party (granted by simple letter to the Beneficiary). If prorogated no additional funding can be claimed nor can an increase in salary costs duration.
- The project coordinator shall devote at least 20% of her/his time in the project.
- The project coordinator shall carry her/his research activity within a research organization member or associated member of AVIESAN.
- The project coordinator shall not benefit from a UNADEV/AVIESAN contract ongoing after January 1st, 2021.

b. Assessment criteria

- Scientific quality of the project:
 - Relevance and originality of the project
 - Place of the project in the national and international context
 - Clarity of the project's goals
- Project coordinator and participating teams:
 - Expertise of the project coordinator in her/his field
 - Complementarity and/or pluridisciplinarity of the participating teams
- Feasibility:
 - Methodological relevance
 - Environment of the project (human resources, existing equipment, access to technology platforms and technical support centers)
 - Credibility of the project schedule
 - Adequacy of the requested funding with the work to be done.

5. General disposition for funding

Funding is assigned for the duration of the project (12 to 36 months). The amount requested shall be justified and detail the portion attributable to operating, equipment and staff expenditures.

The maximum funding amount per project is set to 200k€.

The following costs can be covered by the funding:

- Equipment
- Service provisions
- Operating expenditures and various consumables
- Non-permanent staff costs (technician, engineer, PhD student, post-doctoral researcher)
- Management costs from Managing organizations other than Inserm
- Mission expenses

Budget items are fungible during project implementation, after acceptance by Inserm.

a. Payment

Payment schedule:

For non Inserm Managing organizations, 80% of the funding is paid upon signing the agreement and a balance of 20% is paid after validation of the reports mentioned in section “Scientific and financial reports”, point 6.

If the **Managing organization is Inserm**, the amount corresponding to the funding is made available as annual settlements.

Suspension of the payments:

If the project has not begun by the delivery date of the first scientific report, Inserm give notice to the Managing organization of the breaches to its contractual obligations by way of registered letter and acknowledgement of receipt. This letter urges the Managing organization to remedy to the shortcomings identified within two months of notification.

If, after that time, the faulty Managing organization has not remedied the failure, the agreement is terminated.

b. Use of the funding:

The funding granted by Inserm shall be used by the Managing organization for the sole purpose of the project identified in the funding agreement.

At the end of the project, unspent amounts are to be reimbursed to Inserm within a maximum of 90 days.

c. Eligible expenditures:

Expenditures shall be directly related to the project, strictly necessary for its implementation and duly justified.

Equipment expenditures:

Equipment expenditures are eligible expenditures, part for office automation equipment and furniture costs.

Maintenance costs of equipment bought as part of the project are eligible expenditures, in proportion to the project duration.

Staff expenditures:

Non-permanent staff costs (technician, engineer, PhD student, post-doctoral researcher) are eligible expenditures.

For institutions under private law, permanent contract staff costs are eligible if these employees are assigned to the project within the strict framework of its implementation.

PhD contracts are eligible expenditures only for the end of the thesis (6 to 12 months).

Staff costs for employees assigned to administrative functions are not eligible expenditures.

Operating expenditures:

Service provisions:

The project coordinator is allowed to have part of the funded work done by a third party providing service provisions required for the project. However, these service provisions shall concern a limited part of the project implementation and, where appropriate, respect the rules applicable to the Managing organization.

Operating expenditure:

The following operating expenditures are eligible:

- Consumables;
- Costs incurred for travel of researchers (missions) as part of and for the necessity of the implementation of the research project;

- Costs related to intellectual property protection of patents and licenses induced by the project implementation;
- Internal billing procedures;
- Costs related to publication of articles produced as part of the project during its duration.

Management costs:

The part of the general management costs involved in the project counts as eligible expenditures. These costs are capped at 4% of the amount of the funding granted by Inserm. They do not require financial justification. Teams appointing Inserm as Managing organization for the project will not count management costs as funded expenditures.

VAT:

For Partners not or partially liable to VAT, nonrecoverable VAT on eligible expenditures is an eligible expenditure.

Fungibility:

The funding granted by Inserm is fungible as part of operating expenditures. Transferring budget toward staff costs can only be done with Inserm's prior written consent.

Other arrangements:

If the amount of the funding granted by Inserm does not cover all expenditures related to the project implementation, the Managing organization commits to round off the funding as required for the proper project implementation, either with its own resources or by means of co-funding(s).

If relying on a co-funding, the Managing organization shall notice Inserm of any funding granted beyond the agreement notification, with the name of the co-funding organization and the amount of the co-funding.

6. Scientific and financial reports

a. Scientific report(s)

The project coordinator shall provide reports as defined in the Fund attribution act (agreement or notification), according to the following agenda:

- A letter of commitment (attached to the agreement) signed by the scientific supervisor of each team involved in the funded project, testifying the deployment of the project;
- For projects which duration exceeds 2 years: a mid-term project report for ITMO NNP to evaluate the project's progress and a summary for lay audience of achieved results for UNADEV to communicate to general public and sponsors;
- For all projects: a final report and a public summary of achieved results for UNADEV to communicate to lay audience and sponsors, both delivered 2 months after the end of the project at the latest.

Failure in delivering these reports can lead to repayment of all amounts paid by Inserm.

The scientific evaluation by ITMO NNP of mid-term and final reports can lead to requests for additional information where appropriate. In case of negative assessment, the funding can be suspended. In case of non-compliance with the project or usage of the funding for another project, all financial support can be stopped.

b. Financial report(s)

Financial reports shall be drawn up as defined in the Fund attribution act, showing expenditures during the duration of the project.

Managing organization shall provide a financial report 2 months after the end of the project at the latest. Financial reports shall be signed by the Project coordinator and a financial executive acting as the Managing organization representative. Financials reports shall be sent to Inserm by the Managing organization.

Potential expenditures due to certification of expenditures by an independent auditor are eligible expenditures.

At the end of the project, unspent amounts are to be reimbursed to Inserm by the Managing organization.

7. Other commitments of the Project coordinator and Managing organization

The Project coordinator shall inform Inserm of any significant project modification from the content of the application file or Fund attribution act and of any difficulties impeding the project implementation.

The Project coordinator engage to actively enroll in project tracking operations organized by ITMO NNP, namely presenting the results during a symposium for lay audience. The Project coordinator may also be invited by UNADEV to play a role in communication operations for the general public, after Inserm's approval.

The Managing organization shall inform Inserm in case of changes in contact or bank information.

8. Authorizing officer - Accounting officer

The Authorizing officer for funding and budget transfers is Inserm's Chief Executive Officer and, by delegation, to the Director of the Department of Financial Affairs.

The Accounting officer for payments is Inserm's Chief Accountant.

9. Technical and financial supervision

During the project duration, Inserm reserves the right to organize a visit to the site, in conjunction with the Managing organization and the Project coordinator.

Use of the funding granted from the Fund attribution act can be controlled or audited out off-site and/or on-site by Inserm during the project duration and up to 2 years after the end of the project, either by Inserm or by a firm instructed by Inserm for this purpose.

The Managing organization shall be able to explain all expenditures made from the funding and funded staff assignment to the project.

The Managing organization shall be able to provide all the legal, financial and administrative support documentation related to the funding.

It is recalled that, as public funds, control of this funding can be asked by different governmental supervisory bodies.

10. Publications – diffusion

a. Publications

All publication from the research project shall mention the financial support as follow:

« With financial support from UNADEV (National Union for Blind and Visually Impaired People) in partnership with ITMO NNP (Multi-Organism Thematic Institute Neurosciences, cognitive sciences, neurology and psychiatry) / AVIESAN (national alliance for life science and health) as part of research on vision-related diseases. »

These publications shall be transmitted to ITMO NNP and Inserm for information at shorter notice and at the latest within one month following the publication.

b. Diffusion of project summaries

AVIESAN – UNADEV – AAP « Les maladies de la vision : origines et traitements », 2020-/2021



The Project coordinator authorize the diffusion for all audiences of a French summary of the project submitted in the application file and of the mid-term and final summaries for lay audience.

11. Intellectual property

Inserm gains no intellectual property rights for being a funding organization for calls for proposals and grants. Intellectual property rights on the work and results relative to the project are owned by the project's Managing organization. In case multiple Managing organization are involved in a single project, they can organize themselves the sharing the intellectual property rights.

12. Confidentiality

Inserm engages to keep all information relative to the project implementation confidential, in particular information from project reports, mentioned at point 6, hereinafter referred to as the « Information ». Inserm will not disclose any part of the Information to a third party, short for ITMO NNP, without written approval of the Project coordinator.

However, Inserm may not be bound to secrecy for a particular information given that it can prove that:

- the information is available in the public domain without breach of funding agreement and the rules.
- the information is already known to Inserm on the date of signing the agreement.
- the information has been made freely available by a third party authorized to use it.

13. Protection of personal data

Personal information gathered in the application files will be computerize to ensure examination of the files and administrative and financial monitoring of the projects. In compliance with the Data Protection Act of January 6th, 1978 modified in 2004, people whose data are collected benefit from the right to access, to rectify and to suppress any personal data regarding them. This right can be exercised by contacting Inserm, Department of Legal Affairs, 101 rue de Tolbiac 75013 PARIS.

14. Dispute settlement

In case of dispute between Inserm and the Managing organization regarding the interpretation or execution of the Fund attribution act, both parties engage to send the dispute to conciliators appointed by each party unless they agree on appointing a unique conciliator, prior to any judicial instance.

The conciliator(s) should try to settle the dispute and make both parties agree on a solution within 60 days from the date of appointment of the conciliator(s).

In case no agreement is found, the dispute regarding the Fund attribution act is referred to the administrative court.

15. Call for proposals schedule

Publication date for the call for proposals 2020/2021		July 2020
Submission deadline for the application file	Electronic submission of the complete file	September 3, 2020 Midnight Paris time
Provisional date for publication of results list 2020		November 2020 (deployment of the project in 2020)
Provisional date for publication of results list 2020		Early 2021 (deployment of the project in 2021)

16. Application procedure

The application file shall include all necessary information for the scientific, technical and financial assessment of the project. To be eligible, the scientific and technical description shall be written in English for the evaluation committee.

The application file shall be emailed to:

deficience-visuelle.daf@inserm.fr

Submission deadline: September 3, 2020 midnight Paris time

It is recommended not to wait the submission deadline to submit the application file.

17. Publication of the results list

The list of funded projects will be published on the ITMO NNP website and French and English summaries of these projects will be published subsequently. The results will be communicated to Project coordinators by email.

18. Contact details

For information, please contact:

- for scientific and technical questions:

Christine Tuffereau /Catherine Labbé-Jullié: AO_UNADEV_SCIENCE@inserm.fr

- for administrative and financial questions:

Kadiatou Barry: deficience-visuelle.daf@inserm.fr

APPENDIX

List of members and associated members of AVIESAN

Members

- CEA, **French Atomic Energy and Alternative Energy Commission**
- CHRU, **Regional and University Hospitals**
- CNRS, **French National Centre for Scientific Research**
- CPU, **Conference of University Presidents**
- INRAE, **French National institute for research on agriculture, food and the environment**
- Inria, **French National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology**
- Inserm, **French National institute for health and biomedical research**
- Pasteur Institute
- IRD, **French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development**

Associated members

- **Alliance for research and innovation of health industries (Ariis)**, which federates stakeholders from health industries.
- **French agricultural research and international cooperation organization (Cirad)**, the French research center investigating, with countries of the South, international challenges of agriculture and sustainable development.
- **Conference of Deans of French Schools of Engineering (CDEFI)**, which promotes the training of engineers and the development and valorisation of research.
- **French blood agency (EFS)**, civil operator for blood transfusion.
- **Mérieux Foundation**, a familial foundation fighting infectious diseases.
- **French National Institute for Industrial Environment and Risks (Ineris)**, which contributes to the prevention of risks caused by economic activities to health, environment, and the safety of people and goods.
- **Curie Institute**, which is devoted to the understanding of the mechanisms of carcinogenesis and cancer treatment.
- **French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN)**, a public service expert in research and assessment of nuclear and radiation risks.
- **French Armed forces biomedical research institute (IRBA)**, which researches focus on medical support in the field and on prevention, protection and care for armed forces.
- **Mines-Télécom Institute**, major institution which contributes to research in the fields of information and communication technologies, management, energy, materials and industrial environment.

- **Unicancer**, which focus on the understanding of the understanding of the mechanisms of carcinogenesis and cancer treatment.