

2022 CALL FOR PROPOSALS: « VISION DISORDERS: ORIGINS AND TREATMENTS »



ITMO NEUROSCIENCES, SCIENCES COGNITIVES,
NEUROLOGIE, PSYCHIATRIE



2022 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Research project

« VISION DISORDERS: ORIGINS AND TREATMENTS » treatments”

This call for proposals is organized by the Multi-Organism Thematic Institute Neurosciences, cognitive sciences, neurology, and psychiatry (ITMO NNP) of 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.

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1. Background and goals of the call for proposals

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

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

2. Areas covered by the call for proposals

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

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

3. Terms and conditions of participation

a. Project duration

Projects may be 12 to 36 months in duration and will begin in the second half of 2022.

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 the appendix of the present Call for proposals.
- Participation of industrial partners is allowed if they provide their funding for the project.

Coordinator

- The project coordinator shall be an employee holding a permanent position in 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.

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- The coordinator and associated team leaders shall remain at 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 producing required documents (scientific and financial reports), the organization of meetings, the progress of the project, and communication of the results.
- Laureates or team members of laureates of previous calls for proposals who have not sent their final reports are not eligible for this call for proposals.

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 Account Statement of each Managing Organization will be attached to the Grant Agreement.

4. Eligibility requirements and projects assessment criteria

After verifying the eligibility criteria, the applications will be submitted for written evaluation by a committee of international experts whose members cannot be involved in the projects. ITMO NNP and UNADEV will disclose the composition of the evaluation committee on their websites after the selected projects' publication. The ITMO NNP will send the anonymous expert opinions upon request of the project coordinator. Projects that do not meet the eligibility criteria listed in point 4a will not be evaluated.

The call for projects in 2022 will be subject to a single evaluation, and the selection committee will rank the projects.

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, including all required documents, and abide by the application procedure listed at point 16.

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- The project shall meet the goals of this call for proposals and fall within the areas mentioned in point 2.
- The project must have a duration of 12 to 36 months. An extension of the agreement can be made once upon request of one of the parties and after the other party's agreement (granted by simple mail to the Beneficiary). It will not require additional funding and cannot concern an increase in the duration of the salaries.
- The project coordinator shall devote at least 20% of her/his time to the project.
- The project coordinator shall carry out 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 September 1st, 2022.

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 multidisciplinary 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 awarded for the project duration (12 to 36 months). The amount requested must be duly justified and must include a detailed breakdown of the attributable share of operating, equipment, and personnel costs.

The maximum amount of funding per project is set at 200 k€

The grant may fund the following items of expenditure:

- Equipment
- Service provision

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- 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 signature of the agreement, with a balance of 20% paid after validation of the reports mentioned in the article in the "Scientific and financial reports" chapter, point 6.

When the Managing Organization is Inserm, the credits corresponding to the grant are opened in annual installments.

Suspension of 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 90 days.

Eligible expenditures

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

Equipment expenditures

Expenditure on equipment, excluding office equipment and furniture, is eligible.

The maintenance costs of equipment purchased within the framework of the project are eligible expenses in proportion to the project's duration.

Staff expenditures

Expenditure on non-permanent staff (technicians, engineers, doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers) is eligible.

For private institutions, expenses for permanent staff are eligible when this personnel is assigned to the project within the strict framework of its implementation.

The financing of doctoral contracts is only authorized to end a thesis (6 to 12 months).

Personnel expenses assigned to administrative functions are not eligible.

Operating expenditures

- service provision (The coordinator may have part of the financing work carried out by third parties providing services necessary for the project. However, these services must only concern the execution of a limited part of the project and, where applicable, in compliance with the rules applicable to the Managing Organization);
- Consumables;
- expenses incurred for researchers' travels (missions) within the framework and the needs for the execution of the research project;
- intellectual-property costs for patents or licenses incurred in the course of the project;
- internal billing procedures;
- publication costs of articles generated by the project during the project period.

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 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 subject to VAT or partially subject to VAT, the non-recoverable part of the VAT on eligible project expenses constitutes an eligible expense.

Fungibility

The grant paid by Inserm is fungible within the operating expenses. The budget transfer to personnel expenses can only be made after a written agreement from Inserm.

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 whose duration exceeds two years: a mid-term project report for ITMO NNP to evaluate the project's progress and a summary for the lay audience of achieved results for UNADEV to communicate to the general public and sponsors;
- For all projects. Two months after the end of the project, a final report and a general summary of the results. UNADEV will use the latter to communicate with the public and donors.
- An assessment of the results, impacts, and future perspectives five years after the beginning of the project with a summary for the general public so that UNADEV can communicate with the general public and donors.

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 a negative assessment, the funding can be interrupted. Financial support may be terminated in non-compliance with the project or if the funding is used for another project.

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 then 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 any difficulties impeding the project implementation.

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

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

8. Authorizing officer - Assigning accountant

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 Director.

The Assigning accountant for payments is Inserm's Chief Accountant.

9. Technical and financial supervision

Inserm reserves the right to organize, during the project, a site visit in consultation with the Managing Organization and the project coordinator.

The use of the grant paid under the Act awarding aid may be subject, during the project and in the two years following its expiry, to control or audit by Inserm, carried out by Inserm, or by a firm appointed by it for this purpose, based on documents and/or on-site.

The Managing Organization must prove that the personnel financed have been assigned to the project, as well as all the expenses incurred with the grant.

The Managing Organization must be able to provide all the administrative, accounting, and legal documents and evidence relating to the use of the grant.

It is important to note that, as these are public funds, they may be subject to control by the various State control 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 disorders. »

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

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

11. Intellectual property

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

12. Confidentiality

Inserm undertakes to keep confidential information obtained during the execution of the project, particularly that contained in the scientific reports, from now on referred to as "the information." In particular, Inserm will not divulge any part of it to any third party, in any form whatsoever, without the written agreement of the coordinator, except to the ITMO NNP.

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

- the information is available in the public domain without breach of the 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 computerized 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 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).

If 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 2022		March 2022
Submission deadline for the application file	Electronic submission of the complete file	May 17, 2022 Midnight Paris time
Provisional date for publication of results list 2022		July 2022 (deployment of the project in 2022)

16. Terms of submission

The application must include all the elements required and necessary for the project's scientific, technical, and financial evaluation. To be eligible, it is mandatory to produce a scientific and technical description of the project proposal in English, as non-French speakers carry out the evaluation.

The application file shall be emailed to:

deficience-visuelle.daf@inserm.fr

Submission deadline: May 17, 2022 midnight Paris time

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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:

Kim Nguyen Ba: kim.nguyen-ba@aviesan.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.

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