



AriSLA
Fondazione Italiana di Ricerca per la SLA – Sclerosi Laterale Amiotrofica
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2017 Call for Projects on ALS Research

2017 AriSLA Call for Research Projects: PROMOTING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ALS

Deadline: at 1.00 pm, April 13th 2017

1. Aims of the “2017 AriSLA Call for Research Projects”

AriSLA, Italian Foundation for Research on ALS – Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, opens the “2017 AriSLA Call for Research Projects”. The Call aims to significantly advance knowledge of ALS to efficiently translate research outcomes from bench to bedside in order to improve ALS patients’ care, quality of life and survival. Further, the Call intends to promote networking among nationwide ALS researchers as stated in the mission of the Foundation.

2. Call for Projects themes

“2017 AriSLA Call for Research Projects” funds two distinct types of research projects: **Full Grants and Pilot Grants**.

FULL GRANTS, i.e. research projects with a solid background and consistent preliminary data, proposing multi-disciplinary and innovative approaches, can be submitted in the **Basic and Translational research** areas.

PILOT GRANTS, i.e. research projects with high innovative and original hypotheses, with preliminary data to be consolidated or not available. Applications are intended to collect or strengthen preliminary data for subsequent larger scale funding. Pilot Grants can be submitted in the **Basic and Translational research** areas.

Common features required for Full and Pilot research projects are the **high quality of science** and the **ground-breaking nature and originality with respect to the current science**. To be financed, Applications must be deemed of significant scientific interest and with a strong potential to impact on disease understanding, diagnosis and treatment.

2.1 Full Grant Application: Basic and Translational Research

Full Grant Applications are allowed to request a contribution up to **€ 240,000** over maximum **36 months**.

It is encouraged to apply in scientific collaboration with other Italian or foreign partners.

Project partners based in Host Institutions out of Italy will however not be beneficiary of grant contribution by AriSLA. They are allowed to participate in the project partnership by co-funding their research activities.

The Principal Investigator (PI), as recipient of AriSLA funding, is the scientific coordinator of the project both in case of a single-centre project and in a multi-centre project. Partners should coherently contribute to the achievement of the project objectives (see paragraph 3).



2.2 Pilot Grant Application: Basic and Translational Research

Pilot Grant Applications are allowed to request a contribution up to **€ 60,000** over maximum **12 months**.

This fund may cover the whole or part of the remuneration of the Principal Investigator, if, at the moment of the contract signature with AriSLA, he does not hold any employment contract for the whole duration of the grant and has not reached 40 years of age.

This type of research projects has to be managed by a single proponent.

3. Eligible subjects

Subjects eligible to participate as Principal Investigator in the “2017 AriSLA Call for Research Projects” are researchers of **Italian non-profit Universities and Research Institutes, either public or private**, performing research activities consistent with the statutory purposes of the Foundation. The Principal Investigator and all partners must be scientists with demonstrated scientific competence and independence, able to self-manage the proposed project.

It is expected that the Principal Investigator of a Full Grant, as Coordinator of a potential Consortium, will be the leader of the project design and implementation.

Researchers are allowed to apply for a maximum of 2 Grants, and in any case, can be the Principal Investigator of only 1 Application in this Call.

Principal Investigators of an ongoing AriSLA grants, not yet ended at the date of November 30th, 2017, are not eligible to submit new Project Application¹ as PI, but can apply as a Partner in a consortium.

Partners in a consortium of ongoing projects financed by AriSLA in previous Calls can apply for a new Grant either as a Principal Investigator or as a Partner.

Researchers who have submitted a new research Application to the “2016 AriSLA Call for Research Projects”, which has not been funded, may participate in this Call by submitting a revised Application, modified in accordance with the comments received during the evaluation process. In this case, special attention should be given to the issues raised by the reviewers.

Projects that have already been fully funded by other Agencies are not eligible to be financed.

Full Grants

Principal Investigators of a Full Grant Application must have proven scientific independence and for the entire duration of the Grant they must operate in the Hosting Institution. The Legal Representative of the Host Institution has to declare that the Host Institution will provide the necessary facilities and personnel to carry out the submitted research project. **If the Applicant is not holder of a permanent position, the salary of the Investigator needs to be provided through other means.**

¹Principal Investigators of ongoing projects are allowed to participate only if the contract with AriSLA is going to be concluded within November 30th, 2017. The signature of the new contract is contingent upon the end of the scientific, economical and administrative procedure concerning the previous Grant.



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If the application is successful but the scientific independence of the Applicant is not clearly evident to the International Scientific Committee, the Committee may recommend funding pending a statement by the Applicant's Director (e.g. head of laboratory/department) stating that the results of the funded research will belong to the Investigator, in the form of adequate authorship in any ensuing publications (last name/corresponding author).

When submitting the Application, a formal partnership agreement among participating institutions is not required. This document will be compiled once the Project has been granted.

AriSLA funds researchers affiliated to nation-based Institutions only. The participation of foreign research groups in project partnerships led by an organization located in Italy is allowed by co-funding their own research activities. Project partners based in Host Institutions out of Italy will however not be beneficiary of grant contribution by AriSLA.

Please note that for-profit Partners are allowed to participate in the research partnerships although will not be beneficiary of grant contribution by AriSLA.

Pilot Grants

Principal Investigators of a Pilot Grant Application **must hold proven scientific competences, with at least 3-years experience in a research laboratory.** AriSLA Foundation encourages applications from junior investigators and investigators who are new to the ALS field.

The Legal Representative of the Host Institution has to declare that the Host Institution will provide the necessary facilities and personnel to carry out the submitted research project. **If the Applicant is not holder of a permanent position, the salary of the Investigator, if not requested within the Application as part of the AriSLA Grant, needs to be provided through other means.**

3.1 Sub-contractors

Full Grant and Pilot Grant Applications may be assisted by sub-contractors.

The sub-contractor is intended to be who provides external services or supplies which are necessary for the execution of the project. **Total budget request for subcontracting must not exceed 20% of the funding requested to AriSLA.**

4. Submitting the Application

Applications have two-steps submitting process:

1. LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

Letter of Intent must be submitted by the Principal Investigator by filling up **Full Grant** or **Pilot Grant forms** available on the AriSLA website <http://proposals.arisla.org>, starting from **March 21th 2017**. Applications must be compiled following the specific guidelines for the two types of grant (see "**Guidelines for the submission of the Letter of Intent**" for Full and Pilot Grants).

The LOI has to be only electronically submitted in English by **April 13th, 2017 at 1.00 pm.**



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The hard copy of the online application does not need to be sent.

2. FULL PROPOSALS

Full Proposals have to be submitted by the PI exclusively **after the receipt of an AriSLA “Invitation letter to submit a Full Proposal”** (see paragraph 5), which will include the guidelines for the Full Proposal submission.

5. Applications evaluation and selection criteria

Each Application will be evaluated by an International Scientific Committee appointed by AriSLA, in order to guarantee meritocracy, transparency and impartiality of the selection process.

5.1 Methodology

Applications will be screened by a three-step peer-review:

In the **first step**, the International Scientific Committee will perform a remote evaluation of the submitted *Letters of Intent*. Each LOI will be independently evaluated by three reviewers of proven expertise in the field of the topic of the research Application. Reviewers will provide a written report. During this step AriSLA may directly contact the Applicant in order to gather further elements for the evaluation. All applications will be ranked based on the evaluation criteria mentioned below and up to 35 of the top ranking projects will proceed to the second step. The results of the first-step will be communicated to the PI and the report will include the reviewers' comments.

In the **second step**, the top ranking Full Proposals presented following AriSLA invitation will be assigned to three independent reviewers of the AriSLA International Scientific Committee, who agreed to take part to the Consensus Meeting (see third step).

In the **third step**, the panel of reviewers involved in the second step will provide an overall assessment and a comparative evaluation of the top scoring Full Proposals during a Consensus Meeting. The outcome of the evaluation process will be a final merit-based list.

The Scientific Committee will also review the budget, which may be reduced with respect to the original request.

The conclusion of the evaluation process is expected to end within December 2017. AriSLA will take care to inform all PIs about the Scientific Committee comments.

Member of AriSLA International Scientific Committee are listed in the AriSLA website.

AriSLA claims the right to not allocate any fund if the proposed Applications will be considered not worthy of contribution according to the evaluation process, even in presence of availability of funds.

5.2 Evaluation criteria

Applications that are incomplete or not conform to the rules indicated in the “2017 AriSLA Call for Research Projects” and the specific guidelines will not be processed for evaluation.



The evaluation and the assessment of the overall quality of the Application will be performed by the International Scientific Committee of AriSLA Foundation.

Full Grants

The evaluation of the Letters of Intent will be carried out according to the following criteria:

1. **Quality and feasibility** of the scientific approach;
2. **Ground-breaking nature** and **potential impact** of the project results.

The evaluation of the Full Proposals will be carried out according to the following criteria:

1. Strength of the **background** and **rationale**: availability of solid preliminary data to support the research program; consistency of the research project with the AriSLA Call aims;
2. **Objectives** and **impact on the knowledge of the disease**: indicate the clarity of the proposal objectives and the potential impact of the results on the knowledge of the disease; results eligible for intellectual property protection;
3. **Investigators** and **collaborative potential**: competence and experience of PI/partners in the field of the proposal and complementarity within the Consortium, if present;
4. Suitability of requested **budget** in relation to the activity time.

Pilot Grants

The evaluation of the Letters of Intent will be carried out according to the following criteria:

1. **Quality and feasibility** of the scientific approach;
3. **Innovation and originality** of the proposed project with regards to the current science.

The evaluation of the Full Proposals will be carried out according to the following criteria:

1. **Objectives** and **methodologies**: adequateness of methods and analyses development, integration and appropriateness with respect to the aims of the study;
2. **Innovation** of the proposed project with regards to the current science and **impact** of the results **on the knowledge of the disease** in the short, medium and long-term;
3. **Capacity to deliver**: ability of the PI to finalize the proposed research program according to the project duration and budget;
4. **Potentiality** of the expected results **to be attractive for larger scale funding**.



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5.3 Ineligible Applications

Applications with the following characteristics will be considered ineligible:

- Applications merely covering management cost of research centers;
- Applications aimed to finance the construction/creation of facilities, laboratories, research centers or coordination centers;
- Applications submitted by a Principal Investigator holder of an AriSLA ongoing funding at the date of 30th November 2017 (see paragraph 3 and note);
- Projects that are already fully funded by other Agencies;
- Applications not fully or correctly completed;
- Applications not written in English;
- Applications not electronically submitted by the AriSLA online submission platform;
- Applications lacking the authorization to process personal data (see Privacy Statement section).

6. Dissemination of results of funded projects

AriSLA ensures that new knowledge generated by its research funding will be widely disseminated and readily made available for the benefit of ALS patients. In particular, the Foundation reminds the Principal Investigator:

- **the obligation to inform in advance about any publication** and to acknowledge AriSLA Foundation of all publications arisen from the project;
- **to adhere to the Open Access Policy.**

For further details please refer to AriSLA "Dissemination Policy".

7. Intellectual property

AriSLA mission is to translate research results into therapies and to make them available to patients. To achieve this goal, the Foundation requests the Principal Investigator to undertake any necessary steps to ensure adequate valorization and exploitation of the research outcomes.

AriSLA offers support and assistance to the PI and his Host Institution with regards to intellectual property.

For further information please refer to AriSLA "Intellectual Property Rights Policy".

8. AriSLA project adoption

AriSLA claims the right to promote the "adoption" by third party institutions of the funded projects; therefore it is recommended to consult the document "Projects Adoption Policy" of AriSLA.



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9. “Direct management” of the granted contribution

The administrative management of the granted contribution of the winner projects will be performed directly by AriSLA, according to the "direct management" protocol. In accordance with the approved Integrated Economic Plan, the obtained funds will not be remitted to the PI's Institution. The Principal Investigator will take advantage of AriSLA Administrative Office for their management. This is a free service offered by AriSLA Foundation.

10. Privacy

According to the Italian Law n.196/2003 regulating the protection of persons and other subjects with regard to the treatment of personal data, AriSLA, with head office located in Via Poerio, 14 – 20129 Milan, “holder” of the information and responsible for the data processing, is legally bound to obtain the consent of the “Applicant” regarding the use of the personal data included in the Project Application (*Letter of Intent* and *Full Proposal*). It is recommended in this regard to consult the document “AriSLA Privacy Policy” for further clarification.