2023 Call for Applications for ALS research projects

Application Guidelines - Pilot Grants

Submission Deadline: May 4th, 2023, 1:00 pm

General Instructions

Online Registration

Application form (hereby Form) for "**2023 Call for Applications for ALS research projects**" must be completed online by the Principal Investigator (PI) at https://proposals.arisla.org/ and electronically submitted once completed in all its sections.

PIs should pay careful attention to the instructions. An accurate Application will facilitate the review process. Applications failing to meet the requirements will be rejected.

A PI not already registered should create an account by clicking on "Create account", after confirming to have read the *Information Notice on personal data treatment*. She/he will then receive an email confirming Username and assigned Password to access the Form. Once logged in, the system will ask to change the Password.

It is mandatory that the name entered in the Registration form matches the PI since all communications will be sent to the registered email. This is the only account that allows to modify the Application.

Please note that only one user at a time is allowed to enter information in the Application.

PIs already registered must enter the same email address (Username) used previously. At the first log she/he must confirm to have read the *Information Notice on personal data treatment*. If the Username has been forgotten, this can be retrieved by sending an email to bandi@arisla.org. Please **avoid account duplication.**

If the Password has been forgotten, an automatic email with a new Password will be sent to the registered email address after clicking on "Forgot your Password" entering the Username. Once logged in, the system will ask to change the Password.

Click on the **Pilot Grant button to apply for a Pilot Grant. Please note that once selected Pilot Grant option, the Application type cannot be modified.** Please contact bandi@arisla.org to change the type of grant, considering that all the information entered in the Application will be lost.

General requirements

The Application must be written in English. For abbreviations and acronyms not universally known, spell out the terms the first time they are used, with the appropriate abbreviation in parentheses; the abbreviation should then be used thereafter. The text must be single-spaced, not exceeding the character number limitations specified (which include spaces).

In order to submit the Application**, the PI and the Legal Representative of her/his Research Institute (or a delegate) must stamp and sign the completed *General Information* page. This must be downloaded from**

the *Signature* Section, and the scanned PDF signed must be uploaded in the same Section. Documents can be signed with digital signature.

The Form is organized into sections, which can be completed in any order: remember to click on the "**Save changes**" **button to save data before leaving the page**.

A PDF document of the Application can be downloaded at any time by clicking on the link "**Download Proposal"** at the upper right of the page.

Submitting the Application

As reported in the "2023 AriSLA Call for Applications for ALS research projects", the Applications **must be submitted within the deadline** (May 4th, 2023, 1:00 pm).

Please check the status of each part of the Application in the *Submit* Section and verify that:

- all sections have been completed (mandatory to submit the Application);
- the stamped and signed *General Information* page has been uploaded.

To submit the Application, click on the "**Submit**" button.

An automatic alert will appear confirming the completeness of the Application. Please confirm the submission by pressing the button "**Confirm Submit**". The Application will be then formally closed by the system and cannot be further modified. An automatic message will appear acknowledging about the success of the submission.

The PDF version of the submitted Application can be downloaded at any time by logging in at this https://proposals.arisla.org/.

Assistance

For any information about the Call or about the Form compilation please contact:

E-mail Help Desk: bandi@arisla.org;

Guidelines for preparing the Application

The Form contains nine Sections:

I. General Information
II. Triage project information
III. Full project
IV. Budget
V. Applicant
VI. Lay Summary
VII. Reviewers
VIII. Privacy Statement
IX. Signature

Please note that only Sections I, II and V will be made available to the International Scientific Committee (ISC) members for the Triage phase (see the "Evaluation procedure" in the Call for Applications).

Text boxes can be filled out by a limited number of characters. The maximum number of characters (including spaces) is indicated at the bottom right of each box. **The indication of the maximum number of characters is mandatory**.

All fields marked with an asterisk must be filled in order to submit the Application.

Text boxes can be enlarged or narrowed at any time by dragging the bottom right corner of the box.

Definition

Principal Investigator (PI) is the scientific coordinator of the project.

Collaborators are researchers whose specific support is needed for the completion of minor parts of the project, for example providing specific cell cultures, animal models or tools not available in the PI/Partner's laboratory, or any kind of support to the project. Collaborators must sign a collaboration letter to be uploaded in the **COLLABORATORS** field in which their contribution and support are detailed. **Economic coverage for collaborators is not provided by AriSLA.**

General information - Section I

- **PROJECT TITLE** and **ACRONYM.**
- **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR** – provide name and surname of the PI of the project. Only Single-projects are allowed.
- **HOST INSTITUTION** – report data of the PI's research Institution where the project will be carried out; use the complete Italian name.
- **RESEARCH AREA** – indicate if the project concerns *basic, preclinical or clinical research. Please note that clinical interventional studies are not admitted.*
- **RESEARCH STEPS –** select the Research Step that most truly represents the proposed activities: new knowledge/gene discovery; research on mechanisms; target identification; target validation; therapeutic approach identification; proof of concept; clinical study.

- **TYPE OF APPLICATION** – select the correct option from the drop-down menu, identifying the submitted project as:
  - "*New Application",* if it has never been submitted before;
  - *"Already funded PI - New Application"*, if the new funding request is dealing with a research topic different from that of the previously funded AriSLA project; indicate year and acronym of the previous project. In case the previously funded project was a Pilot Grant, the reason for requesting a new Pilot Grant and not a Full Grant should be provided (250 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM);
  - *"Revised Application",* if it is a revision of a previously submitted Application. Indicate year and acronym of the previous Application.
- **KEYWORDS** – identify and select the keywords that better represent the Application; these will be used for reviewers' matching.
- **PROJECT DURATION** – 12 months only (prefilled).
- **AMOUNT REQUESTED (€)** – indicate the amount requested to AriSLA (max 60000 euro). Please use whole numbers only and enter values without dots or commas. Please note that this value must correspond to the amount indicated in the *Budget* Section in the **OVERALL BUDGET** table.

Triage project information - Section II

- **SUMMARY** (2,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – organize the summary in different parts specifying:
  - **RATIONALE**
  - **BROAD OBJECTIVES**
  - **PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODS**
  - **EXPECTED RESULTS**
- For Revised Application, please fill out the **CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS REVISION** box (5,000 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM). In this Section the relevant modifications made from previous Application must be highlighted, including a detailed reply to the critiques. If the PI is different from the previous Application, the reasons must be provided. Feedback received from previous revision should be uploaded **as a single PDF file** within this section.
- **ADHERENCE TO THE CALL'S PRIORITIES** (2,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) **–** indicate if/how the proposed study addresses the priorities set in the Call.
- **RATIONALE** (2,000 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – provide information about context and rationale of the proposed project. Please note that preliminary data are not required for PG proposals. Nevertheless, preliminary evidence may be deemed necessary to support the rationale and the feasibility of the proposal. You can insert a limited number of images and/or tables about the rationale in the box "**FIGURES**".
- **FIGURES (MAX 5 MB)** – insert figures that are considered relevant for the project (i.e., rationale, etc.) in PDF format. **Please note that only attachments in PDF format will be downloaded within the application by reviewers.**
- **GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC AIMS** (4,000 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – indicate the general objectives and the specific aims that the project intends to achieve.
- **REFERENCES** – report references relevant for the project**.**

Full Project - Section III

- **INNOVATION AND ORIGINALITY** (2,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – indicate innovation and originality of the proposed project and novelty of objectives/methodologies/expected results. Specify if the expected results may be eligible for intellectual property protection.
- **EXPECTED RESULTS, POTENTIAL CRITICAL ISSUES AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES** (2,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – clearly describe which results are expected from the project, which potential critical issues may arise and possible alternative approaches to overcome them.
- **COLLABORATION DETAILS** (2,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – fill out the details about collaborators' role and contribution to the proposed project and upload the signed collaboration letter in PDF format. **Please note that only attachments in PDF format will be downloaded within the application by reviewers**.
- **PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODS –** in the following sections detail project activities, intermediate and final expected results, timing, and techniques and methodologies that will be used to carry out the research activities.

In **WORK PACKAGES (III.1)** detail the work plan by dividing it into work packages (WPs) according to the logical phases of the project implementation. The WPs can be considered as interconnected units of the project activities.

Indicate the WPs number necessary for the project and the corresponding box will automatically appear.

For each WP report the following information:

- **WP TITLE** – insert a title.
- **START DATE** and **END DATE** – report the month of start and end of activities.
- **DESCRIBE SPECIFIC AIMS AND STRUCTURE** (2,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – describe specific aims, structure and operative management of the activities.
- **TASKS AND METHODS** (3,000 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – describe the work to be performed to achieving the goals and the corresponding methods. Explain how data will be analysed and interpreted and describe in detail the statistical methods to be employed.

For clinical observational studies the following items should be clearly defined:

- Study design.
- Study population. Indicate the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the number of patients based on power calculation (if applicable), etc.
- Procedures. Report the clinical procedures and medical examinations planned and the time interval between them. If new methodologies are developed or employed state their advantages over existing methods.
- Safety. Define the potential adverse events (if applicable) and how they will be monitored; describe potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, or other) and assess their likelihood and seriousness.
- Data management and statistical plan. Discuss how data will be collected, analysed and interpreted and describe in detail the statistical methods that will be applied.

- Ethics Committee's Approval. Indicate if the study has already obtained the pertinent Ethics Committee's approval. This is not mandatory to submit the Application. However, please note that in case the Application is approved for funding, the project will not be activated until the protocol and any related documents, including the informed consent and declaration of approval by the Ethics Committee, will be made available to AriSLA.

If the project implies the use of **animal models,** it must be explained why the scientific objectives cannot be achieved without using animals. Where experiments using animals are necessary, it is required to strictly adhere to the relevant Italian laws, rules and regulations (D.to L.vo 116/92); moreover, approval by the PI's Institution Ethics Review Body is mandatory. Measures should be put in place to avoid unnecessary duplication of research/testing and fully implement the Three Rs (Reduction, Replacement and Refinement, from "The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique", Russell and Burch, 1959). Provide a detailed description of the proposed use of the animals in the work outlined and identify the species, strains, ages, and sex of animals to be used in the proposed work. Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals involved. Make sure that the fewest animals compatible with obtaining a valid scientific result are used and carefully justify the number of animals needed. Documentation must be made available upon request.

Once you click on the **"Save Changes"** button the **GANTT CHART (III.2)** reporting the chronology of activities for each WP will be automatically compiled with the information entered in the *Work Packages* Section.

Fill out the **LIST OF DELIVERABLES AND MONTHS (III.3)** chart summarizing and listing deliverables (the expected results for each task previously listed) of all WPs in chronological order as well as the delivery date as in the Gantt chart.

Budget - Section IV

In this Section, the Applicant has to provide a detailed and reliable projection of the project budget for each cost item. Costs will be considered by AriSLA ISC during the evaluation process, in order to judge their consistency with the project.

Detail in the **OVERALL BUDGET TABLE (IV.1)** all project's costs requested to AriSLA. Personnel cost will be automatically compiled from values inserted in the **PERSONNEL TABLE (PERSONNEL REQUESTED TO ARISLA)**.

OTHER FUNDS – It is mandatory that the Applicant lists in this box all financial resources available in direct support of his/her research endeavours, including, but not limited to, research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and/or institutional awards. Specify title and duration of the project, the relative period, the gross amount, the granting agency, and a brief description of the project. If applicable, indicate possible overlaps with the proposed Application.

In the first **PERSONNEL TABLE (PERSONNEL REQUESTED TO ARISLA) (IV.2)**, indicate the job title (e.g. clinician, engineer, technician, post-doc, PhD student, graduate) of eligible personnel's salary requested to AriSLA, detailing his/her contribution to the project in terms of employment time (months/man dedicated to the project) and the WPs on which he/she is involved.

In the second **PERSONNEL TABLE (OTHER PERSONNEL WORKING ON THE PROJECT, NOT REQUESTED TO ARISLA)**, indicate the other personnel working on the project, comprehensive of PI, whose salary is NOT requested to AriSLA, specifying job title, months of employment and by whom their salary is granted.

COST JUSTIFICATION - In this Section the Applicant has to provide details for each cost item.

- **PERSONNEL** (1,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – fill out with the name, if known, role and competences of eligible personnel's salary requested to AriSLA, detailing profile and contribution to the project in terms of employment time;
- **MATERIALS, SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT** (1,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – justify reagents, consumables and equipment costs detailing each subcategory (i.e. plasticware, kits/arrays, etc), quantity and need;
- **SUB-CONTRACTING** (1,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – justify sub-contracting costs in the framework of project specific objectives and specify sub-contractors;
- **OTHER EXPENSES** (1,500 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM) – justify costs in the framework of project specific objectives.

Please note that the "**TOTAL REQUESTED TO ARISLA**" in the **OVERALL BUDGET TABLE** must correspond to the "**AMOUNT REQUESTED**" box in the *General Information* Section.

Eligible Costs

A correct use of funds can be defined when expenses are consistent with the proposed activities, hereby criteria for costs are reported.

Please consider that VAT is a cost for AriSLA. Therefore, the gross amount should be indicated for all item costs.

DIRECT COSTS

Personnel

Costs for non-permanent staff (i.e., graduate students, PhD students, fellow student, post-doc or researchers without support granted by the Host Institution) other than the PI are allowed, following rules of the Host Institution. The PI is obliged to report every staff change that will occur during the project implementation.
Please note that the total annual labour cost should be indicated in the Application budget.

Material and supplies

Reagents, consumables and lab materials are considered eligible costs considering necessities and consistency to the project.
Hardware/software purchase is allowed if strictly specific for the project up to a maximum of € 2,500.

Sub-contracting (services)

Applications may be assisted by sub-contractors. The sub-contractor 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.**

Other expenses

Travels: project-related travel costs to visit Collaborators need to be justified. Expenses related to participation in Congresses are eligible up to a maximum of € 3,000.

Other expenses include expenses for scientific publications, reprints, software (only if in line with specific needs of the project), etc.
The AriSLA Grant has to be acknowledged in any material or scientific publication related to the financed project. Moreover, the PI of a funded project should adhere to the Open access Policy (as indicated in AriSLA Dissemination Policy). For this reason, it is recommended **to include in this category the fee costs for Open Access publications (please consider at least € 3,000/project).**

INDIRECT COSTS

Overheads

Overheads can be required and include general expenses incurred by the Host Institution, administrative and maintenance costs, expenses for any machinery and equipment as part of the project activities.
These costs are calculated as a lump sum. A maximum of 10% of incurred direct costs is allowed.

Non eligible costs:

- Salary of PI;
- Full salaries for members of staff who already receive a regular wage;
- Salaries, travel and other expenses related to sabbatical leave;
- Membership in Scientific Societies;
- Organization of meetings and workshops;
- Construction and/or renovation of space, furniture, rental of space or rooms, call charges and/or fax
- Setting up and maintaining animal facilities;
- Scientific equipment purchases (and hardware and software, if not project-specific software);
- Basic equipment purchase or repair.

Applicant - Section V

Detail name and surname, date of birth, and Applicant's contacts. Complete the Section with the data required. The Host Institution name box is automatically pre-compiled with the information entered in the *General information* Section.

Applicant has to declare that the Host Institution is an eligible subject according to the "2023 Call for Applications for ALS research projects".

Research experience for the project must be reported in brief to **demonstrate scientific independence of PI** as well as a **short description of the Host Institution** (3,000 CHARACTERS MAXIMUM).

Selected Publications

Fill out the Section with:

- the 5 more recent publications (indicate the latest publications by the Applicant);
- the 5 more important publications (indicate the publications considered more impactful to evaluate Applicant's capacity to deliver);
- the 5 more relevant for the proposed theme (indicate the publications more important to evaluate the Applicant's experience in the topic of the proposal).

These three categories are not mutually exclusive.

Lay Summaries - Section VI

LAY SUMMARY (2.500 CHARACTERS) – summarize the project (in English and Italian) using terms of ordinary language, avoiding acronyms and technical terms.
If the project will be funded, this description will become public. Therefore, do not include confidential information (not already published or disclosed) that you do not want to disclose or that may influence a potential patent application.
Organize the lay summary in different parts specifying:

- **TITLE** – it may slightly differ from the project title if this helps to make the topic of the project clearer to the lay public
- **STRUCTURE** – it should contain the following elements:
  - Background containing the research focus and how it is linked to ALS
  - Project aims
  - Impact on ALS.

AriSLA reserves the right to amend the lay summary before publishing it.

Reviewers - Section VII

The Applicant may suggest up to two reviewers of proved experience that could be included in the AriSLA ISC and indicate up to two undesirable reviewers specifying the reasons of the request.

Privacy Statement - Section VIII

In this Section, the PI should confirm to have read the *Information Notice on personal data treatment* document.

Signature - Section IX

In order to submit the Application**, the PI and the Legal Representative of her/his Research Institute (or a delegate) must stamp and sign the completed *General Information* page. This must be downloaded from the *Signature* Section, and the scanned PDF signed must be uploaded in the same Section. Documents can be signed with digital signature.**