2023 Call for Applications for ALS research projects
Triage guidelines - Committee members

This document is an operational guide for AriSLA International Scientific Committee (ISC) members to perform the **Triage** of the Applications submitted to the "2023 AriSLA Call for Application for ALS research projects".

The Call is dedicated to both **Pilot and Full Grant Applications**.

PILOT GRANTS concern research projects with highly innovative and original hypotheses, where preliminary data are either not available or to be consolidated. As such, they are intended to collect or strengthen preliminary data for subsequent larger scale funding.

Particularly for this type of Application, AriSLA Foundation encourages Applications from junior investigators and investigators who are new to the ALS field.

Only Single-centre Applications are admitted.

The duration of the proposed project is 1 year.

FULL GRANTS concern research projects with a solid background and consistent preliminary data.

Applications can either be Single-centre or Multi-centre. The Principal Investigator (PI) is the scientific coordinator of the project, either in case of a Single-centre or a Multi-centre project. In case of a Multi-centre project, the synergy derived from Partners' contribution to the achievement of the project objectives should be evident.

The duration of the proposed project can range from 1 to 3 years.

Both types of Applications may address **basic or preclinical research areas and clinical observational studies**. Applications based on clinical interventional studies are not admitted.

In order to be fundable, both types of Applications should be original and ground-breaking with respect to current science and of high scientific quality. **Projects should demonstrate a strong potential to impact on the understanding, diagnosis or treatment of ALS**.

Review phases

Both type of Applications will be assessed by a two-step peer-review: 1) Triage selection, and 2) Full proposal evaluation, which entails a remote review and a Consensus Meeting (details are available in the "2023 Call for Applications").

For the Triage evaluation, only the *General Information*, *Triage project information* and *Applicant* Sections of the Application are made available to Reviewers. The Triage phase aims at selecting the top-ranking Applications that will undergo Full Evaluation. Each Application is assigned to three members of the ISC, who are asked to score it on the basis of the criteria reported below, to assess the adherence of the proposal to the priority topics suggested in the Call and provide brief written comments. Applications will be ranked according to the average score and it is anticipated that up to about 40 Applications (including both Pilot and Full Grant Applications) will proceed to full review.

For the **Full proposal evaluation**, Applications will be re-assigned to three ISC members that are selected on the basis of the needed expertise, among those available to take part in the final Consensus Meeting.

Triage evaluation procedure

The Triage evaluation will be conducted in remote, by accessing the Applications through the AriSLA web portal (operating instructions are reported below).

Triage scores range from 1 (very poor) to 50 (excellent).

Pilot Grants

Triage will be based on the following criteria:

1. **Innovation and originality** of the proposed project with regards to the current knowledge.
2. **Quality and feasibility** of the scientific approach.
3. **Adherence to the priority topics of the Call.**

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.

Full Grants

Triage evaluation will be based on the following criteria:
1. **Innovation and originality** of the proposed project with regards to the current knowledge.
2. **Quality and feasibility** of the scientific approach and experience of the Applicants in the field.
3. **Adherence to the priority topics of the Call**

ISC members are asked to **assign a numerical triage score to each project**, according to the scale reported below. The score will reflect the recommendation whether the project deserves full review**. It is desirable to use the entire numerical range**, in order to avoid most of the projects falling within an intermediate interval, which would make the triage procedure less efficient.

Triage Scoring Scale		
Triage Score	**Project Evaluation**	**Recommendation**
46 - 50	Outstanding	No concerns - Suggested for full review
41 - 45	Excellent	Only minor concerns - Suggested for full review
36 - 40	Good	Only few critical points - Can be considered for full review
31- 35	Average	Several critical points - Not suggested for full review
1 - 30	Poor	Major concerns - Not suggested for full review

For each Application, ISC members are requested to **justify their score by briefly highlighting strength and weaknesses in the "Comment" field,** also specifying if the Application has any ethical issues that need further attention and if the topic of the application is in line with the priority topics of the Call. Any concerns, particularly if the score is lower than 40, and/or identified weaknesses of the Application should be clearly specified.

Examples of major weaknesses are:
- not related to ALS and/or to the Call's objectives
- not hypothesis-driven
- not feasible
- poor rationale or weak preliminary studies
- other (please specify in the comments).

ISC members are also asked to **assess the adherence of the proposal to the priority topics** suggested in the Call by **writing "yes" or "no" and a brief comment in the text box** "Is the proposal adherent to the priority topics of the call?".

The individual comments of the ISC members will be anonymously sent to the Principal Investigators of those Applications that are excluded from further review. **It is therefore important that the written material is accurate, clearly written, and does not include derogatory language.**

Operating Instructions

Online Registration and General Instructions

The Remote Evaluation Forms must be completed online. Reviewers can login at proposals.arisla.org (in the "Already member?" box) using the information received in the invitation email from AriSLA Scientific Office.

At the first access, reviewers must confirm to have read the *Information Notice on personal data treatment*. The system will then ask to change the Password. In case of forgotten Password, please click on "Forgot your

Password": entering Username (email address) an automatic email with the new Password will be sent to the registered email address. Once logged in, the system will ask to modify the Password.

Please note that this account can be used by one device per time.

Please contact AriSLA Scientific Office at bandi@arisla.org if both Username and Password have been lost.

Once logged in, each reviewer can find the list of Applications that have been assigned to her/him.

Confidentiality on all information about the projects has to be preserved at any time, as reported in the AriSLA contract.

Each Application can be open by clicking on the pdf icon and on the "Triage proposal for reviewers" link. The available attached documents (i.e., figures, collaboration letters) will be downloaded within the application, after the "Applicant" section V.

By clicking on "Evaluate" button a pop-up window will open, where comments and score can be filled out.

In order to be able to evaluate the Application, reviewers must flag the "non-conflict of interest" box. If the Reviewer perceives to have any conflicts, she/he should immediately contact AriSLA staff at bandi@arisla.org, to re-assign the Application.

If the reviewer does not feel confident regarding the theme proposed by a project, she/he can contact AriSLA staff at bandi@arisla.org, in order to re-assign the Application.

By clicking the "**Save changes**" button data entered in the Form are saved.

By clicking the "**Save changes and Submit**" button, the evaluation is completed and closed. **Once the evaluation has been submitted, modifications are no longer possible.**

An email will confirm the submission of comments and score for each Application.

The web application is compatible for most of the commonly used browsers. In particular, we ensure its compatibility with these browsers and following versions: Firefox 74; Chrome 80; Safari 13.

Assistance

For any information about the revision process, please contact:

E-mail Help Desk: bandi@arisla.org