



Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

2022 Call



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Eligibility

Q) Are projects focused on any age-related neurodegenerative disease eligible for funding?

A) Yes. The Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme will consider proposals focused on any age-related neurodegenerative disease, including:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
- Argyrophilic grain disease
- Cerebral amyloid angiopathy
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease
- Corticobasal degeneration
- Corticobasal syndrome
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Frontotemporal lobar degeneration
- Huntington disease, Huntington chorea
- Lewy body dementia
- Logopenic aphasia
- Motor neuron disease
- Multiple system atrophy
- Non-fluent progressive aphasia
- Parkinson's disease
- Pick's disease
- Primary progressive aphasia
- Prion diseases
- Posterior cortical atrophy
- Progressive supranuclear palsy
- Semantic dementia

If your proposal will focus on an age-related neurodegenerative disease not listed above, please contact the PMRP Team (researchgrants@fpmaragall.org) before applying.

Q) What is considered to be basic research?

A) For the purposes of the PMRP 2022 Call, please refer to the following definition from [Eurostat](#), the statistical office of the European Union:

“Basic research is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.”

Please note that, as mentioned in the Guidance for Applicants, although the Pasqual Maragall Foundation considers basic research to be fundamental in the quest to beat age-related neurodegenerative diseases, basic research is not eligible for funding in the PMRP 2022 Call.



Q) In Collaborative Research Projects, do Consortium Principal Investigators (cPIs) also need to conduct translational or clinical research on Alzheimer’s disease or any other age-related neurodegenerative diseases?

A) No. Principal Investigators (PIs) and Consortium Coordinators (CCs) must conduct translational or clinical research on Alzheimer’s disease or any other age-related neurodegenerative diseases but this is not an eligibility requirement for cPIs. We appreciate that, depending on the nature of the research project, consortiums might require another area of expertise and that cPIs may offer cross-cutting knowledge.

Q) What is considered to be a public or non-profit research organisation?

A) Any public or non-profit organisation that carries out research as part of its normal activity. Research does not need to be its primary activity. Examples: foundations, hospitals, research centres, universities. Please contact the PMRP Team (researchgrants@fpmaragall.org) if you have any doubts regarding the eligibility of your organisation.

Q) I am employed by a hospital and a foundation manages all of its research activities. Is it possible for the foundation to be named as my Host Institution/Partner Institution?

A). Yes. Please select the Host/Partner Institution according to how your organisation usually manages its grants.

Q) Does a Principal Investigator, Consortium Coordinator or Consortium Principal Investigator need to have a permanent contract?

A) No but they will need to have a contract for the duration of the proposed research project. If their current contract is due to end during the duration of the proposed research project, they need to confirm with their organisation that they will be supported for the full project duration should the project be selected for funding.

Q) If a Principal Investigator, Consortium Coordinator or Consortium Principal Investigator is currently working part-time for family/personal reasons do they still fulfil the eligibility criteria of holding a “full-time position as an independent scientist”?

A) Yes as long as their position is full-time and they have simply voluntarily reduced their working hours for family/personal reasons.

Q) Who do you consider to be an independent researcher?

A) To demonstrate independence a researcher should have at least one high impact publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor. Fulfilment of the eligibility criterion “to be principal investigator on at least one active, competitive research grant” also suggests that their institution allows them to manage projects independently and therefore considers them as independent researchers.

Q) The Guidance of Applicants states that at the submission deadline for the Letter of Intent (LOI), Principal Investigators (PI) of Individual Research Projects and Consortium Coordinators (CC) and Consortium Principal Investigators (cPI) of Collaborative Research Projects must be principal investigator on at least one active, competitive research grant, and that mentored awards and training grants do not qualify. What is meant by “mentored awards and training grants”?

A) Mentored awards and training grants refer to grants with the inclusion of a mentor or supervisor. The researcher may be named as the Principal Investigator but the award of the grant was also dependent on the inclusion of a mentor or supervisor role.

Examples of mentoring and training grants: Juan de la Cierva, Sara Borrell, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship, Alzheimer’s Association Research Fellowship.

Please note that this does not mean that researchers holding these awards are not eligible to apply to the PMRP. Applicants may be beneficiaries of mentored awards and training grants, providing they meet all of the eligibility criteria.

Q) Is it possible to “share” the role of Consortium Coordinator?

A) No. Only one researcher can be named as Consortium Coordinator.

Q) What is considered to be a proven track record?

A) A proven track record will include demonstrable achievements in terms of scientific publications as main author, grants awarded as principal investigator, presentations at prestigious national and international conferences, awarded prizes, granted patents. Achievements may vary according to a researcher’s area of research and career stage.

Q) Can an individual participate in multiple projects in the PMRP 2022 Call?

A) No. An individual can only participate in one project, regardless of their role (Principal Investigator, Consortium Coordinator or Consortium Principal Investigator).



Funding Principles

Q) Does the €800,000 include the contribution to indirect costs?

A) Yes. The maximum grant award is €800,000 and this must cover direct and indirect costs.

Q) If the duration of a research project is less than 5 years, can the maximum budget of €800,000 still be requested?

A) Yes. Every research project is different. Please determine the project duration based on the length of time required to carry out the proposed research project. Similarly, please calculate the project budget based on the funds required to undertake the research project.

Q) Is the maximum budget allocation higher for Collaborative Research Projects than for Individual Research Projects?

A) No, the maximum grant award is €800,000 for both types of project.

Q) Do indirect costs (overheads) need to be 21% of total eligible direct costs?

A) No. The maximum contribution to indirect costs (overheads) is 21% of the total eligible direct costs. It is not necessary for applicants to request the maximum contribution.

Q) If one institution in a Collaborative Research Project requests overheads of less than 21% of their total eligible direct costs, can another institution request more than 21%?

A) No, the 21% limit applies to each institution's total eligible direct costs.

Q) What does it mean that the “budget must be reasonable, clearly justified, and distributed according to the expected timeline of the research activities”?

A) Reasonable: the budget requested should reflect the expected cost of executing the proposed research project taking into account the actual personnel, goods and services required. The organisation's usual practices must be followed and under no circumstances should the costs be excessive.

Clearly justified: all direct costs included in the budget must be strictly necessary to carry out the research project and their direct relation to the project must be well explained.

Distributed according to the expected timeline of research activities: the budget distribution should be in line with the timeline of the proposed research activities rather than simply averaged over the duration of the project.

Q) Will the grant amounts awarded be the same as the grant amounts requested?

A) Yes, normally the grant award will match the budget requested. However, if deemed appropriate by the Evaluation Committee or Selection Board, the Foundation reserves the right to offer a grant for only part of the requested budget. This may happen if, for example, specific budget items seem excessive or unnecessary to execute the project. One of the questions that the evaluator is asked is if there is a clear justification of the funding requested to execute the proposed research project, taking into account resources already available.

Q) In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, if there are two Partner Institutions outside Spain is the 30% budget limit applied to each institution?

A) No. A maximum of 30% of the budget can be assigned to institutions outside Spain. If there are two Partner Institutions located outside Spain, their combined budget must be a maximum of 30% of the total budget requested for the project.

Q) In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, is there a maximum or minimum budget that can be assigned to the Host Institution or any given Partner Institution?

A) No. The only limit in terms of the budget distribution between the Host and Partner Institutions relates to the maximum of 30% that can be assigned to institutions outside Spain.

Q) Is an external audit report required regardless of the budget requested?

A) Yes, all expenditure must be audited. The frequency of the audits will be established in the Grant Agreement according to the distribution of the awarded budget. In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, the Host Institution and each Partner Institution must submit an external audit report, regardless of the budget assigned to them.

Q) Does the external audit need to be carried out by the same company that audits the institution's annual accounts?

A) No. The external audit company should be appointed according to the institution's usual practices.

Q) Is there a limit to the amount that can be spent on the audit of the project?

No. As projects may vary in duration and budget, there is no limit. Please estimate the cost of the audit based on your organisation's experience.

Q) Is it possible to include part of the Principal Investigator's/Consortium Coordinator's/Consortium Principal Investigator's salary in the budget?

A) Yes. A maximum of 20% of the total direct costs of the budget can be allocated to this type of salary costs.

Example: if an Individual Research Project requests the maximum funding of €800,000 (including overheads at 21% of direct costs), a maximum of €132,231.41 can be assigned to the Principal Investigator's salary costs.

In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, the 20% limit applies to each institution's total direct costs and not the total direct costs of the project

Q) Is it possible to include part of the salary of members of the Research Team, including those with permanent contracts?

A) Yes, providing they are employed by the Host/Partner institution and there is no double funding. The amount requested should be proportional to the percentage of time that the team members dedicate to the research project. A detailed explanation for this type of cost is required at Full Proposal stage.

Q) Are salary costs during short periods of absence eligible?

Yes. Salary costs during short periods of absence (less than or equal to 90 days) can be covered by the grant.

Q) Is there a limit to the amount of the budget that can be allocated to subcontracting?

A) No. However, subcontracting costs in excess of 30% of the total eligible direct costs will be reviewed carefully and will need to be particularly well-justified.

In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, the 30% limit is applied to each institution's total direct costs and not the total direct costs of the project.

Application

Q) Is it compulsory to use the online grants system?

A) Yes, all applications must be submitted via the [online grants system](#).

Q) Can an application be submitted in Spanish?

A) No, all applications must be submitted in English.

Q) Can supplementary documentation be submitted to support the application?

A) No, only the requested documentation can be submitted. Additional documentation such as letters of support, letters of recommendation etc. cannot be submitted.

Q) Does a Letter of Intent (LOI) need to be submitted before a Full Proposal?

A) Yes, the PMRP 2022 Call is a two-stage application process. All applicants must submit a LOI and those whose LOIs are evaluated most favourably will be invited to submit a Full Proposal.

Q) Why is it not possible to submit my application?

A) Please click on the Validate button to identify any potential missing/incomplete information or attachments.

Q) At what stage is Ethics Approval required?

A) Approval from the appropriate ethics committee(s) is required before the relevant project activities are carried out. A copy of the approval does not need to be submitted at any stage of the application process. However, a copy of the approval will be requested by the Pasqual Maragall Foundation before the start of any project activities.

Q) Is it possible to make changes to the consortium at Full Proposal stage?

A) No. The evaluation of the track record of the Consortium Coordinator and the Consortium Principal Investigator(s) is weighted heavily in the evaluation of the LOI therefore it would be unfair to other applicants to allow any changes to be made to the consortium.



Q) Is it possible to make changes to the research project at Full Proposal stage?

A) No, no significant changes can be made to the research project. The background and specific aims provided in the Letter of Intent cannot be edited in the Full Proposal.

Q) Should proposals aiming to analyse data from, or add procedures to, the BBRC's ALFA Study be identified at the Application Stage?

A) Yes. In the Project Overview section of the LOI, applicants must specify whether their project includes the use of the ALFA study. If the answer is yes, they must provide a detailed explanation of the data and/or procedures to be analysed and/or added in the Brief project description, including methodology section of the online form.

Q) Where can I find more information about the BBRC's ALFA Study?

A) More information about the Alfa Study can be found [here](#).

Evaluation

Q) Are Collaborative Research Projects viewed more favourably than Individual Projects?

A) No. All projects are evaluated based on their excellence. Projects should only be submitted as Collaborative if deemed necessary to carry out the proposed research project.

Q) Are Projects including the BBRC's ALFA study viewed more or less favourably than others?

No. All projects are evaluated based on their excellence.

Q) Are Projects including the BBRC's ALFA study evaluated in the same manner than others?

No. In addition to the standard evaluation procedure, these projects will be revised by the BBRC's scientific committee to ensure their feasibility and identify any potential conflicts of interest.

Q) Will each grant be awarded to a project focusing on a different call topic?

Not necessarily. All projects are evaluated based on their excellence therefore more than one grant could be allocated to the same topic.

Q) Why might an application be rejected before it is evaluated by the external experts?

A) All applications must fulfil the eligibility criteria for the call (please see section four of the Guidance for Applicants). The eligibility of all applications is verified by the PMRP Team and ineligible proposals will not be evaluated.

Incomplete applications will also be considered ineligible therefore it is important to ensure that all sections of the online form are fully completed.

Applications may also be rejected for failure to respect the application instructions, for example established character/page limitations, to ensure a fair competition for grant funding.

Q) Is feedback provided to all applicants?

A) All applicants are informed of the outcome of their LOI but detailed feedback is only provided to applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal.

At Full Proposal stage, all applicants are provided with a detailed evaluation report.



Q) Where can I find the Pasqual Maragall Foundation's strategic plan?

The strategic plan is published on the Foundation's website [here](#).

Grant Management

Q) Are there any additional requirements for the Host Institution prior to signature of the Grant Agreement?

A) Yes. The Host Institution will be required to provide additional documentation e.g. to demonstrate that it is up-to-date with its tax and social security obligations.

Q) Do the selected projects need to start in July 2023?

A) It is expected that selected projects will be able to start as of 1st of July 2023 but this is not a compulsory start date. However, all projects should start during 2023.

Q) Will it be possible to make changes to the budget during the life of the project?

A) Yes but prior approval by the Pasqual Maragall Foundation will be required.

Q) Will unspent budget be automatically carried forward to the following year?

A) Yes but all budget variances must be explained in the annual financial reports.



Other Questions

Q) In case of questions not answered by the PMRP Guidance for Applicants 2022 Call or this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, who should be contacted?

A) Please send an email to researchgrants@fpmaragall.org and the PMRP Team will get back to you as quickly as possible.