

# **South Tyrolean Fund for the Promotion of scientific Research (SFPR) at the South Tyrolean Health Care Service (SABES) and the Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg (PMU)**

## **Introduction**

One of the core objectives of the South Tyrolean Health Care System (SABES) and the Paracelsus Medical University (PMU) is to establish and further develop a research cooperation. The South Tyrolean Fund for the Promotion of scientific Research (SFPR) is an essential instrument to achieve this goal. The development and expansion of the research activity is a major priority for SABES and should be based on cooperation projects together with the PMU and other research institutions of South Tyrol (e.g. Eurac Research, Claudiana University of Applied Sciences, Free University of Bolzano, etc.) as well as national and international research institutions. Ultimately, this network should ensure the best possible health care for the population of South Tyrol in the future.

## **Maximum project duration**

24 months

## **Submissions deadline**

Tue, 31/05/22 - Ore 12:00

## **Funding / Contribution**

Other

## **Funding details**

1. The calls and fund allocations take into account the regulations of Italian legislature.
2. Equipment and other infrastructural acquisitions that are funded by the SFPR remain the property of SABES and are inventoried as such. In this case, the subject equipment shall be purchased through SABES. All regulations of SABES applicable to purchases (e.g. purchase application) are valid, and compliance with them must be ensured by the recipients.
3. Personal employment that is funded by the SFPR has to be affiliated to SABES and/or to the PMU Salzburg after personnel agreements between the respective administration offices.

4. Studies involving patients or healthy subjects may only be carried out after prior approval by the Ethics Committee of the two main partners (SABES and PMU), and, if necessary, by Ethics Committee of other participating centers (e.g. other national or international Ethics Committees). The recipient must ensure compliance with all ethical regulations before the start of the project and monitor this compliance during the project itself.
5. The members of the Allocation Board and CORIS involved in the awarding of SFPR funding must treat confidentially the information that comes to their knowledge in the context of the project submission.
6. After positive review of the project proposals and concordance with Italian legislature the decision-making process regarding the eligibility of the requested project proposals is regulated by the rules of the allocation board.
7. Conflict of interests have to be disclosed and will be evaluated case-by-case by CORIS and the allocation board.

**Amount of funding per project:**

Varies depending on the project; maximum grant amount of Euro 100,000.00 per project.

**First level funding:**

First level projects will be funded with a maximum amount of 50.000€ (range 10.000 – 50.000€)

**Second level funding:**

4 projects with an amount of 100.000€ will be funded in the first call.

**Number of projects supported**

Depending on the available total fund amount per call. The completely available amount should be allocated if enough project proposals have been submitted and the review scores “quality of the research design” and “quality of the work plan and proposed management” and “innovation degree of proposed project” have reached at least a score of 1/5 or more as defined in chapter IV-b.

**Other details about subject areas**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Gender-specific Medicine, is defined as the study of how (sex-based) biological, (gender-based) socioeconomic and cultural differences impact people’s health. Gender medicine should be particularly promoted, namely through the State Plan "Piano per l' applicazione e la diffusione della Medicina di Genere" of the State Law of 2018 (art 3, comma 1, Legge 3/2018). For this reason, project proposals that consider gender-specific aspects will be assigned with an extra point in the evaluation process (see IV-b).

**Background**

The allocation of project funds of the SFPR is intended to promote collaborative research at the South Tyrolean Health Care Service (SABES) together with other scientific institutions of the province of South Tyrol and the Paracelsus Medical University (PMU) of Salzburg. The funding is intended to expand and strengthen already existing scientific fields of the SABES and the PMU, to support the establishment of new scientific approaches, methods and procedures and thus to contribute to the formation of scientific priorities. The basis of this process is a development plan, which is being elaborated by the Development Board of PMU-SABES. The main research fields involve biomedicine, nursing care science, pharmacy, medical technology and health science research. *The Development Board suggested the following research focusses/areas for the future cooperation:*

- *Translational medicine*
- *E-Health*
- *Preventive Medicine and Eco Medicine*
- *Chronic disease and Regeneration*
- *Health Services Research and Precision Medicine*

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### **Admitted proposers**

Target group: Principal investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) scientists of all disciplines at SABES, other research Institutions of the Province of South Tyrol or the PMU in Salzburg.

Persons with the following type of employment are allowed to apply to the SFPR as PI or Co-PI:

- Temporary or permanent employees of the SABES
- Temporary or permanent employees of the PMU Salzburg or SALK with PMU affiliation
- Temporary or permanent employees of other research institutions in South Tyrol (e.g. Eurac, Claudiana, Free University of Bolzano, or other Health services accredited institutions)

Two Principal Investigators (PI and Co-PI), one at the PMU Salzburg and one in South Tyrol, are mandatory and are intended to be both responsible for the proposal. The PI or the Co-PI is responsible for application and both are responsible for the project management at their institutions. (e.g. if PI is affiliated to a research institution in South Tyrol, Co-PI must be affiliated to PMU Salzburg and vice versa).

Research projects without a participation of SABES and/or PMU are not eligible. In detail, if the PI and Co-PI are not affiliated to SABES then SABES must be at least a collaboration partner. Moreover, either the PI or Co-PI must be affiliated to the PMU Salzburg.

Principal investigators and Co-Principal Investigators with temporary employment must confirm an employment contract time that overarches the duration of the project.

### **Target and goals**

Funding of collaboration projects between PMU and South Tyrol (including SABES).

### **Terms of submission**

The submission and review process will be managed by the “Consorzio per la Ricerca Sanitaria (CORIS)” of which SABES is a member. The collaboration with CORIS will be regulated by a separate contract that also defines the reimbursement.

The applications must be submitted to the CORIS grant office in electronic form only via its online portal: [hic.corisveneto.com](http://hic.corisveneto.com)

Due to technical reasons, the submission can only be performed if the Principal Investigator or the Co-Principal Investigator is equipped with a digital signature system according to the “P7M” specification.

A formal review of applications will be conducted by CORIS. Incomplete applications or grant applications that do not comply with the formal requirements of the SFPR (in particular, exceeding the scope of the application, non-compliance with formatting requirements) and projects that are not in accordance with Italian legislature or ethical rules will be returned to the applicant. Corrections can be made by the applicant within 2 weeks after notification by CORIS. Otherwise, the application will be rejected by CORIS due to non-compliance with the formal requirements.

### **Contents of the proposal**

The maximum number of characters refers to the counting of characters including spaces. The application can be submitted electronically by the PI or the Co-PI and must include a document with the following information for review purposes:

1. Title of the project
2. Allocation of the project to one of the following research areas:
  - Translational medicine
  - E-Health
  - Preventive Medicine and Eco Medicine
  - Chronic disease and Regeneration
  - Health services Research and Precision Medicine
  - Other area (please specify)
3. Application to first level funding or second level funding.
4. Name of the PI and co-PI, description of the employment relationships, employment duration in case of temporary employment (upload self declaration) and employment addresses. Work addresses, work telephone and fax numbers, email addresses.
5. Names, addresses and affiliation of all collaborators involved in the study. If the PI and Co-PI are not affiliated to SABES than the name, address and affiliation of the collaborating researcher at the SABES is mandatory.
6. Short description of the project in a generally understandable form (max. 1,800 characters).
7. Focus (max. 18,000 characters): Description of the Focus of the planned research project with presentation of the innovative content in relation to the current state of knowledge including own project-relevant preliminary work already existing collaborations with the partners, type and expected percentage of the collaboration partners in relation to the total effort of the project and a reference list of the most important cited project-relevant research work (max. 30 citations at the end of document)
8. Work program (max. 18,000 characters): Description of the planned program, the methodology, explanation of the experimental design, data evaluation, milestones, key risks to delivery, time schedule, including any required official approvals (document upload if available: ethics committee approval, animal experiment approval, etc.).
9. Costs: Detailed description of the planned use of project funds, listed according to personnel, equipment and other infrastructural acquisitions, consumables, laboratory animals, services of third parties and other tangible or intangible acquisitions.

10. Optional: Details of any project funds currently available and/or project proposals submitted for funding by third parties for the research project in question or related to it, details of the respective funding institutions and funding periods; description of any relations to the present proposal, max. 2,000 characters.
11. Written approval from the head of the institute or hospital of the PI and Co-PI (document upload).
12. Direct and indirect conflicts of interest must be disclosed by the applicants in the application. In any case, possible effects of the funding decision on the applicants' own economic or other personal interests, their spouses or partners, family members or persons living in the same household are to be considered a conflict of interest. Further circumstances that could constitute a conflict of interest are any paid or unpaid cooperation of the applicant with project-involved companies or profit-oriented institutions on which the funding decision could have financial or personal effects, including outside the project in question. All payments already received or promised by the applicant or the persons named in sentence 2 from third parties (including non-profit institutions) in connection with the project in question must be disclosed at the time of application, as must any intellectual property rights of the applicant or other persons and institutions involved in the project that are relevant to the project. All financial commitments or payments by third parties to the applicant or the persons named in sentence 2 that occur later, i.e. during an ongoing award procedure or after the SFPR has agreed to provide funding, must be disclosed immediately after their occurrence.

If one of the involved persons in the project receives payments by or is involved in a company whose product is in the focus of research of the project than the project will be excluded (conflict of interest disclosure form provided by CORIS). (document upload)

Curriculum vitae (upload: max. 2 pages) of PI, co-PI and collaborators, with a separate list of publications (relevant to the proposed scientific activity and listed in PubMed or other relevant publications; max. 20 citations). (document upload)

### **Admissibility and exclusion criteria**

Research projects without a participation of SABES and/or PMU are not eligible. In detail, if the PI and Co-PI are not affiliated to SABES then SABES must be at least a collaboration partner. Moreover, either the PI or Co-PI must be affiliated to the PMU Salzburg.

### **Evaluations and acceptance of the proposals**

All applications meeting the formal criteria of inclusion and that are compatible

with Italian legislature and national rules are entering the scientific evaluation process, which is guaranteed by CORIS. The projects should be evaluated by experts that are acting in the field of expertise of the projects. The projects are scored taking into account the following parameters.

- **COLLABORATION STRENGTH** (score 0-5)

Did the collaboration partner in South Tyrol and PMU Salzburg already cooperate together within other research projects (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

Do the collaboration partners in South Tyrol and PMU Salzburg have already published scientific work together (if no = 0 points, if 1-5 publications = 1 point, if five or more publications = 2 points)?

Does the project proposal aim to increase the collaboration between different research institutions in the province of South Tyrol (e.g. SABES, Eurac, Claudiana, Free University of Bolzano, etc.) (no = 0 points, yes = 2 points)?

- **QUALITY** of the research design (**score 0-5; if scored 0 of 5 the project will be excluded for funding**)

How appropriate is the research design in relation to the stated objectives (not appropriate = 0 points, appropriate = 1 point)?

To what extent is the proposed design and methodology of the research project well defined and feasible within the timeframe and resources requested (not = 0 points, partially = 1 point, well = 2 points)?

To what extent does the research show originality (low = 0 points, intermediate = 1 point, high = 2 points)?

- **QUALITY** of the work plan and proposed management (**score 0-5; if scored 0 of 5 the project will be excluded for funding**)

How appropriate are the work plan and project management arrangements (not appropriate = 0 points, appropriate = 1 point)?

Have clear milestones defined (not clear = 0 points, clear = 1 point)?

How likely is it that these will be met within the specified timeframe (not likely = 0 points, likely = 1 point)?

Have the applicants identified key risks to delivery (e.g. ethical, technical, and organizational) and are these adequately addressed (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

Has the project already been approved by the ethic(s) committee(s) (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

- **STRENGTH** of the research team (score 0-5)

Are the roles of the team members clearly described (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

Do the Principal Investigator and the Co-Principal Investigator appear suitably qualified and experienced to lead the proposed work (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

Does the research team provide the necessary breadth and depth of expertise to deliver the proposed work (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

Does the project involve young researchers (no = 0 points, 1 researcher = 1 point, 2 or more young researchers = 2 points)?

- **INNOVATION** degree of the proposed project (**score 0-5; if scored 0 of 5 the project will be excluded for funding**):

Is the project proposal describing innovative methods (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)

Can potential results contribute to improvement of Health Care System (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)

Do the primary objectives meet the criteria for treatment, service and process development (no = zero points, yes = 1 point)?

Do the primary objectives contribute to development of a specialistic area (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

Are gender-specific aspects considered in the project proposal (no = 0 points, yes = 1 point)?

- **IMPACT** of the proposed work (score 0-5)

Does the proposal offer demonstrable benefits to patients and the health care systems or an understanding of how benefits might be achieved (0 no impact, 1 very low impact, 2 low impact, 3 sufficient impact, 4 strong impact, 5 highest impact)?

Every project receives a total score ranging from 0 to 30.

Project proposals that are scored 0/5 in the sections “quality of the research design” or “quality of the work plan and proposed management” or “innovation degree of proposed project” are automatically excluded from competition.

### **Allocation and use of the funding**

Upon completion of the review process by CORIS, the allocation board recommends eligible applications based on the review results and specific board regulations to the CEO of SABES for funding. In the course of the award process, the allocation board SABES-PMU reserves the right, in individual cases, to request additional information from the applicants other than the application documents or information relating to the project application, if this is deemed necessary for the funding decision. Moreover, in individual cases and if deemed necessary, the

allocation board SABES-PMU reserves the right to suggest additional reviewers to CORIS sending an E-mail to: [amministrazione@corisveneto.it](mailto:amministrazione@corisveneto.it) including a short justification of the reviewer proposal, whereby the applicant or any participant of the study must not have a joint authorship with the proposed reviewers of publications in SCI-listed peer-reviewed journals within the last 5 years.

### **Conflict of interests**

Direct and indirect conflicts of interest must be disclosed by the applicants in the application. In any case, possible effects of the funding decision on the applicants' own economic or other personal interests, their spouses or partners, family members or persons living in the same household are to be considered a conflict of interest. Further circumstances that could constitute a conflict of interest are any paid or unpaid cooperation of the applicant with project-involved companies or profit-oriented institutions on which the funding decision could have financial or personal effects, including outside the project in question. All payments already received or promised by the applicant or the persons named in sentence 2 from third parties (including non-profit institutions) in connection with the project in question must be disclosed at the time of application, as must any intellectual property rights of the applicant or other persons and institutions involved in the project that are relevant to the project. All financial commitments or payments by third parties to the applicant or the persons named in sentence 2 that occur later, i.e. during an ongoing award procedure or after the SFPR has agreed to provide funding, must be disclosed immediately after their occurrence. If one of the involved persons in the project receives payments by or is involved in a company whose product is in the focus of research of the project than the project will be excluded (conflict of interest disclosure form provided by CORIS). (document upload)

### **Publication of the results**

The Principal Investigator commits to submit a detailed final report within 6 weeks after the end of the funding period. A separate invitation will be issued for a possible presentation of the results at a scientific event of the SABES and/or PMU.

Furthermore, the applicant is obliged to mention SABES as the sponsor of the research project in all publications resulting from the funded project, including the assigned project number, and to send the publications to the Innovation, Research and Teaching Service (IRTS) of SABES. Funding applications to which the results of the respective application have contributed should also be reported to the IRTS.

The author list of publications resulting from projects funded by the SFPR is composed of persons that are directly involved in the project. Persons with that receive payments by or are involved in a company whose product is in the focus

of the research project should not be listed as author.

### **Evaluations of the ethics committee**

Studies involving patients or healthy subjects may only be carried out after prior approval by the Ethics Committee of the two main partners (SABES and PMU), and, if necessary, by Ethics Committee of other participating centers (e.g. other national or international Ethics Committees). The recipient must ensure compliance with all ethical regulations before the start of the project and monitor this compliance during the project itself.

The payment will start after approval of the project by the ethic(s) committee(s) of the involved centers. If the positive evaluation of the project by the ethic(s) committees(s) is not submitted within 6 months after decision of the allocation board the grant will be withdrawn.

### **Privacy policy**

According to new European Regulation on the protection of personal data (E.U. Regulation 2016/679 - GDPR), ...