

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 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 in South Tyrol (e.g. Eurac Research, Claudian 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 healthcare for the population of South Tyrol in the future.

The South Tyrolean Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Research (SFPR) is an essential instrument to achieve this goal.

Maximum project duration

24 months

Submissions deadline

Wed, 15/06/22 - Ore 17:00

Funding / Contribution

Other

Funding details

The SFPR is intended to promote collaborative research at the South Tyrolean Health Care Services (SABES) together with other scientific institutions in the province of South Tyrol and the Paracelsus Medical University of Salzburg.

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 of 50,000€ (range 10,000 - 50,000€)
- **Second level funding:** 4 projects with a maximum amount of 100,000€ will be funded in the first call.

~~Number of projects supported~~

A total funding of up to €1m can be allocated if enough project proposals have been submitted and have reached the required quality threshold.

~~Award~~

Awards will be allocated by the CEO of SABES based on the recommendation of the Allocation Board of PMU-SABES on the basis of the results of the review process managed by CORIS.

Subject areas

Translational medicine

E-Health

Preventive Medicine and Eco Medicine

Chronic disease and regeneration

Health Services Research and Precision Medicine

Other details about subject areas

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Gender-specific Medicine is defined as a the study of how (sex-based) biological, (gender-based) socioeconomic and cultural differences impact people's health. Gender medicine should be particularly promoted, with special reference to relevant Italian legislation (*State Law of 2018, art. 3, clause 1, Law 3/2018*). Proposals that consider gender specific aspects will be assigned with an extra point in the evaluation process.

Background

The funding is intended to expand and strengthen already existing scientific fields pursued by SABES and 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 research focuses/areas for the future cooperation and these are listed above.

Admitted proposers

~~Target group:~~ Principal investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) should be researchers in any discipline based at SABES or other institutions of the Province of South Tyrol or the PMU in Salzburg.

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

- Temporary or permanent employees of SABES
- Temporary or permanent employees of the PMU Salzburg, or of Salzburger Landeskliniken (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 both intended to be responsible for the proposal. Either the PI or the co-PI is responsible for the application and both are responsible for the project management and delivery at their respective institutions (e.g. if the PI is affiliated to a research institution in South Tyrol, the Co-PI must be affiliated to the PMU Salzburg and vice versa).

In all circumstances, participation of SABES is mandatory. Research proposals without participation of SABES are not eligible. Specifically, if the PI and Co-PI are not affiliated to SABES, then SABES must be at least a collaboration partner named in the application.

PI and Co-PIs with temporary employment contracts must confirm that the duration of their employment extends beyond the duration of the proposed project.

Target and goals

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

Terms of submission

The submission and review process will be managed by the Healthcare Research Consortium - CORIS, of which SABES is a member.

The applications must be submitted via CORIS' online submission platform at: **hic.corisveneto.com** and must be submitted in English only.

Proposals can be submitted on the aforementioned platform from 02 May 2022 at 12.00. ~~Applications must be completed by 31 May at 17.00.~~

ATTENTION: THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO JUNE 15, 2022 5:00 P.M.

For technical reasons, the proposal can only be submitted if the PI or the Co-PI are equipped with a digital signature system according to the "P7M" specification.

Contents of the proposal

The maximum number of characters indicated in this guidance includes spaces. The application must be submitted electronically by the PI or the Co-PI and must include the following information for review purposes:

1. Project title
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
3. Application to first or second level of 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 address, work telephone number and fax, work email address.

5. Names, addresses and affiliation of all collaborators involved in the study. If the PI and Co-PI are not affiliated to SABES, then the name, address and affiliation of the collaborating researcher(s) based at SABES are mandatory.
6. Brief description of the project in a plain English
7. Focus (max. 17,000 characters): description of the main focus of the planned research project, including its innovative aspects in relation to the current state of knowledge and any pertinent preliminary work already completed; an outline of pre-existing collaborations with partners named in the application and how these are aligned with the objectives of this call (see assessment criteria: STRENGTH OF THE COLLABORATION), type and contribution (percentage) expected from collaborators in relation to the total project effort; and a reference list of the most significant research work relevant to the proposal (max. 30 citations at the end of the document), including any joint publication between partners in South Tyrol and PMU Salzburg.
8. Work programme (max. 17,000 characters): description of the planned programme, the methodology, explanation of the experimental design, data evaluation, milestones, key risks to delivery and mitigating actions, schedule of activities, details of any required official approval (upload relevant documents if available, e.g. approval from relevant ethic committees, animal experiment approval etc.).
9. Costs: detailed description of planned use of project funds, listed according to personnel, equipment and other infrastructural purchases, consumables, laboratory animals, services of third parties and other tangible or intangible purchases. The following restrictions apply:
 - publications costs cannot exceed 2% of the total funding requested;
 - costs associated to conferences and missions cannot exceed 5% of the total funding requested;
 - the budget can only cover expenses and costs incurred by the applicants (PI, Co-PI and collaborators) for activities associated with the delivery of the project and the dissemination of its findings.
10. Available funding (optional, max 2000 characters): details of any project funds currently available and/or project proposals submitted for funding by third parties and related to the application being submitted to the SFPR, including the respective funding institutions and funding periods; description of any relations to the present proposal.
11. Written approval from the relevant authority of the institute or hospital of

the PI and Co-PI (document upload)

12. Direct and indirect conflicts of interests (document upload). The relevant module can be downloaded from CORIS' online platform.
13. Curriculum Vitae (document upload: max. 2 pages) of PI and co-PI and collaborators, with a separate list of publications pertinent to the proposal and listed in PubMed or other relevant publications (document upload: max. 20 citations).

Admissibility and exclusion criteria

Research proposals without participation of SABES and PMU are not eligible. Specifically, if neither the PI or the Co-PI are affiliated to SABES, the SABES must be at least be included as a collaboration partner. Either the PI or the Co-PI must be affiliated to the PMU Salzburg.

Applicants with temporary employment contract that does not extend beyond the duration of the proposed project will not be admitted.

Applications that are not complete or that do not comply with the formal requirements of the SFPR (in particular, beyond the scope outlined in this call, non-compliance with formatting requirements) and projects that are not in accordance with Italian legislation or ethical rules will be excluded from the competition. CORIS might request corrections to be made to the submissions, to ensure these are in line with formal requirements. Corrections can be made by the applicant within 2 weeks after notification by CORIS.

Evaluations and acceptance of the proposals

A formal review of the applications will be conducted by CORIS. All applications meeting the formal requirements for inclusion in the competition and that are compatible with the Italian legislation and national rules will be admitted to the review 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 via other research projects? (no=0 points, yes=1 point)
- Have the collaboration partners in South Tyrol and PMU Salzburg

already published scientific work together? (if no = 0, if 1-5 publications = 1 point, if >5 publications = 2 points)

- Does the 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, the proposal will be excluded from 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 feasible=0 points; partially feasible=1 point; feasible = 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, the proposal will be excluded from funding)

- How appropriate are the work plan and project management arrangements? (not appropriate=0 points; appropriate=1 point)
- Have clear milestones been defined? (no=0 points; yes=1 point)
- How likely is it that these milestones will be met within the specified timeframe? (not likely=0 points; likely=1 point)
- Have the applicants identified key risks to the delivery of the project (e.g. ethical, technical, organisational) and are these adequately addressed? (no=0 points; yes=1 point)
- Has the project already been approved by the relevant 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 PI and Co-PI 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; >1 researchers=2 points)
- **INNOVATION** degree of the proposed project (score 0-5; if scored 0, the project will be excluded from funding)
 - Does the proposal describe innovative methods? (no=0 points; yes= 1 points)
 - Can potential results contribute to improvements within the health care system? (no=0 points; yes=1 points)
 - Do the primary objectives of the proposal meet the criteria for treatment, service or process development? (no=0 points; yes=1 point)
 - Do the primary objectives contribute to the development of a specialist area? (no=0 points; yes=1 point)
 - Are gender-specific aspects considered in the 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 system, or an understanding and a clear trajectory of how benefits might be achieved? (no impact=0 points; low impact=1 point; moderate impact=3 points; high impact=4 points; exceptional impact=5 points)

Each reviewer will assign to the allocated proposals a score ranging between 0 to 30. Proposals will be excluded from the competition if they are scored 0 out of 5 points in the following parameters:

- Quality of the research design
- Quality of the work plan and proposed management
- Innovation degree of the proposed project

Allocation and use of the funding

Upon completion of the review process by CORIS, the allocation board will recommend eligible applications for funding to the CEO of SABES. Recommendations will be based on the review results and specific board

regulations. During 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, bearing in mind that no suggestion can be offered by someone who has collaborated or published with the applicants within the last 5 years. In all cases, reviewers allocated to each proposals must not have joint authorship of publications in SCI-listed peer reviewed journals within the last 5 years.

Where a funding recommendation is made, a grant agreement will be issued between SABES and the PI. The payment will start after approval of the project by the relevant ethic(s) committee(s) across the collaborating organisations. Ethical approval from relevant committees need to be submitted within 6 months of the funding recommendation being notified to the PI. Failure to provide the required documentation will lead to the funding offer being withdrawn. Payments modalities are defined in the grant agreement *and are supervised by an administrative office at SABES or an external partner defined by a separate agreement.*

Conflict of interests

Direct and indirect conflicts of interests must be disclosed by the applicants in the application. These will be assessed, on a case by case basis, by CORIS and by the Allocation Board, but will be based on the following principles:

1. In all circumstances, 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.
2. 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.
3. All payments by third parties (including not-for-profit institutions) already received by, promised or committed to the applicant or the persons listed in point 1 above, in connection with the proposal 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 proposal

and that are relevant to the proposal.

4. All financial commitments or payments by third parties to the applicant or the persons listed in point 1 above that occur after the application submission, must be disclosed immediately.
5. Proposals that include individuals who receive payments by, or are involved in a company whose product is the focus of the proposed research, will be excluded.

The Conflict of Interest disclosure form can be found on the online submission platform and will need to be uploaded onto the system once completed.

Statement about conflict of interests

DECLARATION OF ABSENCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST_0.pdf

Publication of the results

The PI and co-PI commit 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 applicants are required to mention SABES as the sponsor of the research in all publications resulting from the funded project, including the assigned project reference number, and to send the publications to the Innovation, Research and Teaching Service (IRTS) of SABES. Funding applications to which the results of the SFPR funded projects have contributed should also be reported to the IRTS.

The list of authors of publications resulting from projects funded by the SFPR will need to be composed of individuals who are directly involved in the project. Individuals who receive payments by or are involved in a company whose product is the focus of the research project should not be listed as authors.

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 the Ethics Committees of other participating centres (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 delivery of the project.

Payments will only be initiated after approval of the project by the relevant ethics committees, which will need to be provided to SABES within 6 months of the funding decision being communicated to the PI. Failing to submit copies of ethical approval will result in the funding offer being withdrawn.

Proposals that already include ethical approval by the relevant ethics committees will have a competitive advantage, as outlined in the assessment criteria.

Privacy policy

The reply to this call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) EU 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

Other informations

1. The calls and funding allocations are subject to the regulations of the Italian legislation.
2. Equipment and other infrastructural purchases that are funded by the SFPR remain the property of SABES and are inventoried as such. Any such purchase shall be made through SABES, and the relevant SABES regulations will apply to all purchases. Compliance to SABES regulations will need to be guaranteed by the beneficiaries of such purchases.
3. The members of the Allocation Board and CORIS involved in the SFPR award process must treat confidentially all the information that comes to their knowledge in the context of the proposal submission.
4. After the positive assessment of the proposals, and in accordance with the Italian legislation, the decision-making process regarding the eligibility of the proposals is regulated by the rules established by the allocation fund and outlined in this document.