

MUI-START programme - 14th call

The MUI-START programme has been devised as a start-up fund for young scientists. The aim of the programme is to offer young scientists the opportunity of developing new project ideas that could serve as basis for a subsequent application for third-party funding (e. g. FWF). The MUI-START programme funds only high quality scientific projects. Calls will be announced once a year. The 14th call of the MUI-START programme involves a three-step evaluation procedure. Please, read carefully the following instructions.

Type of funding

The 14th call of the MUI-START programme will support both Stand-alone (clinical or non-clinical) and larger cooperative (interdisciplinary or translational) research projects with pre-/clinical relevance.

The maximum duration of a project is 24 months. Projects can be funded to a maximum of € 70.000.

Eligibility criteria:

- Projects can be funded only if the PI is employed at the MUI for the entire duration of the project. If this is not the case at the time submission, the applicant should document and justify how this requirement will be fulfilled. The degree of employment must be at least 50% (20 hours per week).
- Applicants must have completed their doctoral studies (e.g. PhD, clinical PhD). Proposals from applicants with an adequate degree (MD) and an excellent record of accomplishment will also be considered.
- The MUI-START funding cannot be used to finance clinical-/PhD positions.
- Clinical trials can be funded only if they represent a clearly defined study that can be completed in the predetermined duration of the project (max. 24 months).
- The applicant's most recent academic degree (e.g. PhD) must have been completed no longer than eight years ago. Fully justified career breaks can be taken into account (e. g. parental leave, national service).
- Applicants' track record must be commensurate with their academic age. However, two (accepted) peer-reviewed international publications as first author are compulsory.
- Excluded from applying are:
 - Professors and heads of departments/divisions
 - PIs of third-party funded projects. (e.g. FWF, FFG...)
 - Applicants that already received a MUI-START research grant
- Research proposals should have a clear connection to one of the University's research focuses, i.e.: a) Oncology, b) Neurosciences, c) Genetics, Epigenetics & Genomics, and d) Infectiology, Immunology & Organ and Tissue transplant.
- Gender aspects in research should be an integral part of the research strategy. Gender aspects should be accounted for in all relevant parts of the proposal.
- Only one proposal per applicant can be accepted.
- Similar applications with essentially the same research focus from the same applicant are not allowed during the same funding period or if already funded.
- Likewise, identical or essentially identical grant applications submitted by different applicants will not be accepted.

Evaluation procedure

There will be a three-step evaluation procedure for proposals submitted under the 14th call.

First evaluation step: Proposals will be first assessed by the MUI-START jury and selected according to the following criteria: excellence of the applicant's track record, scientific quality of the proposal, relevance of the proposal for the MUI research focuses, inclusion of gender aspects in all relevant parts of the proposal, and potential of the proposal to be translated into an application for third-party funding.

Only proposals that satisfy these criteria will be selected for the second evaluation round (international peer-review).

Following peer-review by international experts the proposals will be ranked and the best applications short-listed. Short-listed applicants will be invited to an individual interview with the MUI-START jury (third evaluation step). Final decisions on proposals will be based on both the reviewer's scores and the outcome of the interviews.

Application guidelines:

The funding must be used to cover only project-specific costs. Following costs can be considered:

- Personnel costs: Personnel costs might be requested to employ additional staff needed to carry out to the project (student assistants or technical staff). A thorough justification must be provided in the proposal. Personnel costs must be based either on the current collective agreement or on the FWF standard salary costs for student assistants. The MUI-START Programme **does not cover employment costs for PhD students and post-docs**.
- Material costs (consumables, etc.) should be duly justified; competitive quotations must be provided for costs exceeding € 5.000,00.
- Quotes from service units, such as Core Facilities should be added
- Travel expenses for one relevant conference or meeting per year may be covered provided an active participation in the event (e. g. poster or oral presentation). Costs for travelling, accommodation and registration's fees will be reimbursed only at the level stated in the respective MUI guidelines: <https://www.i-med.ac.at/forschung/files/rkz-richtlinie.doc>.
- Double funding of a project, or of work-packages from another project (e. g. FWF; TWF) is not allowed. Additional funding sources must be declared.
- Only selected proposals will undergo peer-review by international experts and the short-listed applicants will be interviewed by the MUI-START jury.
- Applicants may exclude up to two reviewers. Positive reviewer suggestions will be discarded.
- Only the referent in charge of a proposal will know the identity of the reviewers assigned to the proposal. The rest of the MUI-START jury will access the reviews anonymously.

How to apply:

Applications must be submitted online using the Grants, Applications and Reviews (GAR) platform of the MUI (<http://fld.i-med.ac.at/gar>).

The 14th call will be open from 1st February 2023 12:00 h local time until 15th March 2023 23:59 h local time.

- Please submit your proposal as PDF file using Arial 11, 1,5 spaced. Proposals should have a maximum of 12 DIN-A4 pages (points 2 – 9; without annexes and references)
- Only proposals in English will be accepted.
- Applicants must provide the following documents together with their application:
 - Curriculum vitae (indicating the duration of your MUI working contract)
 - Publication list (indicating the IF of publications)
 - Academic abstract (ca. 450 words)
 - Proposal
 - Itemization of the requested funding ([Link](#))
 - Affirmation of the head of the department/division ([Link](#))
 - Affirmation of the head of the MUI animal facilities ([if applicable](#))
- **Expected begin of the projects: 01.12.2023**
- Proposals should have the structure explained hereafter. Please include all predetermined points (with numbers) in the specified manner.

Proposal structure:

1. Cover sheet including the project title, 5 keywords, and the duration of the project (months)
2. Background and state of the art
3. Objectives
4. Working plan
5. Methodology
6. Outlook/perspectives: short overview on possible aims after completion of the proposed project (ca. ½ page)
7. Time schedule
8. Project costs: a thorough written justification of the costs applied for must be provided in this section.
For an overview of the project costs, use the form "[itemization of requested funding](#)".
9. Cooperation partners inside and outside the MUI
10. Studies subjected to regulations:
 - a. Permits for animal testing should be presented to the MUI research office (Forschungsservice und Innovation) no later than the expected project start.
 - b. Permits for working with genetic modified organisms must be enclosed to the full proposal

- c. Decisions of the ethics committee must be submitted to the MUI research office (Forschungsservice und Innovation) no later than the expected project start.

Additionally, all the potential ethical, safety-related and regulatory aspects of the project must be described briefly. These aspects must be addressed in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any ethical concerns.

Applicants and the personnel employed in the MUI-START projects must follow the rules of good clinical practice (ICH-GCP), good manufacturing practice (GMP), and good scientific practice (GSP). Thus, the proposal should include following sentence: “*Hereby, I certify than in case of approval of the present proposal the rules of GCP, GMP and GSP will be observed*”.

11. Gender aspects in the research approach
12. Proposals must include a statement that no application for funding of the same project has been submitted anywhere else.
13. References

Important information:

- If cross-references to a current or a submitted third-party funded project exist, a detailed explanation highlighting the differences between both projects must be included in the proposal.
- A scientific report including a summary of the obtained results, information on publications and presentations of results in congress, and a brief report on the use of funding is expected from grant recipients at the end of the funding period.
- Submission of a third-party funding application (e. g. FWF) is compulsory for all MUI-START grant recipients. The MUI research office must receive proof of such a submission within three quarters of the planned duration of the MUI-START project. Failure to apply for a third-party funded project will result in the cancellation of the payment of last quarter of the MUI-START grant budget.
- If the PI leaves the University before the scheduled end of the project (e. g. employment somewhere else) the project funding will be immediately cancelled and a final report on the project must be provided. For parental leaves (either mother or father), the project may be interrupted temporarily and resumed at a later date.
- Proposals that do not fulfil the formal criteria described in these guidelines will be discarded without exception. Please pay particular attention to the sequence and numeration of the individual points described before and justify thoroughly in the text all the costs applied for. Use the form “itemization of requested funding” for an overview on the project costs.

Further information:

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