

MUI-START program - 16th call

The MUI-START program is designed as a start-up fund for young scientists at the postdoctoral level. The aim of the program is to support qualified young researchers in the preparation and generation of initial research data that can serve as the basis for a subsequent application for third-party funding (e.g. FWF, FFG, LBG, EU-Horizon etc.). The MUI-START program supports only high-quality scientific projects. Calls for proposals are announced once a year. The sixteenth call of the MUI-START program includes internal and peer-reviewed external evaluation procedures. Please read the following instructions carefully.

Type of funding

The sixteenth call will support collaborative tandem research projects involving two principal investigators, one with a background in basic research and the other in clinical research. The aim is to promote patient-oriented, translational research initiatives and bridge the gap between basic and clinical research. Projects can last up to 24 months. The maximum funding available per tandem project is 60,000 euros.

A total of 300.000,00 Euro is available for this call.

Eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must be employed by MUI for the entire duration of the project to be eligible for funding. If this is not the case at the time of submission, applicants should document and justify how this requirement will be met. Employment at MUI must be a minimum of a marginal employment contract.
- Applicants must have completed a doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, clinical PhD) or M.D. degree.
- No more than six years must have elapsed since the applicant's most recent academic degree (e.g., PhD; M. D.). Fully justified career interruptions (e.g. parental leave, national service) will be considered.
- The MUI-START funding cannot be used to finance clinical PhD projects.
- Candidates must have a record of achievement appropriate to their academic age. A minimum of two (accepted) peer-reviewed international publications is required, one at least as first author.
- Candidates that have been funded previously by MUI-Start or TWF/TNF cannot apply.
- Only one proposal per applicant can be accepted.

Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated in two stages:

The MUI-START jury will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria: the excellence of the applicant's track record; the scientific quality of the proposal; the inclusion of gender aspects in the research approach; and the potential for success in applying for third-party funding.

Only those proposals that meet these criteria will be selected for evaluation by external reviewers.

Following peer review by international experts, the best applications will be shortlisted and ranked. The final decision will be made at a meeting of the MUI-START jury.

Application guidelines:

All relevant parts of the proposal should address gender issues.

Funds may only be used to cover project-specific costs. The following costs may be considered:

- **Personnel costs:** Personnel costs may be requested to hire additional staff needed to carry out the project (student assistants). A detailed justification of these costs must be included in the proposal. The MUI-START program does not cover employment costs for doctoral students or for one's own position. Personnel costs must be based either on the current collective agreement or on the FWF standard salary costs for student assistants.
- **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.
- If the approval of an animal experiment or the approval of an ethics committee is required, this must be stated on the application form.
- Clinical trials can be funded only if they represent a clearly defined study that can be completed within the project's predetermined duration (max. 24 months) and fulfils all regulatory requirements.
- **Travel expenses** for one relevant conference or meeting per year may be covered, provided there is active participation in the event (e. g. poster or oral presentation). Travel, accommodation and registration fees will only be reimbursed up to the amount specified in the relevant 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; TNF) is not allowed. Additional funding sources must be declared.

How to apply:

Applications must be submitted online using the [Grants, Applications and Reviews \(GAR\)](#) platform of the MUI.

The 16th call will be open from 9th February 2026 12:00 h local time until 6th April 2026 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
 - Academic abstract (ca. 450 words)
 - Proposal
 - Table showing the requested funding (please use provided template).
 - Confirmation from the head of the institute/clinic

- Confirmation of the head of the MUI animal facilities (if applicable)
- **Expected begin of the projects: 01.11.2026**
- 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/Hypotheses
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 template table 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) 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) 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 that 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 cancelled immediately 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.

Further information:

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