



Guide to proposal preparation 2026

“5 per Mille” Research Program

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Calls for proposals, FEA instructions, Tips for applicants, Eligible costs and Keywords are available at:
<https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/funding-for-research/individual-grants/>

Guide to Pre submission Preparation

Helpdesk

To enquire about the Call for proposals and ask for support during the application process, applicants can contact AIRC at the following e-mail address: grants.applicationsupport@airc.it

This guide provides instructions to prepare an application for a “5 per Mille” Research Program.

Access to AIRC Projects Administration and Grants Evaluation System (PAGES) website

Please, visit the website <https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/funding-for-research/multiunit-reasearch/> and click on the relevant “apply” button. You will be prompted to login or to register to PAGES.

Researchers who already have an AIRC account

You may login into your AIRC account with your username and password.

First-time applicants

Only registered users can access the application form. Click on “Register (for applicants only)”.

Please provide the requested information (fields in **bold** are mandatory). The registration will be confirmed by e-mail and a username and password will be provided. Please note that the confirmation e-mail will be sent by AIRC during working hours only. Login into your AIRC account with your username and password.

How to apply

To launch the application form for the first time: select “Multi-Unit Grants”, choose “From Tumor Complexity to Precision Oncology”, and then click on “Apply”. In the next window, click on “Access the application form”.

To access the application in progress: from www.direzionescientifica.airc.it click on “Login”, insert your credentials, and then click on “Access the application form”.

Because this is a multi-unit grant, the application form comprises a dedicated section for the Principal Investigator (PI), along with individual sections to be completed by each Group Leader (GL). The PI is the researcher who is primarily responsible for the proposed research plan and who coordinates the work of all GLs.

Once in the “Application management section”, the PI must:

- Fill out the **PI application form**: complete the information regarding the PI’s own research unit;
- Fill out the **Units form**: the PI can add the Group Leaders responsible for each participating research unit, who will complete the corresponding sections. **To add a new unit:** click on the blue button “+ Add new unit” and provide the name and affiliation of the new GL. In case the affiliation is not among

those listed, please send an e-mail to administrative.office@airc.it. PIs must ensure that GLs have an account on the AIRC portal and that the information about their affiliations is up to date; if not the GLs must first create an account or update the affiliation information before they can be added.

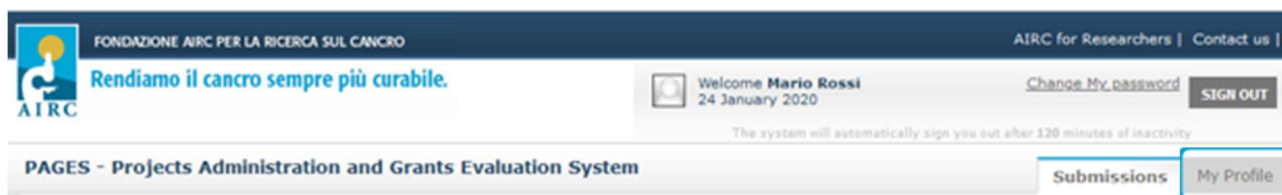
- After each research unit has been authorized by AIRC, the GL will be included in the Units list and the corresponding GL online form will become available for the GL to be filled out.

It is the PI's responsibility to check that the information present in each GL application is correct; once all sections have been filled out and submitted, the PI must formally approve each GL section by clicking on "Approve unit". Only when all GL sections have been filled out and approved by the PI, and when the PI's own section form has been completed, the PI can submit the "all-inclusive", complete application. The PI and GLs can access the application form anytime by clicking on "Submissions" and then on "Access the application form".

The guidelines provided below are valid for both the PI and GL sections.

Before starting the application: update "My Profile"

To access "My Profile", please login on your AIRC account: <https://www.pages.airc.it>



You need to **import the information directly from the My Profile section** to fill in a number of forms:

- PI Education and Training
- PI Research and Professional Experience
- Awards
- Publications
- Patents




We strongly advise you to insert/update the information in these forms before starting to fill out the application forms.

General features of PAGES application forms

- All forms that must be filled out are listed on the left side of the page. Click on each one of them and fill in all the mandatory fields (in bold). **Click on "SAVE" after completing each form;**
- the forms can be filled out in different sessions and the work can be interrupted/resumed at any time;
- several forms must be submitted as PDF files. **Files exceeding 4MB and secure PDF files cannot**

be uploaded. Documents submitted as PDF files must be written using an A4 portrait format, single-spaced, with margins not less than 2 cm and **a font not smaller than 10 points. Do not exceed the page limit indicated for each section:** the system will not allow the upload beyond the page limit;

- the letters of collaboration must be signed and uploaded as PDF files. **It is possible to use holographic or digital signatures.** Please note that digital signatures will no longer be visible in the final PDF application; however, the AIRC staff can check the uploaded document for the presence of such digital signatures;
- the **status** of each form is shown on the left:

	red cross for mandatory forms that are incomplete
	yellow circle for non-mandatory forms
	green mark for completed forms

The application must be written **entirely** in English.

Applications that do not conform to all the requirements in these instructions will be rejected.

The application forms in detail

1. Principal Investigator/Group Leader

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

Please provide or update (if necessary) the position at the Hosting Institution (e.g., associate professor, staff scientist, etc.). All other fields are automatically filled out with information provided at registration into the AIRC website; to modify the information in any of these fields, please click on the link "My personal data".

Please note: to successfully complete this form, it is mandatory to provide the ORCID identifier (<https://orcid.org>) and the tax code ("codice fiscale") of the applicant in the "My personal data" section.

2. Title Page

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

Please fill in the requested fields, entering:

- The title of the proposal (present only in the PI's section).** It must not exceed 120 characters, lowercase, spaces included. It should be neither too specific (with abbreviations of molecules names such as "Role of PGCI in tumor progression"), nor too vague (such as "Analysis of tumor

metastatization”).

- **The Hosting Institution.** The system automatically lists the institution(s) indicated by the applicant in previous applications to AIRC, if any. In case it corresponds to the institution where the research will be carried out, please check the corresponding box, otherwise check the box “Other” and select the current Hosting Institution from the drop-down menu. Please refer also to the “Declaration on affiliation” section (below) for further details. If the Hosting Institution is not listed in the menu or some information is not up-to-date, please follow the instructions provided here: <https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Registration-Hosting-Institution.pdf>
- **The Department.** In case the Hosting Institution is organized in research departments (Departments, in the case of universities; Institutes, for Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche), please select from the drop-down menu the department where the research program will be carried out. In case a department is not listed, please follow the instructions provided here: <https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Registration-Hosting-Institution.pdf>.
- **The Laboratory (optional).**
- **Grant Officer (optional).** Applicants may designate a Grant Officer from the Hosting Institution to assist in the preparation and submission of the application. If the name of the Grant Officer is not to be found in the drop-down menu, follow the instructions described here: <https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Registration-grant-officer.pdf>. From their Personal Area, the authorized Grant Officers will have access to the applicant’s application and will be allowed to complete and submit it on behalf of the applicant.

3. Legal Representative and Scientific Director

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

The Legal Representative (“Legale Rappresentante”) of the Hosting Institution will be responsible, along with the applicant, of all the legal and administrative duties of the grant and will have to **sign the application**.

The information regarding the Legal Representative and/or the Scientific Director are provided automatically by the system based on the Hosting Institution selected in the “Title page” section.

Please select the name of the Legal Representative from the drop-down menu.

In case the Director of a Department within the Hosting Institution is duly authorized to sign as Legal Representative, check the relevant box: “By flagging this check-box you are declaring that the Director of the Department is duly authorized to sign on behalf of the Legal Representative of the Institution”. **By flagging this box, the applicant certifies that the Director of the Department has been conferred power of attorney.**

Please note that if the Hosting Institution doesn’t have a Scientific Director (e.g., universities), the information regarding the Scientific Director is not required. **Only the person selected through this section can sign**

the application, therefore, please make sure that all data are correct and up-to-date, and then click on “Save”. If they are not, please **promptly** notify AIRC and follow the instructions provided here: <https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Legal-representative-data.pdf>

4. Program Keywords

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

Program keywords will be one of the tools used by the AIRC Peer Review Office to assign each application to the most appropriate reviewers. Therefore, **an accurate choice of keywords is extremely important to ensure that reviewers with the most adequate expertise will evaluate the application**. Pick a set of keywords that clearly define the key aspects of the research plan.

The list of keywords is available at <https://www.pages.airc.it/DataFiles/Calls/SupportInfo/Keywords.pdf>.

5. Graphical abstract

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

Please upload as PDF file (1 page) a graphical abstract of your proposal. The graphical abstract should provide a summary of the proposed research plan’s key points and include a visual representation of the program’s structure, highlighting the distribution of activities among the participating units.

6. Letter of Intent

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

Give an overview of the research program and explain why it has chances to provide a real clinical benefit to patients. Make clear how each participating group is essential for the delivery of the proposed aims. Do not exceed the **four-page limit**, including figures and references; upload the document as PDF file. Please include an estimated budget range.

7. Applicant Education and Training

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

In order to complete this form you need to update the “Education and training” section in “My Profile” first.

In this section, please list all degrees the applicant holds or any degree program he/she is enrolled in. The field Master’s degree (laurea) is mandatory, while the “PhD” and “Speciality” section can be filled if attained.

Each applicant can add only one master's degree, one PhD degree and one specialty.

The form automatically shows the information stored in the "My Profile" section of the AIRC account. A record can be modified or updated anytime by clicking on the "Degree" column and filling in the pop-up window.

8. Applicant Research and Professional Experience

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

In order to complete this form you need to update the "Research and professional experience" section in "My Profile" first.

List all research and professional positions held by the applicant, including post-doctoral trainings. By clicking on "Add new record", the form automatically shows the information inserted in the "My Profile" section of your AIRC account.

9. Research Interruptions and Justifications

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

Applicants are invited to insert research interruptions in the last ten years (from 2016 to 2026) and to describe in detail whether such career breaks have had a negative impact on their track record. Reviewers are instructed to take this information into account when assessing the scientific productivity of an applicant. Research interruptions include:

- **Maternity leave** (female applicants): A career break of 12 months will be automatically calculated for each child (e.g. for twins, the system automatically calculates 2 years of interruption).
- **Illness, personal issues or parental leave** (the latter for male applicants): indicate the period of interruption (at least 5 months) and describe it in the dedicated box.

The system will automatically sum up all career breaks and will indicate the total months of interruptions.

For each full year of interruption, the system will automatically add an extra year to the publications time range. Examples:

- Applicant with no research interruptions: publications spanning from January 2021 to 2026.
- Applicant with n. months of research interruptions ≥ 12 and < 24 : publications spanning from January 2020 to 2026.
- Applicant with n. months of research interruptions ≥ 24 and < 36 : publications spanning from January 2019 to 2026.

10. Narrative Biosketch

This form must be completed by	PI Yes	GLs Yes
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Please identify up to five major scientific accomplishments of the applicant and explain how they helped advance the scientific knowledge in oncology. They may be seminal publications, patents, awards, proprietary software and datasets, authored textbooks, significant mentoring activities, leadership roles in important international research consortia, organization of major international conferences, previous fundings, etc.

The goal is not to have a long list of achievements, but rather to focus on those that have impacted most on the field of cancer research. Upload the document as PDF file (**max 1 page**).

11. Publications

This form must be completed by	PI Yes	GLs Yes
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In order to complete this form you need to update the "Publications" section in "My Profile" first.

If you had research interruptions in the last 10 years, please fill in the "Research Interruptions and Justifications" form first because career breaks might have an impact on the publications time range. See the dedicated form for details.

Provide a list of **maximum 10 significant papers** published in the last 5 years or more, depending on whether you have had career breaks longer than 12 months, that describe the applicant's contribution in the field. Do not include abstracts, conference papers, letters to the editor, book chapters and papers published in non peer-reviewed journals.

From the application form:

- You can add new publications by selecting the **"Add from My Profile - Publications"** button.
- To include manuscripts that have been accepted for publication but not yet published, please click on **"Add papers in press"**.
- To verify or update authorship information and to add AIRC acknowledgements, click on the publication title.

Candidates are responsible for uploading the most accurate information regarding publications and authorship. The IF assigned to each article, regardless of the publication date, is the latest provided by the Journal of Citation Reports (JCR) by Clarivate Analytics. For 2026 Calls, the 2025 JCR list, with the 2024 IF will be used.

Candidates are required to check all the information and to contact the AIRC Peer Review Office (grants.applicationsupport@airc.it) before the deadline of the Call in order to correct any possible inaccuracy

or mistake.

12. AIRC Policy on Research Integrity

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

Please read the [AIRC policy on research integrity](#) and check the corresponding box. AIRC is not responsible, and does not accept any liability, for scientific misconduct of personnel involved in a funded research program. By signing the application, the applicant and the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution certify that they will comply with ethical principles of good scientific practice and engage in honest behaviour, as described in such policy.

13. FEA (Firma Elettronica Avanzata)

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

The PI and the Legal Representatives must digitally sign the application: refer to the [FEA instructions](#) ("Firma Elettronica Avanzata") for details. If you do not hold an Italian tax code ("codice fiscale") please contact our offices (grants.applicationsupport@airc.it).

Proposal Submission

Applicants are advised to not leave submission to the last minute, as heavy server load might affect system performance.

Please follow these steps:

- Access the "Check your forms" section anytime in order to:
 - a) check and see whether each form have been correctly filled out. If any mandatory form is incomplete, the system will indicate the information that must be provided, in order to submit the application. A yellow warning sign will indicate whether there are missing data or inconsistencies that, however, will not prevent the application from being submitted;
 - b) view the application in its incomplete/complete state. By clicking on "Create draft" and then on "Open submission draft" you can download the PDF draft generated by the system.

Online submission - GLs

Once each GL has completed his/her own section, the GL can go to "Check your forms" and then to "Submit". All mandatory sections of the application form must be completed and must have the green flags before finalizing the submission and subjecting it to the PI's approval. After checking all content of that section, the PI can either endorse the GL section clicking on "Approve unit", in which case the status of that section will

change from “Submitted to PI approval” to “PI approved”; or “Reject unit”, in which case the status will revert to “Draft” and the GL section will be accessible again for the necessary modifications/amendments.

Online submission - PI

When a GL has completed and submitted his/her own section, the status of that unit in the PI's application management interface will change from “Draft” to “Submitted to PI approval”. The PI must verify the content of each GL section and then endorse it or not, using the “Approve unit” or “Reject unit” buttons, respectively. As a result, the status of each unit will either become “PI approved” or revert to “Draft” if the section is not approved.

The PI must also complete his/her section of the application form as well. Only after all GL forms have been approved, and only after the PI's own form has been filled out, the PI can proceed to the submission of the program application to AIRC by clicking on the “submit” button.

- The Submit section becomes available only when all mandatory forms are complete and have the green flags. In the submit section, a complete PDF draft of the proposal is automatically created. Please read the PDF draft carefully and check that the entire content is correct and readable (e.g. make sure that the personal data of the PI and the information regarding the Hosting Institution is up to date; that PDF documents that have been uploaded are in the correct orientation and are not truncated; that figures, Graphical Abstract and Gantt chart included, have a high enough resolution; that all publications in the time range indicated have been added with the inclusion – if necessary – of the correct supporting documentation, etc.).
- After ascertaining that all data are correctly reported in the PDF Draft, please check the box “I have checked the PDF files included in the application and I confirm they are correct”. Only after this step, it is possible to click on “Submit”.

Be aware that after clicking on “Submit” it will not be possible to make any further modifications.

Applicants will receive a confirmation of submission by e-mail.

The following documents will be generated and stored in the “Your submissions archive” section of the PI's Personal Area:

- **PDF file of the application:** it **will be available only when digitally signed by the PI**. This is the document that will be sent to the reviewers.
- **Publications addenda:** contains the list of publications (also present in the PDF file of the application) and supporting documentation for papers in press, Web of Science Core Collection publications and authorship certifications;
- **Affiliations certificate:** contains the declaration on affiliation (also present in the PDF file of the application) and the affiliations certificates, if applicable.

A copy of the above documents should be saved for future references.

The application cannot be modified after the online submission deadline.

The evaluation of the proposal is ONLY based on the information included in the application.

Submission of digitally signed application

Both the PI and the Legal Representative must digitally sign the presubmission application by the deadline indicated in the Call: refer to the [FEA instructions](#) for details. GLs are not requested to digitally sign the presubmission.

Guide to Full submission Preparation

This guide is only for applicants officially notified that their presubmission enquiry has been successful; it explains what is required to complete and submit the full application.

How to add/remove units – management section (PI only)

In this phase it is possible to add or remove a unit based on the comments provided by the reviewers in the presubmission. The reasons for adding a new unit or removing an existing one will be visible to the reviewers and will be taken into account in the evaluation of the full proposal.

- **To add a new unit:** click on the blue button “+ Add new unit” and provide the name and affiliation of the new GL. In case the affiliation is not among those listed, please send an e-mail to administrative.office@airc.it. PIs must ensure that GLs have an account on the AIRC portal and that the information about their affiliations is up to date; if not the GLs must first create an account or update the affiliation information before they can be added.
- After each research unit has been authorized by AIRC, the corresponding GL online form will be available and the GL will be included in the Units list;
- **To remove a unit:** click on the “remove” button next to the unit and provide an explanation as to why the PI has decided to eliminate the unit from the full proposal. Only after AIRC has removed the GL from the application, the corresponding Unit will be listed as “Ended” in the Units list.

How to apply – application form (PI and GLs)

The PI and GLs can access the application form anytime by clicking on “Submissions” and then on “Access the application form”.

- For the PI and the GLs already included in the presubmission, the full proposal comprises:
 - a) the presubmission forms. All the information entered in these forms during the presubmission phase cannot be changed, with the exception of the Publications form. Please contact AIRC in case any Legal Representative of the PI/GL's Hosting Institutions have changed;
 - b) a set of new forms.
- Newly added GLs will have to fill out all forms, including those originally requested for presubmissions.

It is the PI's responsibility to check that the information present in each GL section is correct; once all sections have been filled out and submitted, the PI must formally approve each GL section by clicking on “Approve unit”. Only when all GL sections have been filled out and approved by the PI, and when the PI's own section form has been completed, the PI can submit the “all-inclusive”, complete application.

The application forms in detail

1. Declaration on Affiliation

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

In this section, applicants must indicate whether they are already working in the Hosting Institution. It is not mandatory to be located in the Hosting Institution at the submission deadline; however, should the application be funded, applicants are expected to be affiliated with the Hosting Institution and working there from the beginning of the program and for its entire duration.

Applicants must indicate the Host Institution and any other affiliations in Italy or abroad they intend to maintain or activate in the event of being awarded the grant.

Affiliation with the Hosting Institution

Check “yes” if you are already affiliated with the Hosting Institution by the submission deadline.

In this case, by signing the application, the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution certifies that the applicant is already affiliated with the Hosting Institution and declares that, should the application be funded, the applicant will be allowed to remain affiliated with the Hosting Institution and to work there for the entire duration of the grant in order to carry out the research program.

Check “no” if you are not affiliated with the Hosting Institution by the submission deadline.

In this case, by signing the application, the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution certifies that, should the application be funded, the applicant will be affiliated with the Hosting Institution by the start date of the program and will be allowed to work there and remain affiliated with it for the entire duration of the grant in order to carry out the research program.

In case of funding and before the **program starts**, a letter (one-page PDF) digitally signed by the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution must be provided to AIRC, in order to confirm that the applicant has started his/her research activity in the Hosting Institution. Use the specific link in the submission section of your personal area.

Affiliation with other institutions

If the response to the statement “The Hosting Institution is the only institution I am affiliated with” is “No”, the system automatically lists all the affiliations indicated by the applicant in the past, if any. Please add any additional institution the applicant is or will be involved with (in Italy or abroad). If the institution is not listed in the drop-down menu, please provide all the requested information in the text boxes underneath, and then Click on “Add”.

Each affiliation listed in this form can be updated by clicking on the institution’s name: please check that all mandatory fields are filled in. In case the affiliation with an institution is no longer in place, or will be terminated, please indicate the termination date of the appointment at such institution.

Applicants must provide the following letters:

- **for the Hosting Institution:** an official letter (one-page PDF) digitally signed by the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution certifying the amount of time the applicant will spend at the Hosting Institution and the percentage of time that the PI will devote to the program;
- **for each of the other institutions the applicant is affiliated with (in Italy or abroad):** an official letter (one-page PDF) digitally signed by an institution's official defining the type of activity carried out by the applicant at such institution (e.g. research activity, teaching duties, etc) and certifying the amount of time the applicant will spend there. The letter is not needed if the affiliation is terminated or will be terminated before the program starts.

To provide the letter(s), applicants have two options:

- if it is already available at the time of submission, check the box "I am attaching the following documentation...", click on "Select" and upload the document as a single PDF file.
- if it is not available at the time of submission, check the corresponding box and upload the letters **before the program starts**; use the specific link available in the submission section of your personal area in the PAGES website www.pages.airc.it.

The letters will not be included in the PDF of the application but will be separately saved in your AIRC account.

Please note that, should the application be approved, funds will not be granted unless all the requested documentation is uploaded and cleared by AIRC.

2. Abstract

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

The Abstract must be structured into the following parts: Background, Hypothesis, Aims, Experimental Design, Expected Results and Impact on Cancer (**max 500 words in total**). Please note: the system allows plain text only; special characters will be maintained but formatted text (e.g. bold, superscripts etc.) will be automatically converted into plain text. When all sections have been filled out, click on "Save". All parts will be assembled automatically into one page in the PDF file of the application.

Please make sure not to include confidential information because the abstract will be made public in case the application is funded.

3. Proposal Main Body

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

Attach the Proposal Main Body as PDF file (**max 23 pages**), including figures, preliminary data, timelines and references. Use A4 portrait format, single-spaced, with margins not less than 2 cm and a **font not smaller**

than 12 point.

The Proposal Main Body should address all these aspects:

- **Impact:** make clear why, in six years' time, the proposed research has chances to provide a real clinical benefit to cancer patients;
- **Rationale and feasibility:**
 - a) describe the research questions, explain why they are important and describe the experimental design and methodologies that will be employed to answer them;
 - b) provide figures of relevant preliminary data;
 - c) describe the power calculation and analysis and make sure your results are statistically significant.

Research plan: organize the research plan in work-packages. Provide tasks, including milestones; each milestone should represent a step towards the common goal of the program, not a single and isolated research endeavour. All expected results should be clearly stated in the Research plan.

Innovation: highlight the originality and innovation of the proposed research program;

Resources: describe facilities, major equipment and shared resources available for the program. This is important, as many international reviewers are not familiar with Italian research institutions. To this aim, please provide a link to the lab and/or Hosting Institution webpage, when available in English;

Team areas of expertise: these programs are meant to function only if a genuine collaboration between participants is in place. Describe the expertise and skills that each Unit (lead by PI or GL) brings to the program and explain why it is essential for the delivery of the proposed aims;

Risk assessment and contingency plans: describe any potential pitfall or caveat, or interdependencies between work-packages that could impact on the proposal. Suggest alternative approaches that the team will undertake to address them;

References: list all literature references at the end of the document and employ the format used by *Cancer Research*. Example: Hanahan D, Weinberg RA. Hallmarks of cancer: the next generation. Cell 2011; 144:646-74. Include a paper identification code (PubMedID or doi or WoS).

4. GANTT Chart

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

In this section, please upload a GANTT chart to provide a clear visual representation of the program timeline, making it easier to understand the foreseen tasks, their durations and dependencies. The GANTT chart must be uploaded as a 1-page PDF file.

5. Declaration on originality of the application

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

The proposal must be **original**. Scientific overlap with other AIRC applications must be disclosed and justified. Submissions of proposals previously presented to AIRC by another PI will not be accepted.

We are aware that copying may be accidental and that parts of an application (e.g. materials and methods) may include duplicate material, originally produced by the PI for other goals than the present application.

In this form, answer YES to disclose any possible homology or scientific overlap with other applications and provide the justification (including the original AIRC application information) in the dedicated box. This also applies to:

- Applications by any other researcher (including also team members or collaborators);
- Applications submitted within different AIRC funding schemes;
- Applications submitted in past years, regardless of whether they have been funded or not.

Please note that AIRC checks documents with anti-plagiarism software. Proposals that contain blatantly and substantially copied materials already included in an AIRC application submitted by another researcher will be rejected.

6. Sustainability plan

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

In this section, please indicate what action or plans will be undertaken to maintain or sustain the program's activities beyond the current "5 per Mille" 2026 Program funding period. For example, indicate if these activities will be integrated into, and funded by, the Host Institutions. The aim is to demonstrate that the program has a clear and realistic plan for sustaining its impact after the grant ends. Upload the sustainability plan as PDF file (**max 2 pages**).

7. Governance/partnership/program management

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	No

Upload a partnership plan as PDF file (**max 3 pages**), addressing the following issues:

- **Governance and organizational structure of the team:** a deputy-PI, a Program Manager (PM) and a steering committee must be appointed. The steering committee must include the PI (chairman), the deputy-PI and selected Group Leaders; the role of this committee is to assist the PI in overseeing the program, for example by proposing solutions to manage changes in the proposed plan or conflicts between participants; Consistent with the partnership requirements of the Call, each participating unit (led by a Group Leader) contributes unique and complementary expertise.

Governance mechanisms include: defined roles and responsibilities for each unit, shared work plans and GANTT alignment, regular cross-unit scientific exchanges, integration of data management, IP agreement frameworks, and ethical compliance processes. The PM will assist the team in coordinating activities of the research consortium, ensures compliance with award requirements, oversees financial distribution; facilitate communication within and outside the consortium; ensure relationships with AIRC representatives and organize outreach activities, help manage intellectual property, assist preparation of reports, reviews and meetings;

- **Advisory Board:** the PI must set up an external advisory committee of 2 to 4 scientists working outside of Italy; they will monitor the program, providing independent feedback and recommendations;
- **Retreats:** the PI must organize regular meetings with all GLs. A kick-off meeting and yearly retreats with all members of the program, the advisory board and representatives of AIRC must be organized. At the end of each retreat the advisory board must write a report and send it to AIRC;
- **Incidental finding policy**
- **Procedures for resolving conflicts;**
- **Intellectual property:** an agreement between the PI, all GLs and their Hosting Institutions about the intellectual property of data obtained through this funding scheme must be in place, consistent with the [AIRC policy](#);
- **Biospecimens and Data Governance Policy implementation plan**
- **Policy on Data management and sharing:** explain how samples and data generated with the program will be stored and made available to all participants.
- **Patients' Relationship:** where useful to the outcome of the clinical activity, patients representatives involvement will be highly valued.

Considering the complexity of these programs, it is important that each one of these issues is thoroughly addressed.

8. Publications

	PI	GLs
This form must be completed by	Yes	Yes

Integrate the selected publications list from the pre-submission by providing the full list of papers published in the last 5 years or more, depending on whether you have had career breaks longer than 12 months). Do not include abstracts, conference papers, letters to the editor, book chapters and papers published in non peer-reviewed journals.

From the application form:

- You can add new publications by selecting **"Add from My Profile - Publications"**.
- To include manuscripts that have been accepted for publication but not yet published, please click on **"Add papers in press"**.

- To verify or update authorship information and to add AIRC acknowledgements, click on the publication title.

The applicant is responsible for uploading the most accurate information regarding publications and authorship. The IF assigned to each article, regardless of the publication date, is the latest provided by the Journal of Citation Reports (JCR) by Clarivate Analytics. For 2026 Calls, the 2025 JCR list, with the 2024 IF will be used.

Candidates are required to check all the information and to contact the AIRC Peer Review Office (grants.applicationsupport@airc.it) before the deadline of the Call in order to correct any possible inaccuracy or mistake.

Papers accepted after the full submission deadline

In case additional papers **with the applicant as leading author** (first, last or corresponding author) are accepted for publication after the full submission deadline, the applicant can add this supplementary information to the application. From the “submission section” of the personal area, the applicant can click on “add additional paper in press”, insert the requested information and upload **a single PDF file** containing a copy of the acceptance letter and a copy of the title page. AIRC Peer Review Office will accept/decline the requests. Deadlines are indicated in each Call for proposals.

9. Patents

	PI	GLs
This form may be completed in	Yes	Yes

In order to complete this form you need to update the “Patents” section in “My Profile”.

In this non-mandatory form, please list patents granted in the last ten years. By clicking on “Add new record”, the form automatically shows the information stored in the “My Profile” section of your AIRC account. By selecting some or all of these records, they will be uploaded in the current application.

10. Awards

	PI	GLs
This form may be completed in	Yes	Yes

In order to complete this form, you need to update the “Awards” section in “My Profile”.

In this non-mandatory form, list up to five awards the applicant has been honored with. By clicking on “Add new record” the form automatically shows the information stored in the “My Profile” section of your AIRC account. Please select the records to be uploaded in the current application by checking on the corresponding box.

11. Personnel Involved in the Research

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

A “5 per Mille” team should be made up of:

- **The Principal Investigator (PI):** is the coordinator, fully responsible of the entire program throughout its duration. The PI is also the primary contact for AIRC. Applicants participating in this Call as PIs are not permitted to act as Group Leaders in other consortia within this Call.
- **Group Leaders (GLs):** scientists who give a major scientific contribution to the program and may receive a portion of funding from the award budget. Acting as GL in multiple applications is discouraged.
- **Team members:** members of the research groups directed by the PI and each GL, comprising, possibly:
 - a) Program Manager (mandatory, **PI only**)
 - b) PhD students
 - c) early-stage researchers (preferably within 10 years from the attainment of their master’s degree by the submission deadline, *e.g.* post-doctoral fellows)
 - d) experienced researchers
 - e) technicians
 - f) research nurses (in case of clinical trials or complex clinical investigations)
 - g) data manager

If a team member has not been identified yet, please select “TBD” (To Be Defined) and upload a PDF file (**max 1 page**) describing the qualifications/skills the TBD should have. Add TBD personnel sparingly, since a high percentage might negatively influence the assessment of the feasibility of the research plan and/or compromise the timely start of the work;

For the execution of the program the following may also be involved:

- **Collaborators:** scientists external to the PI/GL’s research groups (including scientists working in the same Hosting Institution of the PI/GL but belonging to other research groups, and scientists affiliated with other institutions); **PIs of other AIRC grants can be listed as collaborators.**
- Companies.

While adding the personnel involved in the program, consider that AIRC discourages listing many units of personnel at marginal fractions of their time: therefore, make sure to have a sizable number of units of personnel devoting at least 75% of their time to the program. Do not list secretaries and/or administrative staff; personnel involved for less than 20% of their time should not be listed here, but must be included in the “Description of the work for each Unit of Personnel”.

To insert a new unit of personnel, click on “Add” and fill in the fields in the pop-up window. Click on the PI/GL name to enter his/her effort and indication of clinical activity.

This table summarizes what is required for each member of the team and where to insert the information:

PERSONNEL	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED	SECTION
PI/GL	Personal data	Principal Investigator
	PI effort on program $\geq 30\%$, GL effort on program $\geq 20\%$	Personnel
	Clinician (choose YES if involved in clinical practice)	Personnel
Team member	Personal data (or TBD)	Personnel
	Effort on program $\geq 20\%$ ($\geq 50\%$ for PM)	Budget/Personnel
	Role	Personnel
	Clinician (choose YES if involved in clinical practice)	Personnel
	CV (if effort $\geq 75\%$; $\geq 50\%$ for PM) not requested for technicians and research nurses PDF 1 page	Budget/Personnel
	Description of qualifications/skills (only for TBD) - PDF 1 page	Personnel
	Salary	Budget
Collaborator	Personal data	Personnel
	Letter of collaboration	Personnel
Company	Company name	Personnel
	Letter of collaboration	Personnel

Letter of collaboration (for collaborators and companies)

A formal letter of collaboration must be uploaded in PDF format, for each collaborator and/or company. The letter (**max 2 pages**) should be in letterhead paper, dated and signed.

Letters provided by **collaborators** must describe the specific agreements made between the parties in terms of:

- role on the program and activities that will be carried out by the collaborator;
- management of the resources;
- intellectual property rights;
- authorship in publications resulting from the collaborative effort;
- under what provision (free or not) the collaborator provides his/her expertise and/or reagents to the PI/GL, in compliance with the AIRC policy on financial Conflict of Interest.

Letters of collaboration provided by **companies** must be based on the Word template available in the online form (and [here](#)). Please download it and fill in the requested fields. Do not modify or delete any of the letter's sections.

Within the letter provided by the company, it should also be declared that:

- the PI/GL has the full property of data and results;

- b) the company has no right to veto the publication of results at any time;
- c) the management of the study, data acquisition and analysis and data property are completely independent of any kind of economic interest by companies producing or marketing drugs or diagnostic tools.

Funding will not be granted in the absence of such information.

Transfer of grant funds to collaborators is not allowed unless under service provision agreement followed by regular invoices.

Description of the Work for each Unit of Personnel

Click on "Select" and upload a PDF file (**max 2 pages**).

Please divide this document into the same work-packages and tasks described in the proposal main body and indicate who will do what in each work-package/task. Describe the work of each unit of personnel. If necessary, provide evidence of the skills of key team members citing a couple of significant papers that attest to their expertise. Do not list undergraduate students, secretaries and/or administrative staff. Include scientific personnel involved for less than 20% of their time when they provide an important contribution to the program.

12. Budget Form and Justifications

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

In the six columns, one for each year of support, insert the amount needed for each of the categories allowed. If the grant is awarded, AIRC will provide detailed instructions on the deadlines for spending the assigned funds.

Please refer to the [AIRC Grant Management Guidelines – Eligible Costs](#) document that summarizes the guiding principle underlying the costs eligibility criteria for AIRC grants.

The amount requested must be in Euros (NOT in thousands of Euros). The research plans must be designed for six years and the budget must be foreseen for the entire duration of the program; applications with budgets not encompassing all six years will be rejected.

Budget categories allowed:

DIRECT RESEARCH COSTS (EXCLUDING PERSONNEL). The budget must be calculated based on an itemized list of actual costs. Enter the amount of money needed for research costs, divided into the following subcategories:

- consumables and supplies (examples: plasticware, reagents, chemicals, animals if applicable etc.);
- instrumentation and equipment (examples: electrophoresis power supplies, microcentrifuges, PCR

machines etc.). The costs of large instruments and technological platforms should be included here and thoroughly justified in the Notes section. As indicated in the Eligibility Criteria section of the Call for Proposals, the Hosting Institution must provide the necessary equipment to carry out the program;

- services (examples: sequencing, microarray, histology, patent filing costs etc.);
- maintenance contracts (examples: service contracts for large instruments, animal facilities contracts);
- publication costs (most likely none in the first year of the program, as it takes time to obtain publishable data);
- meetings and travel costs (including expenses for retreats, e. g. honoraria and travel costs for members of the advisory board).

PERSONNEL EFFORTS/COSTS. Support is provided only for team members at 100% time on the program. In general, it is not allowed to provide financial support from the grant to personnel already holding a permanent position at the Hosting Institution at the time of the grant award. It is not allowed to pay personnel that does not directly carry out the program research activity (e.g. secretariats, financial staff, etc.) with the exclusion of one Program Manager per program, to be paid by the PI. For further details see the [AIRC Grant Management Guidelines – Eligible Costs](#).

Please click on “edit costs” to insert the Personnel costs details:

Man/year effort: please indicate the percentage of time that will be devoted to the work. **AIRC discourages listing many units of personnel at marginal fractions of their time:** therefore, make sure to have a sizable number of units of personnel devoting at least 75% of their time to the program. PhD students (or equivalent) can be listed as 100%. Support for personnel shall not exceed 50% of the total man/year effort. Example: for a research unit where all personnel adds up to a total of 4 man/year effort, no more than 2 units of personnel at 100% of their time (= 2 man/year effort) can be paid on the grant.

Financial support: please indicate the amount of financial support requested (e.g. fellowship or other contracts permitted by the applicable law). Applicants should ascertain that the Hosting Institution can take on personnel as indicated in the application, under the type of financial support requested.

The financial support requested should be consistent with the gross amount provided to personnel at the same career level at the Hosting Institution. Integration of the AIRC financial support by the Hosting Institution is permitted, but two salaries are not allowed.

In case an AIRC fellowship or an AIRC grant is awarded to one of the unit of personnel for whom financial support has been requested in this grant application, the PI/GL will be allowed to use the financial support for another unit of personnel, if needed. In case, the name of the new personnel unit must be provided when submitting the budget adjustment or the grant renewal request.

AIRC recommends that personnel working on the program is hired under an employment contract with adequate and equitable social security provisions (contribution to pension funds, health and accident

insurance, parental leave, etc.) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectorial collective bargaining agreements

Curriculum Vitae: please upload a **CV in English** as a PDF file (**max 1 page**). CV must be added only for personnel working at least at 75% of their time on the program, with the exclusion of technicians and research nurses.

The following format must be used for all CVs:

- personal data (name, date and place of birth, citizenship, work address, phone number and e-mail address);
- education (list, in reverse chronological order, all degrees obtained);
- research experience (list, in reverse chronological order, all positions held, describing very briefly – two sentences maximum – the main focus of the research activity);
- technical skills and competences;
- awards;
- publications (only a selection of the most relevant, with a maximum of five).

INDIRECT COSTS. Indirect costs will be supported up to 15% of the direct research costs (personnel included) incurred during the program. Please enter the percentage charged by the Hosting Institution (from 0 to 15; 0,1 decimals are allowed); the system will automatically calculate the corresponding amount.

OVERHEADS. Overheads will be supported up to 10% of the sum of direct (personnel included) and indirect costs incurred during the program. Please enter the percentage charged by the Hosting Institution (from 0 to 10; 0,1 decimals are allowed); the system will automatically calculate the corresponding amount.

For your convenience, you can use the budget calculator tool [available here](#).

By signing the application, the Legal Representative acknowledges the budget requested, including “Indirect costs” and “Overheads”, in compliance with the guidelines of the Call.

Justification notes

For each year of support and for each budget category, a description and justification of the amounts requested in the “Justification notes” box must be provided and will be evaluated by the reviewers. More specifically:

- for each section of the “Direct research cost”, provide a financial breakdown, on an itemized basis;
- for “Personnel costs”: when financial support for personnel is requested, please describe under what kind of provision (e.g. fellowship, contract etc.) the person will be hired;
- costs associated with the execution of a clinical trial or with other clinical applications (e.g. services provided by a contract research organization, recruitment of research nurses, etc.) should be clearly described and identifiable.

13. Awarded/Pending Support

This form must be completed by	PI Yes	GLs Yes
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In this section, applicants are requested to disclose all grants they will or might receive from any funding agency during the period of support with the AIRC grant, as well as any currently held grant. In particular:

- **Awarded support:** the applicant has already obtained a grant or received notification of funding;
- **Pending support:** the proposal submitted by the applicant is under consideration by the funding agency.

Please list all grants, regardless of whether they overlap with the current proposal or not. Active AIRC grants are automatically listed by the system. For each grant, indicate: the funding agency, project title, duration, total amount of funding (in Euros), the degree of overlap (in terms of research plan) with the program presented with this application and a justification for requesting additional support from AIRC together with the names of all personnel listed in the current application (including the applicant) that are also involved in the other grant and the percentage of time committed to the latter. A single unit of personnel should not be allocated for more than 100% of the time. This applies to the sum of all grants, including those from agencies other than AIRC. In case of collaborative grants, please specify the role of the applicant and indicate the amount allocated to the applicant's unit. Reviewers will be asked to verify that the proposal does not represent a duplication of projects already funded by AIRC, or submitted to, or to other funding agencies. AIRC reserves the right to ask supplementary documentation to other funding agencies in order to verify possible overlaps.

14. Disclosure of financial conflict of interests

This form must be completed by	PI Yes	GLs Yes
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Applicants must disclose financial conflicts of interest with the proposal, as described in the AIRC policy on [Financial conflicts of interest](#).

A financial conflict of interest includes a financial association or relationship that could influence (**actual**) or could be reasonably perceived as capable of influencing (**apparent**), the objectivity and integrity in the design, conduct, and reporting of a research activity. Such conflicts of interest include relationships with corporations whose products or services are related to the subject matter of the proposal. These relations include employment, substantive ownership of stock (> 5% of shares in a company), membership on a standing advisory council or committee, service on the board of directors, or public association with the company or its products. Other areas of conflict of interest could include receiving consulting fees (> 10.000 € per year from a company), patent filings, serving as a paid spokesperson, or providing services in exchange for honoraria.

Disclosing a potential conflict provides the reviewers with the needed information to independently assess

whether the work may be impacted by it; usually the disclosure does not invalidate the research.

Appropriate measures will be taken against applicants who have failed to disclose conflicts of interest, including the termination of the grant, the obligation to return grant money to AIRC, the ineligibility to apply to AIRC grants, and the exclusion from AIRC review panels and other bodies.

In the online form, applicants should select the option that best describes their possible financial conflict of interest(s):

1. I do not have financial conflicts of interests, as defined in the AIRC policy;
2. I do have financial conflicts of interests (actual or apparent).

In case option n. 2 is selected, the applicant is invited to disclose the conflict(s) held by themselves or their relatives up to the second degree, by clicking on the relevant button. For each conflict of interest, the applicant should indicate the name of the company/institution involved, select the type of conflict from the scroll-down menu and explain in the "Description" field how the actual or apparent conflict of interest(s) will or will not interfere with the independence and with the intellectual property of the results of the program. We do not require applicants to disclose the monetary value of their financial interests.

Reviewers in charge of evaluating the program will be asked to determine if the conflicts declared may affect the objectivity and integrity of the proposed research plan.

In any case, please note that it is possible to exploit the results obtained from the grant as long as the patent rights are fully held by the grantees and/or their institutions, as described in the Intellectual Property section of the Calls.

15. Bio-Ethical Requirements

The following terms and conditions apply to research with humans and research with animals:

- No research with humans or animals will be undertaken in the absence of the necessary authorizations; grant money cannot be used to cover costs associated with studies with humans or animals if the studies have not been authorized by the competent authorities.
- AIRC reserves the right to check the compliance with the bio-ethical requirements. To this aim, a copy of the authorizations must be made available to AIRC upon request at any time throughout the duration of the program and up to ten years after the program is concluded.
- In case the competent authorities do not approve the proposed human or animals studies, the applicant must promptly notify AIRC and devise an alternative research plan.
- Should there be substantial modifications in the research plan which require research on humans or animal experimentation not foreseen in this application, the applicant must detail them in the grant renewal requests.
- Any proposed modifications of the research plan will be subject to scientific evaluation, to make sure that the program is still scientifically sound and competitive. Program continuation and renewals of the grant will be contingent on a positive evaluation of the proposed modifications.
- AIRC is not responsible and does not accept any liability for studies regarding research with humans and research with animals.

By signing the application, the PI and the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution certify that they will comply with AIRC terms and conditions regarding research with humans and research with animals.

Further indications for each type of research are described below.

Research with humans

Check “YES” if your research plan involves any of the following:

- human biological samples (with the exclusion of commercially available human cell lines);
- human genetic material and/or human data collection (e.g. genetic information, health etc.);
- clinical studies with healthy volunteers and/or patients.

For AIRC-funded research programs that include independent phase I – II clinical trials:

- AIRC cannot be considered the promoter/sponsor of the trial;
- AIRC does not accept any liability for harm to participants in the clinical studies.

If you check “YES”, **the authorization of the local Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board (IRB) is mandatory** and must be valid for the entire duration of the human studies as detailed in the research proposal. The authorization should not be included in the application, but must be made available to AIRC upon request (during the program and up to ten years after the termination of the grant).

The approval document issued by the Ethics Committee **MUST** indicate:

- the date when the IRB meeting was held; approvals obtained more than three years ago, *i.e.* prior to 2023, are NOT acceptable, unless the study protocol is still active (supporting documentation might be requested to verify this is the case);
- the name of the applicant or of a unit of personnel included in the application. In case biospecimens are provided by external sources/collaborators, the authorization must be issued by the Ethics Committee of the collaborator’s research center;
- a clear reference to the studies described in the proposal (e.g. the title of the application).

Research with animals

Check “YES” if your research plan involves studies with vertebrates, cephalopods and foetal forms of mammals.

If you check “YES”, **the authorization from the Italian Ministry of Health is mandatory, according to the D.Lgs. 26/2014**, and must be valid for the entire duration of the animal studies as detailed in the research proposal. Should the animal studies be carried out by a collaborator working outside of Italy, the regulatory approval of the competent institutional or national authority must be obtained, and the experiments be performed following the guidelines described in: Jann Hau, Steven J. Schapiro: “Handbook of Laboratory Animal Science - Essential Principles and Practices, 4th Edition” (CRC Press, Taylor and Francis group, 2021). The authorization should not be included in the application, but must be made available to AIRC upon request (during the program and up to 10 years after the termination of the grant).

Research supported by AIRC that involves animal experimentation must comply with the **principles of the Three Rs (3Rs) to Replace, Reduce and Refine the use of animals in research**, as required by national and international rules: upload a PDF document (**max three pages**) describing how the 3Rs have been implemented in the research plan (e.g. explain why the anticipated results and benefits of the proposed research justify the use of animals, and why methods avoiding the use of living animals cannot be used; provide details and justification on the number of animals proposed for the research plan; describe all actions that will be taken to avoid or minimize pain and distress; etc.). The content of this form will not be included in the PDF of the application: it will generate a separate PDF that will be available in your personal area and that will be made available to reviewers upon request.

16. AIRC Policy on Research Integrity

This form must be completed by	PI	GLs
	Yes	Yes

Please read the [AIRC policy on research integrity](#) and check the corresponding box. By signing the application, the PI, the GL and the Legal Representatives of the Hosting Institutions certify that they will comply with ethical principles of good scientific practice and engage in honest behaviour, as described in this policy.

17. FEA (Firma Elettronica Avanzata)

The PI/GL and the Legal Representatives must digitally sign the application: refer to the [FEA instructions](#) ("Firma Elettronica Avanzata") for details. If you do not hold an Italian tax code ("codice fiscale") please contact our offices (grants.applicationsupport@airc.it).

Full Proposal Submission

Applicants are advised not to leave submission to the last minute, as heavy server load might affect system performance.

At any time during the application process a PDF draft file of the full submission enquiry can be generated and checked: go to "Check your forms" (on the lower left of the main page), click on "Create draft" and then on "Open submission draft". It is strongly suggested that after all forms have been correctly filled out, and prior to proceeding with the final submission, the PDF draft and its content are carefully read, controlled and verified.

Online submission - GLs

Once each GL has completed his/her own section, the GL can go to "Check your forms". All mandatory sections of the application form must be completed and must have the green flags before finalizing the submission and subjecting it to the PI's approval. After checking all content, the PI can either endorse the GL section clicking on "Approve unit", in which case the status of that section will change from "Submitted to PI

approval" to "PI approved"; or "Reject unit", in which case the status will revert to "Draft" and the GL section will be accessible again for the necessary modifications/amendments.

Online submission - PI

When a GL has completed and submitted his/her own sections, the status of that unit in the PI's application management interface will change from "Draft" to "Submitted to PI approval". The PI must verify the content of each GL section and then endorse it or not, using the "Approve unit" or "Reject unit" buttons, respectively. As a result, the status of each unit will either become "PI approved" or revert to "Draft" if the section is not approved.

The PI must also complete his/her application form as well. Only after all GL forms have been approved, and when the PI's own form has been filled out, the PI can submit the program application to AIRC by clicking on the "submit" button.

The PI will receive a confirmation of the submission by e-mail.

The application cannot be modified after the online submission deadline.

The evaluation of the proposal is based ONLY on the information present in the application.

Submission of digitally signed application

First GLs and their Legal Representatives must digitally sign the application following the same procedure described in the [FEA instructions](#).

Only when all GLs have submitted their digitally signed application, the PI and the Legal Representative of the PI's Hosting Institution will be allowed to digitally sign the complete application with the same procedure described in the [FEA instructions](#).

Only when the complete application has been digitally signed, in the section "Your submissions archive" the applicants will find: the final PDF of the full submission enquiry (PI only); a PDF with the list of the publications uploaded in the application form (PI and GLs); a PDF with the affiliation certificates (PI and GLs); research on animals - 3Rs (PI and GLs, if applicable). A copy of all these documents should be saved for future reference.