



Guide to proposal preparation 2026

NEXT GEN CLINICIAN SCIENTIST GRANT

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

New in 2026

COVID-19

Research interruptions due to COVID-19 are no longer accepted.

RESUBMISSION LIMITATIONS:

Applicants are not eligible to apply if they:

- received a score ≥ 4 in the 2025 MFAG presubmission;
- received a score ≥ 18 in the 2025 IG call;
- were classified as 'not eligible for funding' in the 2025 Call for Fellowships in Italy.

Guide to Proposal Preparation

Helpdesk

To get information about the Call for proposals and support during the application, applicants can contact AIRC at this e-mail address grants.applicationsupport@airc.it

This guide provides instructions to prepare an application for an AIRC Next Gen Clinician Scientist grant.

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

Please visit the website <https://www.direzionescientifica.airc.it/funding-for-research/individual-grants/>, select the Call of interest 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

AIRC has recently updated the PAGES system. For this reason, you will need a one-time **migration of your existing account**. Follow the instruction provided [here](#). After the migration, you will be able to login into your AIRC account.

First-time applicants

Only registered users can access the application form. Click on “Need an account? Sign up here (Registration is 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 such e-mail will be sent by AIRC during working hours only). You will then be able to login your AIRC account with your username and password.

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:



The screenshot shows the AIRC website header. On the left, the AIRC logo and the slogan "Affrontiamo il cancro. Insieme." are visible. In the center, the text "Welcome Mario Rossi" is displayed. On the right, the user's name "Mario Rossi" and the role "Principal Investigator" are shown next to a yellow circular icon with the letters "SR". A dropdown menu is open, listing three options: "My Profile", "Change Password", and "Logout". The "My Profile" option is highlighted with a yellow box.

- 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 the application forms.

General features of PAGES application form

- 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;
- a number of 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 point. Do not exceed the page limit indicated for each section:** the system will not allow the upload of a number of pages beyond the limit;
- the letter of institutional commitment and the letters of collaboration (if any) must be signed and uploaded as PDF files. **It is possible to use both holographic and digital signatures.** Please note that digital signatures will no longer be visible in the final PDF application; however, AIRC staff can verify whether the uploaded document contains 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.

Please note: this is a two-step application process. Forms to be completed in the pre-submission or the full submission phase are identified with “PRE” and “FULL”, respectively. With the exception of the PI Position, the Legal Representative and Scientific Director, and the Publications forms, none of the information entered in the pre-submission can be modified in the full submission.

The application forms in detail

To launch the application form for the first time: select “Individual Grants”, choose “Next Gen Clinician Scientist Grant” and then click on “Apply”. You will be redirected to the login. In the next window, click on “Apply” and subsequently on “Access the application forms”.

To access the application in progress: you will find your ongoing application under “open activities” in the

Application session. Click on “Access the application form”.

1. Principal Investigator

This form must be completed in **PRE**

Please provide or update (if necessary) the PI position in the Hosting Institution. 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 PI through the “My personal data” section.

2. Title Page

This form must be completed in **PRE**

Please fill in the requested fields, entering:

- **the title of the proposal.** 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 research area.** Among the 27 Research areas provided in the menu, please select the topic that most corresponds to the research activity that will be carried out with the grant;
- **the Hosting Institution.** The system automatically lists the institution(s) indicated by the PI 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 project 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 present 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 PI's application and will be allowed to complete and submit it on behalf of the PI.

3. Legal Representative and Scientific Director

This form must be completed in **PRE/FULL**

The Legal Representative ("Legale Rappresentante") of the Hosting Institution will be responsible, along with the PI, 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 on behalf of the Legal Representative, check the 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 PI certifies that the Director of the Department has 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 aren't, 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. Project Keywords

This form must be completed in **PRE**

Project 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 may be completed in **PRE/FULL**

In this non mandatory form, 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. It will be possible to update the graphical abstract in the full submission.

6. Letter of Intent

This form must be completed in **PRE**

In the Letter of Intent applicants are invited to:

- describe the proposed work (including preliminary data, if available, sample size and power calculation analyses) and the projected achievements focusing on the potential impact on clinical practice in oncology and ultimately on cancer patients;
- describe their background and expertise, highlighting their commitment to cancer research, their qualifications and motivations to lead the proposed research project, including previous significant experiences in research institutions outside of Italy, if any;
- describe the successful history of the Hosting Institution in managing and carrying out clinical research studies.

If this is a resubmission of a previously rejected proposal, candidates should briefly indicate how the application has been modified.

DO NOT include publications of the PI, as these will be listed in a separate section of the application form.

Upload the letter as PDF file, **max 3 pages**, single-spaced, with margins not less than 2 cm and a **font not smaller than 10 points** including figures with captions and key references. Non-compliance with the formatting recommendations will be negatively evaluated by the reviewers.

7. Institutional Commitments

This form must be completed in **PRE**

In this document (**on letterhead paper, max 2 pages**), the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution, or the Director of the Department on his/her behalf, must describe the level of institutional commitment to support the applicant in the management of the proposed research project.

Please download the Word [template](#) (also available in the online form) and fill in the requested fields. Do not modify or delete any section. Once the letter is completed and **signed**, please upload it in PDF format.

Both holographic and digital signatures are accepted.

Failure to address any of the points listed above will result in the rejection of the application.

Inclusion of additional benefits for the PI (e.g. availability of core facility services free of cost, expertise and personnel made available to support the proposed clinical study, etc.) is encouraged and will make the pre-submission more competitive.

By signing the application, the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution certifies that he/she will comply with the conditions described in this letter.

8. PI Education and Training

This form must be completed in **PRE**

In this section, please list the degrees held by the applicant or the programs he/she is enrolled in. In the “Master’s degree” (“laurea”) section, please insert the medical degree required to apply (see Eligibility criteria). Moreover, the “PhD” and/or “Specialty” sections should be filled, as one of these degrees is required to apply (see Eligibility criteria). Each applicant can add only one medical degree in the Master’s degree section, and one PhD and one Specialty in the relevant sections. The date of PhD defence/viva will be used as reference for eligibility.

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

Do not list post-doctoral positions here, as they should be included in the “PI Research and Professional Experience” section.

9. Certificate of PhD or Specialty

This form must be completed in **PRE**

In this mandatory form, please upload a copy, in PDF format, of the official document certifying the attainment of the PhD and/or specialty degree, if applicable. **If the applicant holds both degrees, please merge the certificates in a single PDF file. Applications submitted with incorrect certification documents will be rejected and excluded from the peer review.**

10. PI Research and Professional Experience

This form must be completed in **PRE**

In order to complete this form, you need to update the “Research and professional experience” section in “My Profile”.

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

11. Awards

This form must be completed in **PRE**

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

In this non-mandatory form, list up to 5 awards the applicant has been honored with. By clicking on “Add new record” the form automatically shows the information stored in “My Profile” section of your AIRC

account. Please select the records to be uploaded in the current application by checking on the corresponding box.

12. Research Interruptions and Justifications

This form must be completed in **PRE**

Applicants are invited to insert research interruptions in the last 10 years (from 2015 to 2025) and to describe in detail whether such career breaks have had a significant 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. The interruptions will affect the time range for degree attainment as well as for publications. In particular, for each full year of interruption, the system will automatically add an extra year to the publications time range. Examples:

PI with no research interruptions: publications spanning from January 2021 to 2026.

PI with n. months of research interruptions ≥ 12 and < 24 : publications spanning from January 2020 to 2026.

PI with n. months of research interruptions ≥ 24 and < 36 : publications spanning from January 2019 to 2026.

13. Publications

This form must be completed in **PRE/FULL**

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.

Please note that in the pre-submission phase applicants can upload maximum 10 publications.

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

In pre-submission, provide a list of **maximum 10 significant papers** published in the last 5 years (*i.e.* 2021-2026 or more, depending on whether you have had career breaks longer than 12 months). that describe the applicant’s contribution in the field. When doing so, **please make sure to include at least 3 publications that do count for eligibility**. Reviews, editorials, case reports, letters to the editor without data, book chapters, meeting abstracts (even if they contain original data or are published on journals with Impact Factor), conference papers and papers published in non peer-reviewed journals do not count for eligibility.

In full submission, integrate the selected publications list by providing the full list of the papers published

in the last 5 years (*i.e.* 2021-2026 or more, depending on whether you have had career breaks longer than 12 months).

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 PI 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 (previously the Intellectual Property and Science business of Thomson Reuters). For this Call, the 2025 JCR list, with the 2024 2-year 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 PI as leading author** (first, last or corresponding author) are accepted for publication after the full submission deadline, the PI can add this supplementary information to the application. From the “submission section” of the personal area, PI can click on “add additional paper in press”, insert the requested information and upload and **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. Communications about papers in press must be submitted by the deadline indicated in the Call..

14. Patents

This form must be completed in **PRE/FULL**

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 10 years. By clicking on “Add new record”, the form automatically shows the information stored in “My Profile” section of your AIRC account. By selecting some or all of these records, they will be uploaded in the current application.

15. Declaration on Affiliation

This form must be completed in **FULL**

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, PIs are expected to be affiliated with the Hosting Institution and work there from the beginning of the project and for its entire duration.

Applicants are also required to list **all** institutions (in Italy or abroad) they are or expect to be affiliated with.

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 PI is already affiliated with the Hosting Institution and declares that, should the application be funded, the PI 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 project.

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 PI will be affiliated with the Hosting Institution by the start date of the project and will be allowed to work there and remain affiliated with the Hosting Institution for the entire duration of the grant in order to carry out the research project.

In case of funding and before the **project 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 PI 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 PI 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 using the templates available [here](#):

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

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.

16. AIRC Policy on Research Integrity

This form must be completed in **FULL**

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 project. By signing the application, the PI 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.

17. Abstract

This form must be completed in **FULL**

Explain why the proposed research has a clear objective that is consistent with the AIRC mission and will likely lead to advances in clinical practice in oncology in the near term. **Please make sure not to include confidential information because the abstract will be made public in case the application is funded.**

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).

18. Revision

This form must be completed in **FULL**

If the research project in this application is a revision of a previously rejected proposal, please check the appropriate box, "YES"; otherwise, check "NO".

PIs whose previous Individual Grant application was rejected in the past 5 years have two options:

If the new application is a resubmission, check "YES" and upload a PDF (**max 3 pages**) with a point-by-point reply to the criticisms and issues raised by the reviewers, explaining how they have been addressed and indicating all changes introduced in the research plan (additions, deletions, modifications).

If the new application is NOT a resubmission, check "NO" and briefly explain in the dedicated box (**max 200 words**) how the research proposal is fundamentally different in hypothesis, methods and scope from the previously rejected application.

The Peer Review Office will try to assign revised applications to the same reviewers who evaluated them in

the previous Call. However, this is not always possible, as some reviewers may not be available in all rounds of review. Therefore, please make sure to describe (or to report verbatim) all issues raised in the original evaluations, so that new reviewers can understand how the application has been modified to address the criticisms. In any case, the previous application and the reviewers' comments may be made available to the new reviewers involved by the staff of the AIRC Peer Review Office.

19. Proposal Main Body

This form must be completed in **FULL**

Attach the Proposal Main Body as PDF file (**max 12 pages**), including figures, preliminary data, timelines and references. As mentioned before, please use an A4 portrait format, single-spaced, with margins not less than 2 cm and a **font not smaller than 12 point**.

The Proposal Main Body is intended to describe a 5-year research plan and should address all these aspects:

- **Impact:** make clear why the proposed research has chances to have an impact on cancer in 5 years' time;
- **Rationale and feasibility:**
 - a) describe the research questions, explain why they are important and summarize the experimental design and methodologies that will be employed to address 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:** applicants are free to structure their plan according to the proposed study and to include visual aids (e.g. Gantt chart, trial schema, etc.);
- **Originality and innovation:** highlight the originality and innovation of the proposed research project;
- **Resources:** describe facilities and major equipment available for the project. 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;
- **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 the journal *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).

20. Declaration on originality of the application

This form must be completed in **FULL**

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.**

21. Personnel and collaborations

This form must be completed in **FULL**

A team should be made up of:

- **A Principal Investigator (PI):** coordinator and fully responsible of the entire project throughout its duration. The PI is also the primary contact for AIRC;
- **Team members:** members of the research group directed by the PI, comprising, possibly:
 - a) PhD students;
 - b) early-stage researchers (preferably within 10 years from the attainment of their master's degree by the submission deadline, *e.g.* post-doctoral fellows, junior clinicians);
 - c) experienced researchers (*e.g.* staff scientists, senior clinicians);
 - d) technicians;
 - e) research nurses;
 - f) data managers.

If the 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.

Companies and **collaborators** may also be involved in the project.

The term "collaborators" refers to scientists external to the PI's research group (including scientists or

clinicians working in the same Hosting Institution of the PI but belonging to other research groups, and scientists or clinicians affiliated with other institutions, in Italy or abroad); PIs of other AIRC grants can be listed as collaborators.

While adding the personnel involved in the project, 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 project. 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”. Do not include secretaries and/or administrative staff.

To insert a new unit of personnel, click on “Add” and fill in the fields in the pop-up window. Click on the PI's name to enter his/her effort and indication of clinical or non-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	Personal data	Principal Investigator
	Effort on project. Must be $\geq 50\%$	Personnel
	Clinician (choose YES if involved in clinical practice)	Personnel
Team member	Personal data (or TBD)	Personnel
	Effort on project. Must be $\geq 20\%$	Budget/Personnel
	Role	Personnel
	Clinician (choose YES if involved in clinical practice)	Personnel
	CV (if effort $\geq 75\%$; not requested for technicians and research nurses) – PDF 1 page	Budget/personnel
	Description of qualifications/skills (only for TBD) – PDF 1 page	Personnel
Collaborator	Salary	Budget
	Personal data	Personnel
Company	Letter of collaboration	Personnel
	Company name	Personnel
	Letter of collaboration	Personnel

Letter of collaboration from collaborators and/or companies

A formal letter of collaboration must be uploaded, for each collaborator (including units involved in multicentric clinical studies) and/or company.

The letter (**max 2 pages**) should be in letterhead paper, dated and signed.

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

- role on the project and activities that will be carried out by the collaborator;
- management of the resources;
- intellectual property rights;

- d) authorship in publications resulting from the collaborative effort;
- e) under what provision (free or not) the collaborator provides his/her expertise and/or reagents to the PI, 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:

- a) the PI 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, 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 agreements followed by regular invoices.

Description of the Work for each Unit of Personnel

Click on "Select" and upload a PDF file (**max 2 pages**): subdivide the text into the same work-packages and tasks described in the proposal main body, and indicate who will do what in each work-package/task.

Include scientific personnel if involved for less than 20% of their time, when they provide an important contribution to the program.

22. Budget Form and Justifications

This form must be completed in **FULL**

The grant is **up to a total of € 1.500.000 in 5 years** (with an average of € 300.000/year). If crucial for the development of the project, the PI can allocate different amounts of funding across the 5-year period, providing a clear justification in the budget section of the application.

For each year, please provide a financial breakdown for each category listed. 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 principles underlying the eligible costs for AIRC grants.

The amount requested must be in Euros, not in thousands Euros. The research plan must be designed for 5 years and the budget must be foreseen for the entire duration of the project.

Allowed budget categories

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, subdivided into the following subcategories:

- consumables and supplies (examples: drugs, reagents, chemicals, plasticware, animals if applicable etc.);
- small bench instrumentation (examples: electrophoresis power supplies, microcentrifuges, PCR machines etc.). As indicated in the Eligibility Criteria of the Call for Proposals, the Hosting Institution must provide the necessary equipment to carry out the project;
- services (examples: services provided by a contract research organization, collaboration costs, histology, patent filing costs, sequencing, authorizations);
- maintenance contracts (examples: service contracts for large instruments);
- publication costs (most likely none in the first year of the project, as it takes time to obtain publishable data);
- meetings and travel costs;
- equipment: indicate the support requested. Please remember that purchase of large instrumentation is allowed only if vital for the development of the project and it must be thoroughly justified. Purchase of large instrumentation for standard clinical practice is not allowed.

PI EFFORT: please indicate the percentage of time that will be devoted to the work in the Personnel section.

PERSONNEL EFFORTS/COSTS. Support is provided only for the team members specifically recruited for the project and who will work at 100% of their time on the project. Personnel already holding a permanent position at the Hosting Institution at the time of the grant award cannot be paid with grant money.

Personnel that can be paid on grant:

PhD students	Early-stage researchers	Experienced researchers	Technicians	Research nurses	Data managers	MAX
YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	3

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 project. PhD students (or equivalent) can be listed as 100% if their research activity is dedicated to the AIRC research project.

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 kind 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 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 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.

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 project, 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 5).

INDIRECT COSTS. Indirect costs will be supported up to 15% of the direct research costs incurred during the project (personnel included). 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 costs (personnel included) and indirect costs incurred during the project. 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” 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.

23. Awarded/Pending Support

This form must be completed in **FULL**

In this section, PIs 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 PI has already obtained a grant or received notification of funding;
- **Pending support:** the proposal submitted by the PI 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 project 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 PI) 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 PI and indicate the amount allocated to the PI's unit. Reviewers will be asked to check 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 to verify possible overlaps.

24. Disclosure of financial conflict of interests

This form must be completed in **FULL**

PIs 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, PIs 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 PI 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 PI 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 project. We do not require PIs to disclose the monetary value of their financial interests.

Reviewers in charge of evaluating the project 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 Call.

25. Bio-Ethical Requirements

This form must be completed in **FULL**

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 project and up to 10 years after the project is concluded.
- In case the competent authorities do not approve the proposed human or animal studies, the PI 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 PI 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 project is still scientifically sound and competitive. Project 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 projects 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 must not be included in the application.** In case of funding, AIRC reserves the right to request a copy at any time throughout the duration of the project and up to 10 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 3 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 must not be included in the application.** In case of funding, AIRC reserves the right to request a copy at any time throughout the duration of the project 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 3 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.

26. FEA (“Firma Elettronica Avanzata”)

This form must be completed in **PRE/FULL**

Both the PI and the Legal Representative must digitally sign the application (Pre-submission and Full submission): 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

Online 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 has 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.
- The Submit section appears 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; make sure that PDF documents that have been uploaded are in the correct orientation and are not truncated; that figures and Gantt 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 having ascertained 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:** all applications (pre and full) **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;
- **Research on animals – 3Rs**

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 present in the application.

Submission of digitally signed application

Both the PI and the Legal Representative must digitally sign the application (pre and full submissions): refer to the [FEA instructions](#) for details.