



INDIVIDUAL - Grant Application GUIDELINES 2025-2027

Wings for Life Spinal Cord Research Foundation

The Wings for Life Spinal Cord Research Foundation is a privately funded research charity organisation with the exclusive aim to promote basic and clinical research related to spinal cord injury with the perspective to improve outcomes.

Basic research projects may address the following aspects of traumatic spinal cord injury

- nerve regeneration/plasticity
- neuronal and glial protection
- functional deficits induced by lesions
- preferentially in mammalian models
- preferentially on mechanisms present/validated in humans

Clinical research projects may address

- spinal cord injury management
- other areas related to traumatic spinal cord injury essential to the propagation of neurological and functional recovery

A preference is given to research projects, which have

- a perspective of translation from the laboratory to the clinical setting
- the potential to provide real benefits to spinal cord injury patients
- a focus on chronic spinal cord injury, in case applicable

Technological advancements like exoskeleton and brain spinal interfaces will be considered, if the focus lies on their application in the context of rehabilitation/plasticity. However, WfL does not fund projects which are only intended to improve technological development.

Despite unquestionable clinical relevance, basic or clinical projects in the areas of medical complications (bladder/bowel function, cardiovascular function, pressure ulcer, neuropathic pain, spasticity) and technological developments represent only a *secondary* focus. Applications in those areas can *only* be considered, if the approach is novel, original and offers a unique and innovative treatment perspective or the ability to run clinical trials more effectively.

The Individual Grant is intended to cover the salary of the applicant up to max 3 years. After 2 years the applicant has to submit a scientific report/extension application, the funding for the third year depends on its evaluation.

Additionally, Wings for Life requires an annual financial report.

The budget of Individual Grants will be customized, depending on institutional payment. The salary will have been agreed with your host institution prior to submitting an application. Wings for Life requires a written statement of the institution stating that the proposed salary is in accordance with the institution's standard employment practices. This statement needs to be signed by an official signatory of the institution/HR department.

Wings for Life will provide absolute costs as indicated. Fringe benefits, training, tuition fees can be included up to the maximum sum and need to be specified and indicated in different lines of the budget form.

- The maximum amount for post-doc is 100.000 EUR/year
- The maximum amount for PhD student is 60.000 EUR/year
- The maximum amount for technicians is 45.000 EUR/year

Individual Research proposal in English shall contain:

1. Information on the Principal Investigator:

- Please note, that you initially have to select between Project or Individual Grant. According to this selection, respective fields will be requested.
- Contact Information on the applicant and the Host Institution
- Applicant is (choose one):
 - Established investigator in spinal cord research
 - Established investigator in another field
 - Young investigator
 - Postdoctoral fellow
 - PhD student
 - Technician
- Research field (choose one):
 - Fundamental research
 - Preclinical research
 - Clinical research

2. Proposal Information:

- a. Title of project
- b. Key words (200 characters including spaces)
- c. Proposal hypothesis (500 characters including spaces)
- d. Scientific abstract (3200 characters including spaces)
- e. Introduction describing the state of the art in the field and the applicant's own contribution (max. 20.000 characters with spaces)
- f. Specific goals of the project, with the tested hypothesis/aims (max. 10.000 characters with spaces)

- g. Detailed research plan that should also describe the institution (internal and external) equipment/facilities/available expertise that may provide a significant support (max. 20.000 characters with spaces)
- h. References (please note: when copying references from a citation manager (EndNote, Citavit, ...), please deactivate any links and make sure that you only copy text into our online application site)

3. Tables and Illustrations:

- a. Gantt chart; please upload as pdf or jpg format.
- b. Key figure summarizing the goal/hypothesis of the proposal for the wide public; as well as a legend; please upload as pdf or jpg format.
- c. Tables and Illustrations: Firstly, indicate the overall number, the respective amount of fields will then be created. Please upload as pdf or jpg format.

For proper display, please make sure that individual tables or illustrations are not bigger than 1 page

4. Curriculum vitae

- a. Use the provided form in our online submission tool **OR**
- b. Upload a CV as pdf to section 8 (additional information) including the following information (**max. 4 pages**):
 - Name
 - Current Position
 - Education/Training (Institution/Location, Degree, Years, Field of Study)
 - Position and Employment (Institution/Location, Position, Years)
 - Honors and awards (Institution/Location, Position, Years)
 - Editorial and Reviewing (Institution/Journal, Activity)
 - Listing of best publications (last 5 years)

5. Institutional information

- c. Name, address and coordinates of the institution (phone/email)
- d. Fiscal officer
- e. Coordinates for bank transfer

6. Listing of Other Support

- a. Current applications for this or related projects at the laboratory of the applicant: This should include all sources of support (government, other foundations, etc...)
- b. Pending applications (WFL is able to fund topics that are already funded or will be funded by other foundations, but not on identical experiments).

7. Budget request

- a. Amount requested
- b. Predicted budget allowance and justification for the first two years. Please **ONLY** enter given categories (Salary, Travel costs to annual Wings for Life scientific meeting (This category is mandatory: 1.500 € within Europe, 3.000 € overseas)).

Maximum sum (salary) per grant is:

- 100.000 € - per year for postdoctoral applicant
- 60.000 € - per year for PhD-Student applicant
- 45.000 € - per year for technician applicant

The grant will be given in EUR. At the time of each payment the respective, contractual EUR amount will be converted into the respective currency at the daily rate at that time.

8. Additional Information

- Additional information
- Non-desired reviewer (confidential, not displayed to the reviewers)
- How did you found out about the Wings for Life grant (confidential, not displayed to the reviewers)
- Picture of Principal Investigator (confidential, not displayed to the reviewers)
- Additional documents
 - **Obligatory:** If human or animal subjects are involved in the project, a copy of the institution's human/animal subjects research committee approval must be enclosed. This approval is a funding pre-requisite. If the approval is still pending, please indicate the date of anticipated approval (the approval must then be forwarded to WFL).
 - **Obligatory:** Technicians, PhD and Postdoctoral applicants must submit a letter of support from the laboratory's senior scientist. This must also confirm that the costs for the project are covered by the host lab. Additionally, the applicant needs two other appropriate letters of reference.
 - Reprints of a maximum of **three** publications of the applicant that are directly related to the proposed project (please send as pdf documents).

Deadline for applications: November 2nd, 2024 (Only electronic applications will be taken in account).

General information about the Research Grant Application

- Wings for Life grants are not restricted to any particular country and we thereby welcome worldwide's applications.
- Language of application is English.
- Only one research proposal per Principal Investigator can be submitted.
- Even if a particular research project is designed to last for a period of more than two years, the research contract will be concluded for a two-year period only. At the end of the second year, Wings for Life will decide at its own discretion whether to renew the contract for the remaining period. This will be done upon the evaluation of an interim report/grant extension application 3

month before the end of the financial year. This document will contain additional information like for example the predicted budget allowance for the third year.

- The principal investigator is required to send Wings for Life PDF files of all publications which result from the funded research, during and after the term of the contract. WFL expects an acknowledgement of the source of funding in all publications and presentations (journals, conferences) made by the principal investigator. WFL shall obtain intellectual property rights, in particular patents, resulting from WFL funded work and research. The scope of the granted rights is to be defined in detail in the research contract.
- All experiments funded by the Wings for Life - Spinal Cord Research Foundation need to comply with the ARRIVE (1) and/or MIASCI (2) guidelines. This includes not only acknowledgement in the reference section but also applying the ARRIVE reporting principles in the manuscript and reports. The ARRIVE guidelines can be downloaded here: <https://arriveguidelines.org/arrive-guidelines>
- If a patent or any other intellectual property right results from the WFL funding, WFL is to be notified without delay.
- The review process: All proposals will undergo the review process. Proposals will be distributed to at least two reviewers. The reviewers will evaluate the proposal applying the criteria listed below and recommend or advise against its funding. The Scientific Advisory Board and the internal Board of Directors of WFL will then give final approval / disapproval.

All research proposals will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- WFL priorities
- Scientific merit
- Preliminary data
- Feasibility of the project (good commitment of state of the art research and theory)
- Adequacy of environment: facilities/equipment and available expertise
- Qualifications of the Principal Investigator
- Adequacy of methods and
- Any other factor that will potentially increase the success of the research program.

However, WFL is entirely free to accept or reject proposals at its full discretion.

- Successful applicants will be offered a written research contract. Until such contract has been signed, WFL is not committed or obliged.
- Applicant's Responsibilities: A Grant Holder's meeting will be organised in Austria to promote dialogue between the scientist and the SCI's community. These meetings will provide opportunities to establish collaborations that may be funded through supplemental grants by the WFL foundation. To this end, awardees from Europe will be granted 1.500€, awardees from beyond 3.000€.

- Not spent money during the agreement period is not lapsed as a no-cost extension for the project can be granted.
- **Proposal Submission:** Applications who do not adhere to these guidelines will be rejected without further review.
- For any further questions, please contact Dr. Verena May (verena.may@wingsforlife.com) and Dr. Beatrice Sandner (beatrice.sandner@wingsforlife.com).