

Rules of the ANRS expedited call for proposals COVID-19 in Resource-Limited Settings

The information in this document complies with the general terms and conditions of the ANRS reference document, "*Modalités d'organisation administrative, scientifique et financière de l'ANRS*" [ANRS administrative, scientific and financial organizational terms and conditions] (MOASF), describing the financial regulations for research grants allocated by the ANRS, accessible on the ANRS website, or in the "Reference documents" section of the management platform for calls for proposals.

Context of the expedited call for proposals on the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus infection, COVID-19 in Resource-Limited Settings:

Within a few weeks, SARS-CoV-2 responsible for COVID-19 disease has gone from a localized epidemic to a pandemic and international public health emergency.

Based on current knowledge, there are no preventive vaccines, no means of biomedical prevention, and no specific treatments. International, national, and local strategies to control the epidemic essentially consist of barrier measures, social distancing, face masks, confinement, different testing and diagnostic procedures, and symptomatic treatment. Research in all its dimensions is therefore now an absolute priority, expressed at the highest political level both in France and internationally.

The COVID-19 pandemic has now firmly taken hold, and the stakes will be particularly high for resource-limited countries in Africa, Asia, and South America, over the coming weeks and months. These are countries with weak healthcare systems and a major burden of other endemic health problems, starting with HIV/AIDS. It is likely that the application of the current measures used to control COVID-19 will prove difficult in such regions.

In response to the current emergency facing resource-limited countries as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, the ANRS has organized a special call for proposals with a fast-tracked submission, assessment and selection process, dedicated to resource-limited countries.

General conditions

Scope

Research projects must involve a French team (team A) and a team from a resource-limited country (team B) represented, respectively, by researchers from France and the resource-limited country submitting the project. Other French and foreign teams may be associated with the two teams submitting the project, organized into teams C, D, E, etc.

The research projects should be conducted in "low or middle income countries" according to the World Bank

classification. Please visit the www.banquemondiale.org website for further information.

Via its pivotal "ANRS Sites" partnerships, the ANRS leads a network of researchers in resource-limited countries, listed in Appendix 1. Researchers responding to this call for proposals are encouraged to contact the coordinators at these ANRS sites beforehand, for assistance in designing, launching and implementing their projects.

Only research projects on the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus infection, COVID-19, are eligible, covering basic science, vaccine, and clinical research (including clinical trial proposals), together with research in the field of public health and human/social sciences. A link with HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, or sexually transmitted infections is not a prerequisite.

Initiation contracts ("Contrats d'initiation") and scholarship grant (Post-doc and PhD) are not eligible.

The schedule for this call for projects is as follows:

Launch: Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Application submission deadline: Monday, April 13, 2020 at 23:59 (Paris time)

Final results publication: Friday, April 24, 2020

Budget

This special ANRS call for proposals has a budget of 4 million €.

Research applicants are invited to seek co-funding from other funders.

Submission procedure

All applications must imperatively be submitted online via the ANRS platform for calls for proposals: <https://apogee.anrs.fr> or accessible via www.anrs.fr.

The list of persons involved in the project, signed by each participant, must be transferred electronically, exclusively for this call for projects, at the latest one week after the closing date. The paper version with the original signatures of all participants must be submitted before any funding is transferred.

The online application form comprises 3 main parts: administrative and scientific information on the researcher submitting the project and any partnering teams, the scientific presentation of the actual project, and budget aspects.

The budget aspects allow to determine the project budget which should comprise full costs, i.e., listing and estimating all costs required for implementation of the project: including costs for which funding is sought from the ANRS and costs to be covered by operational organizations working on the project (notably permanent researcher and engineer personnel involved in the project), or costs already funded by the ANRS but in a different context (e.g., methodology and management centers, existing graduate assistants or scholarship holders expected to contribute to the project). The boxed section at the bottom of the table must be filled in to justify the budget application.

Costs should also include expenses which will be covered directly by the ANRS when asked by the researcher to act as the sponsor: insurance, additional hospital costs, patient compensation, if applicable, etc.

Once all costs have been identified, it should then be stipulated how each cost will be covered: by funding already acquired or for which a funding application has been submitted (and to whom), or by funding requested from the ANRS for the project.

A form completion guide, notably for the budget aspects, is available in the "Reference documents" section of the platform for calls for proposals. Exclusively for this call for proposals, completion of the "Team publications and patents" and "Information on ongoing and submitted ANRS projects" tabs is optional. To generate the final document, state N/A in these two tabs of the form.

Project duration:

For this call for proposals, the maximum project duration is 18 months.

Regulatory and ethics procedures

All research projects in resource-limited settings are submitted to the ethics regulations stipulated by the "*Charte d'éthique de la recherche dans les pays en développement*" [Ethics charter for research in developing countries], accessible either via the ANRS website, or in the "Reference documents" section of the platform for calls for proposals.

Researchers working in existing ANRS research projects (therapeutic trial, physiopathological cohort or study), wishing to submit a project, should contact the Scientific Advisory Board for the research in question to obtain approval prior to compiling their applications. A letter from the Scientific Advisory Board should be enclosed with the application. Researchers wishing to submit a project are also asked to briefly explain existing ANRS research (objectives, study population, etc.) associated with the project, and provide an updated on its progress (inclusion status, follow-up, etc.)

Promoting open science

As part of ANRS goals for promoting open science, and in partnership with the national plan for open science, researchers submitting projects and the associated teams shall agree, if funding is obtained, to submit the scientific publications resulting from the projects (full text) to an open archive, either directly in HAL or via a local institutional archive.

Submission takes place in accordance with the provisions of Article 30 of Law no. 2016-1321 of October 7, 2016, on a digital Republic (Article L533-4 of the French Research Code).

Furthermore, the ANRS recommends prioritizing open-access journals or publications. For more information in this respect, please visit the www.doaj.org website which indexes open-access, peer-reviewed scientific journals, together with the www.doabooks.org website which does the same for monographs.

Support modalities

Funding deadlines

Funding will be set in place 4 to 12 weeks after publication of the results of the call for proposals. This is subject to completion of the administrative, ethics and regulatory steps following acceptance of the project, within the required time-frames.

Types of support

For projects conducted in partnership with several teams, the ANRS funds separately each research project team.

Funding is in the form of a grant paid to the organization linked to the scientific manager of each project team. This organization ("administrative organization") is therefore responsible for managing the funds, and is required to justify the use of the grant upon completion of the project.

The grant is split between equipment, operations, and personnel. The budgets for the selected projects are, however, likely to be modified by the ANRS, notably to balance the different types of expenditure.

Moreover, equipment loans allocated in the context of the call for proposals shall not exceed €20,000 per project team.

For research projects spanning several years, funding is paid in installments, each covering a maximum period of 12 months. Exceptionally, projects lasting more than 12 months, but less than 2 years, may receive funding in a single installment, if warranted, covering the entire duration of the project. The procedures for submitting interim scientific and/or financial reports between each installment are defined, where appropriate, in the funding allocation documents for the grants concerned.

In all cases, payment of the subsequent installments shall remain subject to the available ANRS budget resources over the financial years concerned, and its assessment of project progress.

After the final scientific and financial reports have been drawn up, and in accordance with the regulatory requirements on public subsidies, any funds which have not been used before the end of the project, or used for a purpose or in a manner not in accordance with the conditions of assignment, shall be repaid to the ANRS by the administrative organization.

Administrative fees

The ANRS stipulates that administrative organizations should, as a matter of principle, waive or strictly limit to a minimum any administrative fees taken from its payments. If the administrative organization is strictly unable to waive these fees, the general administrative fees associated with the project shall be limited to 4% of the total amount of expenses supported.

Administrative documents to be submitted for administrative organizations not yet registered with the ANRS

Once funding for the research project is approved by the ANRS, assuming that the proposed administrative organization is not yet registered with the ANRS, the beneficiary shall be required to transfer the following administrative documents, at the very least, to the ANRS:

1. An official document stating the legal form of the organization (creation decree, statutes, etc.) and its purpose in relation to the research, notably in terms of carrying out and managing research projects.
2. The duly certified name and position of the representative of the organization, authorized to sign the financial agreement (decree of appointment, delegation of signature, etc.)
3. The full banking details of the administrative organization original bank details or any other original document certified by the organization's bank and stating its full banking details (certificate that the organization is an account holder, for example).

You may be asked to provide the same documents if the organization is already registered but has not managed

any ANRS loans for at least three years, or in the event of changes in the banking details or legal representative of the organization.

These documents are only to be provided after acceptance of the project, where appropriate, and should not therefore be submitted with the project application via the platform for calls for proposals.

The ANRS reserves the right to reject an administrative organization failing to fulfill the criteria stipulated by its registration procedures or having previous grants which have not been finalized from an administrative perspective (financial report not submitted or ongoing dispute for the recovery of unused loans). The ANRS may also request any other information in addition to the above-mentioned documents to complete the registration procedure for the administrative organization proposed for the project.

Final report and publications

For each funded research project, the beneficiary shall submit the following to the ANRS, within 3 months after the end of the financial agreement:

1. Offprints of publications in peer-reviewed journals, providing these correspond to the subject of the research project, together with a scientific report on the project.
2. A research synopsis comprising 5 pages maximum (exclusively for projects in the field of social sciences).
3. A financial report with a detailed description of the use of the project funds, certified by a duly authorized financial representative from the administrative organization.

All results publications (abstracts, articles, etc.) obtained as part of the funded project must imperatively acknowledge the financial support provided by the ANRS. All publications or papers falling within the scope of the project and accepted for a conference must be notified to the ANRS, prior to the conference.

Contacts

APOGEE platform administrator: apogee@anrs.fr

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of sites and contact persons for the pivotal "ANRS Sites" venture

SITES	Surname	First name		Position
Brazil	DE CASTRO	Nathalie	nathalie.de-castro@aphp.fr	France Coordinator
	PIMENTA	Cristina	cpimenta48@gmail.com	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
Burkina Faso	KANIA	Dramane	draka3703@yahoo.fr	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
	VAN DE PERRE	Philippe	philippe.vande-perre@inserm.fr	France Coordinator
Cambodia	SPIRE	Bruno	bruno.spire@inserm.fr	France Coordinator
	MEAN	Chii Vun	mchhivun@nchads.org	Assistant Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
	SAPHONN	Vonthanak	vonthanak@uhs.edu.kh	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
Cameroon	DELAPORTE	Eric	eric.delaporte@ird.fr	France Coordinator
	EITEL	Mpoudi Ngole	empoudi2001@yahoo.co.uk	Assistant Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
Côte d'Ivoire	EHOLIE	Serge	sergeholie@yahoo.fr	Assistant Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
	N'DRI-YOMAN	Thérèse	yoman-therese.ndri@pacci.ci	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
	ANGLARET	Xavier	Xavier.Anglaret@u-bordeaux.fr	France Coordinator
Egypt	FONTANET	Arnaud	arnaud.fontanet@pasteur.fr	France Coordinator
	ESMAT	Gamal	g_esmat@yahoo.com	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
Senegal	TAVERNE	Bernard	bernard.taverne@ird.fr	France Coordinator
	N'DOYE	Ibra	ibra.ndoye@yahoo.fr	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
Vietnam	LAUREILLARD	Didier	didier.laureillard@yahoo.fr	France Coordinator
	PHAN THI	Thu Huong	huongphanmoh@gmail.com	Resource-Limited Country Coordinator
	KHO THI HUE	Chi	chi.vaacmoh@gmail.com	Assistant Resource-Limited Country Coordinator