

2023

Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme (PMRP)

RULES FOR PARTICIPATION
2023 CALL



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1 Definitions

Please find below a definition of various terms used throughout the Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme 2023 Call Rules for Participation.

Foundation — The Pasqual Maragall Foundation.

Programme — The Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme (PMRP).

Call — The 2023 Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme (PMRP) Call.

Individual Research Project — A research project carried out by one Research Team led by a single Principal Investigator.

Collaborative Research Project — A research project carried out by a Consortium of two to three Research Teams and coordinated by a single Consortium Coordinator. Each Research Team must be from a different institution.

Research Team — A group of individuals at an institution, led by a Principal Investigator, who undertake activities to directly contribute to the research project.

Consortium — A group composed of a maximum of three Research Teams that perform a Collaborative Research Project led by a single Consortium Coordinator. Each Research Team must be from a different institution. Each Research Team at a Partner Institution must be led by a different Consortium Principal Investigator.

Principal Investigator (PI) — The Principal Investigator of an Individual Research Project, responsible for the submission of the application to the Pasqual Maragall Research Foundation and the overall execution of the research project.

Consortium Coordinator (CC) — The lead Principal Investigator of a Collaborative Research Project, responsible for the submission of the application to the Pasqual Maragall Foundation, the execution of the research project at the Host Institution, and the overall coordination and execution of the Collaborative Research Project.

Consortium Principal Investigator (cPI) — A Principal Investigator of a Collaborative Research Project, responsible for carrying out the research project at their organisation (Partner Institution) but not for the overall coordination and execution of the Collaborative Research Project.

Research Organisation — An organisation that carries out research as part of its usual activity (e.g. research centre, foundation, university, hospital).

Host Institution — An organisation with overall responsibility for a research project (i.e., the organisation of the Principal Investigator (PI) of an Individual Research Project or the organisation of the Consortium Coordinator (CC) of a Collaborative Research Project).

Partner Institution — In a Collaborative Research Project, an organisation participating in the project but not coordinating it (i.e., the organisation of a Consortium Principal Investigator [cPI]).

Letter of Intent (LOI) — The first stage of the application process that is open to all researchers and institutions complying with the eligibility criteria (section 4).

Full Proposal — The second stage of the application process that is only open to invited applicants, selected based on the assessment of the LOIs received during the first stage.

Evaluation Committee — The committee that scores the applications received according to the established evaluation criteria and informs the Selection

Board (see below). It is formed by experienced external evaluators who score the quality of the proposals. They are selected because of their career and expertise, without conflict of interest and under a commitment to confidentiality. Evaluation is overseen by an Evaluation Coordinator, an expert with acknowledged prestige who reviews and monitors the evaluation process.

Selection Board — The board formed by an odd number of members that is convened by the Pasqual Maragall Foundation to assess the alignment of received applications with the strategic plan of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation and the priorities of the PMRP in addition to the evaluation criteria established for the Evaluation Committee. Selection Board members include the Foundation's Director, external consultants to the Director, selected members of the faculty and Scientific Advisory Board of the Foundation's research centre, and external experts of recognised international prestige in their field.

Grant Agreement — The agreement to be signed between the Principal Investigator of Individual Research Projects or the Consortium Coordinator of Collaborative Research Projects, the Host Institution and the Pasqual Maragall Foundation specifying each party's rights and obligations. Consortium Principal Investigator(s) and their institution(s) accept these rights and obligations by signing an accession form to accede to the Grant Agreement.

Consortium Agreement — The private agreement to be signed between the Consortium Coordinator, Consortium Principal Investigator(s) and their Institutions specifying their rights and obligations in relation to a Collaborative Research Project.

2 Foreword

2.1 *The Pasqual Maragall Foundation and its Research Centre*

The Pasqual Maragall Foundation is a private, non-profit organisation that was created in April 2008 in response to the commitment made by Pasqual Maragall (former mayor of Barcelona and former president of the Government of Catalonia) by publicly announcing that he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

The Foundation has a dual mission: to promote research to prevent Alzheimer's and other age-related neurodegenerative diseases, and to offer solutions that improve the quality of life of affected people, their families and their caregivers. In the field of scientific research, the Foundation carries out scientific activities through its research centre, the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center (BBRC), dedicated to disease prevention and the study of cognitive functions affected in healthy and pathological ageing.

All this is possible thanks to the **support of several entities and more than 50,000 recurring donors** who contribute financially. Their support is essential to continue working for a future without Alzheimer's, since scientific research is the only way to overcome the disease.

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For more information,
please visit: <https://fpmaragall.org/>

The flagship project of the Foundation's research centre, the BBRC, is the **ALFA** (for Alzheimer and FAmilies) study, sponsored by "la Caixa" Foundation. The ALFA parent cohort is composed of nearly 3,000 cognitively unimpaired individuals, most of

them sons or daughters of Alzheimer's patients. ALFA participants are characterised from the clinical, cognitive, genetic, risk factor and lifestyle as well as neuroimaging point of view. A number of studies, such as the ALFA+ cohort composed of nearly 420 cognitively unimpaired participants, are nested into the ALFA study, and entail a deeper and longitudinal characterisation including fluid and neuroimaging biomarkers, on top of the clinical, cognitive, risk factor and lifestyle information gathered. In brief, the ALFA parent cohort and its nested studies, through deep phenotyping of middle age cognitively unimpaired individuals, is aimed at studying the earliest stages of preclinical Alzheimer, which will be useful to understand early pathophysiological changes together with modelling the preclinical stages to develop successful prevention trials. More detailed information of the ALFA study is found [here](#).

2.2 *The Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme*

Alzheimer's disease and other age-related neurodegenerative diseases are a growing social challenge that strongly diminish the quality of life of affected people as well as people around them. In this context, and in alignment with the Pasqual Maragall Foundation's strategic plan (2020-2025) and purpose "Achieving a future without Alzheimer's or any other neurodegenerative disease", the Foundation launched the Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme (PMRP), to support the development of extramural research projects of scientific excellence, *i.e.*, high-quality research led by individuals carrying out their research activities at a public or non-profit research institution based in Spain (other than the BBRC).

The PMRP aims to fund excellent translational and clinical research to overcome Alzheimer's or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases. The Foundation is convinced that strengthening the scientific community committed to preventing or curing age-related neurodegenerative diseases is the optimal way to defeat them. Please note that although the Pasqual Maragall Foundation considers basic research to be fundamental in the quest to beat age-related neurodegenerative diseases, basic research is not eligible for funding in the PMRP 2023 Call.

3 *The PMRP 2023 Call at a Glance*

- The PMRP 2023 Call aims to nurture and support **translational and clinical research projects** focused on Alzheimer's disease or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases.
- The budget for the PMRP 2023 Call is €1,600,000.
- Application to the PMRP is via a **two-stage application process**: submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) followed by the submission of a Full Proposal upon invitation as described in section six of this document.

*Timeline PMRP 2023 Call**

Call documents available on the Pasqual Maragall Foundation's website	16/10/2023
Call opens	18/10/2023
LOI submission deadline	21/11/2023 – 15:00 CET
LOI results announced, and Full Proposals invited	March 2024
Full Proposal submission deadline (by invitation only)	24/04/2024 – 15:00 CEST Invited applicants will always be granted at least four weeks to prepare the full proposal
Full Proposal results announced to applicants	July 2024
Results announced publicly	To be confirmed
Expected start date of the projects	From October 2024

*Dates may be subject to change. Applicants will be kept informed of any relevant changes.

- Projects may be submitted as an **Individual Research Project led by a Principal Investigator (PI)** or as a **Collaborative Research Project** (Consortiums formed by a maximum of three Research Teams from three different institutions) **coordinated by a Consortium Coordinator (CC)**.
- Projects must be submitted by a PI or a CC from a public or non-profit Research Organisation based in Spain.
- If the results of a project are subject to any type of rights held by for-profit institutions at the time of submission, the project is ineligible to be submitted to the PMRP 2023 Call.
- In the case of **Collaborative Research Projects, only the CC must be based in Spain**. The other (maximum two) PIs in the Consortium, referred to as Consortium PIs (cPI) in the PMRP, may be from a public or private non-profit organisation based in any country.
- The projects shall have **a duration of a minimum of two up to a maximum of five years**. Continuation of the grant is contingent upon the timely submission of satisfactory timely reports.
- **A maximum of €800,000** will be awarded to each project. The budget limit does not increase for Collaborative Research Projects. Although there is no minimum project budget established, applicants should keep in mind that the Foundation aims to fund high impact projects.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, a maximum of 30% of the budget can be assigned to Partner Institutions outside Spain.
- The Projects must address at least one of the following **topics focused on Alzheimer's disease or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases**:

- Translational research to develop new drugs and build preclinical evidence
- Biofluid biomarkers
- Neuroimaging biomarkers
- Digital biomarkers

- Epidemiological studies
 - Genetic risk factors
 - Development of novel research tools and resources
 - Immunity & Inflammation
 - Modifiable risk factors
 - Novel approaches to risk assessment, diagnosis, treatment and prevention
 - Disease prevention
 - Biological processes and molecular pathways associated with disease initiation, progression, or outcome
 - Tools to predict risk prediction, disease severity and disease protection
 - Non-pharmacological interventions
 - Neuropathology
 - Any other topic related to Alzheimer's disease or other age-related neurodegenerative disease. Please contact the PMRP Team (researchgrants@fpmaragall.org) to confirm eligibility of the topic before applying.
-
- Projects aiming to analyse data from, or add procedures to, the ALFA Study, the flagship study of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation's research centre, are welcome. Applicants are asked in the Project Overview section of the online application form if their project plan includes the ALFA study. If the answer is "yes", they must provide a detailed explanation and will be asked to complete an additional form to indicate the data and/or samples they would like to access. In addition to the standard evaluation procedure, these projects will be revised by the BBRC's Scientific Coordination Unit to ensure their feasibility and identify any potential conflicts of interest. More information about the **ALFA Study** can be found [here](#).

- Please check the eligibility criteria (section four) before applying.
- Should you have any questions regarding your application or eligibility, please first read this Rules for Participation carefully and consult the PMRP 2023 Call Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document available on the [Foundation's website](#).



If your question is not answered,
please do not hesitate to contact the
PMRP Team at: researchgrants@fmaragall.org

4 Eligibility

4.1 Applicants

Principal Investigators (PI) of Individual Research Projects and Consortium Coordinators (CC) and Consortium Principal Investigators (cPI) of Collaborative Research Projects may be of any nationality and must meet the following requirements:

- To be in possession of a doctoral degree (PhD).
- To hold a position as an independent researcher at a public or non-profit Research Organisation (other than the Foundation's research centre, the BBRC).
- In the case of **Principal Investigators (PI)** of Individual Research Projects and **Consortium Coordinators (CC)** of Collaborative Research Projects, the Research Organisation (Host Organisation) must be based in Spain.
- The Research Organisation of **Consortium Principal Investigators (cPI)** may be based anywhere in the world.
- To have a proven track record (demonstrable achievements, for example, significant publications as main author, presentations at prestigious national and international conferences, awarded prizes, granted patents) in the topic of research proposed during the five years prior to the Call opening (2018-2023). The five-year period may be extended in certain circumstances as specified in section seven.
- PIs and CCs must conduct translational or clinical research on Alzheimer's disease or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases.
- At the submission deadline for the Letter of Intent (LOI), to be principal investigator on at least one active, competitive research grant. Mentored awards and training grants, i.e., projects including the role of a mentor or supervisor, do not qualify.

- To be legally linked to the Host/Partner Institution when applying for the grant.
- To have the approval of the Host/Partner Institution to submit the project to the PMRP 2023 Call.

NOTE: A Principal Investigator/Consortium Coordinator of a project funded in the PMRP 2022 Call can participate in the PMRP 2023 Call but only as a Consortium Principal Investigator.

A Consortium Principal Investigator in a project funded in the PMRP 2022 Call can participate in the PMRP 2023 Call as a Principal Investigator/Consortium Coordinator or Consortium Principal Investigator.

The Selection Board is asked to take into account each project's suitability for inclusion in the Foundation's portfolio of *intramural* and *extramural* projects.



IMPORTANT: Please note that an individual can only participate in one project in the PMRP 2023 Call (regardless of their role *i.e.*, PI, CC or cPI).

4.2 Institutions

Proposals must be submitted by a PI or a CC from a public or non-profit Research Organisation based in Spain. This institution is referred to as the **Host Institution** in the PMRP. cPIs can be from a public or non-profit Research Organisation based anywhere in the world. This institution is referred to as a **Partner Institution**.

The **following rules apply to Institutions**:

- Given its direct link to the Pasqual Maragall Foundation, the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center (BBRC) is not an eligible Host or Partner Institution.
- For-profit entities cannot be Host Institutions, nor can they be Partner Institutions.
- Only public or non-profit Research Organisations in Spain are eligible to be Host Institutions.
- Public or non-profit Research Organisations worldwide are eligible to be Partner Institutions.
- There is no limit to the number of applications in which an institution may participate.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, each Research Team must be from a different institution.
- All participating institutions must be willing to support their PI/CC/cPI throughout the project lifecycle and provide the appropriate scientific and administrative environment to carry out the project.

5 Funding Principles

- The budget for the Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme 2023 Call is €1,600,000.
- Projects may have a duration of up to five years. The duration of the research project should reflect the expected timeframe of research activities but please note that the minimum project duration is two years.
- Grants of up to €800,000 may be requested. The amount requested should reflect the level of expenditure required to undertake the proposed research project.
- The PMRP grant is expected to be the main financial support for the proposed research project. However, projects forming part of a larger project are allowed if it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no double funding. For this reason, applicants are asked to provide details of other financial support (awarded and requested) during the application process.
- The €800,000 may cover the eligible costs of the research project including a maximum flat-rate contribution of 21% of the total eligible direct costs towards indirect costs (overheads).
- The budget must be reasonable, clearly justified, and distributed according to the expected timeline of the research activities. The correct allocation of the budget will be an evaluated criterion during the selection process.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, a maximum of 30% of the budget can be assigned to Partner Institutions outside Spain.
- All expenditure must be incurred in line with the Host/Partner Institution's usual practices and be supported by a full audit trail, including invoices or other supporting documentation, and proof of payment.

- It will be a requirement to submit financial reports within two months following the end of each annual reporting period. It will also be a requirement to submit at least one interim technical report as well as a final technical report.
- All declared expenditure must be audited. An audit report must be submitted with each financial report. In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, the expenditure of the Host Institution and each Partner Institution (regardless of the budget assigned to them) must be audited. Whenever possible, the Host Institution should coordinate the audit on behalf of the Consortium. The external audit costs are eligible project costs.
- The Pasqual Maragall Foundation reserves the right to conduct internal audits.
- Except for the costs of the final audit report, all expenditure must be incurred during the agreed grant period.
- The grant will be paid according to the approved budget distribution. The first grant payment will be transferred to the Host Institution after signature of the Grant Agreement. Subsequent payments will be subject to the approval of each annual financial report and the interim technical report(s) and will be transferred until the threshold of 80% of the grant has been reached. The balance of the grant will be transferred following approval of the final technical and financial report.
- Any unspent grant funds must be returned to the Pasqual Maragall Foundation following approval of the final financial report.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, it is the responsibility of the CC's Host Institution to transfer to the Partner Institutions their share of the grant payments.
- The Foundation appreciates that changes may be required throughout the life of the project. For this reason, flexibility will be offered to awarded grantees. Providing the project is carried out as agreed, Principal Investigators, Consortium Coordinators and Consortium Principal Investigators will be allowed to request changes to their approved budgets.
- The Foundation's main focus will be on monitoring the scientific activities of the projects. However, to ensure that the grant is exclusively spent on approved project activities, financial controls are also required.

- As a general rule, all expenditure directly related to the project will be considered eligible, providing it is incurred in line with the Host/Partner Institution's usual practices.
- The proposed budget may be distributed between the following budget headings: Personnel, Travel, Equipment, Consumables, Other direct costs, Subcontracting and Indirect costs (Overheads). Please note that VAT cannot be charged to the project.
- Additional information regarding eligible and ineligible costs can be found in the following table but please do not hesitate to contact the PMRP Team (researchgrants@fpmaragall.org) if you have any questions.

PERSONNEL	
Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Salary and social security costs of personnel required to undertake the research project (personnel employed specifically for the project as well as personnel already employed by the institution). ✓ Compulsory end of contract indemnity payment but only the part that corresponds to the time the person dedicated to the project. ✓ Contribution to the salary of the PI, CC and cPI, but only up to a maximum of 20% of the total direct costs budget requested and in line with the time dedicated to the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Salary costs during extended periods of absence (longer than 90 days). ✗ Recruitment costs of project personnel. ✗ Bonuses (payments in addition to an employee's usual salary, for example for achieving objectives or as a result of an organisation's financial performance).

TRAVEL	
Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for PI, CC, cPIs, Research Team members and personnel hired for the project, related to: ✓ Consortium meetings (Collaborative Research Projects). ✓ Communication, dissemination and outreach activities (including conferences to present project results). ✓ Training courses related to project activities. ✓ Other travel strictly necessary to carry out the research project. ✓ Visa costs. ✓ Travel insurance costs but only for travel to countries that do not accept the European Health Insurance Card. 	
EQUIPMENT	
Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Equipment strictly necessary for the execution of the project. As a general rule, equipment must be purchased during the first 40% of the project duration (for example, during the first two years of a five-year project). Purchases made after this time require prior approval by the PMRP Team. The full cost may be charged to the project, regardless of the depreciation period of the item purchased. ✓ Specialist software required to undertake the research project. ✓ Renting or leasing of equipment strictly necessary for the execution of the project. ✓ Specific hardware required for the research project e.g., high specification computer for data management, hard drives for data storage. ✓ Costs associated with repairs and maintenance of the equipment purchased for the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Standard computer hardware and software (e.g., Microsoft Office). ✗ Construction or renovation costs. ✗ Furniture.

CONSUMABLES	
Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Laboratory materials. ✓ Health care materials. ✓ Animal models. ✓ Cell lines. ✓ Any other consumables directly related to the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ General office supplies (stationery, printer ink or toner...).
OTHER DIRECT COSTS	
Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Internally invoiced services according to officially approved rates. ✓ Open Access publication fees. ✓ Courier costs (samples and documentation) directly related to the research project. ✓ Animal housing costs. ✓ Conference registration fees. ✓ Compensation fees for study volunteers. ✓ Insurance costs directly related to the project. ✓ Organisation of communication, dissemination and outreach activities and events (room hire, catering...). ✓ Costs related to the protection of the project's results. ✓ Travel and accommodation for invited speakers at communication, dissemination and outreach events organised by the project when clearly justified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Rent for laboratory/office space. ✗ General utilities (electricity, water, telephone etc.). ✗ Bank charges, including those incurred by the Host Institution for the distribution of the grant to Partner Institutions in the case of Collaborative Research Projects. ✗ PhD tuition fees and other academic fees. ✗ General training courses. ✗ Membership fees for associations, professional organisations, societies etc. in other cases. ✗ Books, journals and magazine subscriptions. ✗ Gifts for study volunteers.

OTHER DIRECT COSTS (CONT.)
Eligible costs

- ✓ Costs for photocopying/printing clearly identifiable as directly related to the project e.g., printing of questionnaires.
- ✓ Membership fees for associations, professional organisations, societies etc. but only if the combined cost of a membership fee plus a conference registration fee is less than the cost of a registration fee for a non-member.
- ✓ Other direct costs required to undertake the project (if in doubt, please contact the PMRP Team).

Ineligible costs
SUBCONTRACTING
Eligible costs

- ✓ External audit costs for the audit of the financial reports.
- ✓ External services associated with publications (manuscript review, correction, translation...).
- ✓ Any other external services required to carry out the project. Please note that subcontracting costs in excess of 30% of the total eligible direct costs will be reviewed carefully and will need to be particularly well-justified.

Ineligible costs

- ✗ Subcontracting between the host institution and a partner institution, or between two partner institutions is not permitted.

SUBCONTRACTING
Eligible costs

- ✓ A maximum flat-rate contribution of 21% of the total eligible direct costs (personnel, travel, equipment, consumables, other direct costs and subcontracting).

Ineligible costs

6 *Application and Selection*

6.1 *General Considerations*

Application to the PMRP is via a two-stage application process: submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) followed by the submission of a Full Proposal upon invitation.

The whole process of application, review and selection of projects will be carried out in English therefore all information must be submitted in English.

Applications must be made via the [online grants system](#) and include online forms and in the case of the Full Proposals a duly filled offline document, uploaded as a converted PDF file. Please read the Rules for Participation and Submission Guidelines carefully before starting your application.

Prior to completion of the LOI online, some brief questions must be answered as part of an initial eligibility check. It is the responsibility of the applicant to answer these questions correctly. A full eligibility check will be carried out following receipt of the submitted LOI.

Under no circumstances may the applicants contact any of the evaluators involved in the selection process in order to obtain information on any aspect related to the Programme. If this happens, the candidate may be excluded from the Call and/or any future Pasqual Maragall Foundation calls.

Decisions to dismiss an application at any stage of the evaluation process are final. There is therefore no appeals process. The application and selection process has been designed to ensure that grants are awarded to the research projects demonstrating the highest level of scientific excellence and fit with the priorities of the PMRP 2023 Call. Rejection does not imply a negative assessment of the application.

6.2 Application and Selection Procedure

6.2.1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

Applicants are asked to complete and submit their LOI via the [online grants system](#).

The LOI consists of an online form including the following information:

- Basic information about the project (title, publishable lay summary, scientific abstract...)
- Information about the track record of the PI/CC and cPI(s)
- Information about the research project with a 9,000-character limit, including:

- Background (maximum of 1,500 characters including spaces)
- Specific aims of the project (maximum of 1,500 characters including spaces)
- Brief project description, including methodology (maximum of 2,000 characters including spaces)
- Novelty of the project (maximum of 2,000 characters including spaces)
- Impact of the project (maximum of 2,000 characters including spaces)

No detailed budget breakdown is required at the LOI stage.

Following submission, all LOIs will be checked for completeness and subjected to a full eligibility check by the PMRP Team. Applicants will receive confirmation as to whether their LOI fulfils eligibility criteria and has moved forward to the scientific review stage. Please note that no further changes can be made to applications after the submission deadline. Incomplete LOIs will be declared ineligible.

All eligible LOIs will be evaluated according to the criteria detailed in section seven by three evaluators chosen from the pool of experts who form part of the Evaluation Committee. Evaluation Committee members are all experts of recognised international prestige in their field and are selected based on the topic(s) and the keywords provided by the applicants. This evaluation process will be managed externally and is overseen by an appointed Evaluation Coordinator, an individual chosen for their experience in evaluating proposals at an international level.

Projects aiming to analyse data from, or add procedures to, the ALFA Study, the flagship study of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation's research centre, will also be managed by the BBRC's Scientific Coordination Unit to ensure their feasibility and identify any potential conflicts of interest.

The Foundation's PMRP Selection Board will receive the final Evaluation Committee scores after they have been verified by the Evaluation Coordinator. Selection Board members include the Foundation's Director, external consultants to the Director, selected members of the faculty and Scientific Advisory Board of the Foundation's research centre (BBRC), and external experts of recognised international prestige in their field. In addition to the evaluation criteria established for the Evaluation Committee, the Selection Board will assess the alignment of the applications with the **Foundation's strategic plan** and the **priorities of the Programme**, as well as their suitability for inclusion in the Foundation's portfolio of **intramural** and **extramural** projects. If deemed necessary, the Selection Board may invite the PI or CC to attend a meeting to present their proposed research project. Following the Selection Board's assessment, the final ranking of the received LOIs is confirmed.

The highest-ranking LOIs will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. It is expected that the total requested budget of proposals invited to submit a Full Proposal will be around three times the available PMRP 2023 Call budget.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their LOI, but feedback will only be provided to applicants who are invited to present a Full Proposal.

6.2.2. Full Proposal

Full Proposals are submitted by invitation only. Invited applicants are asked to complete and submit their Full Proposal and upload the required accompanying document (template will be provided) via the **online grants system**.

Full Proposals will include the following information:

- ① An online form detailing available resources, the project budget, budget justification, and an ethical checklist.
- ② A ten-page offline document related to the project including the information below:

- Background, including problem statement and overall aim of the project.
- Project description, including methodology and workplan.
- Novelty of the project.
- Impact of the project.
- Research team(s) (in the case of Collaborative Research Projects, an additional page is permitted for each Partner Institution).
- Communication, dissemination, exploitation, and data sharing plans.

Ethics and security issues, references and supporting figures do not count towards the page limit. However, no more than four pages of supporting figures can be included.

Please note that the following rules apply to the offline document:



Font: Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri

Font size: at least 11 points

Line spacing: at least single line

Following submission, all Full Proposals will be checked for completeness and their eligibility verified. Applicants will receive confirmation as to whether their Full Proposal fulfils eligibility criteria and is moving forward to the scientific review stage. Please note that no further changes can be made to applications after the submission deadline and incomplete Full Proposals will be declared ineligible.

The evaluation of Full Proposals will also be managed by an external Evaluation Committee overseen by an Evaluation Coordinator. All eligible Full Proposals will be evaluated by at least two experts of recognised international prestige in their field who will score the applications according to the criteria detailed in section seven. The Foundation's PMRP Selection Board will receive the final Evaluation Committee scores after they have been verified by the Evaluation Coordinator. At this second stage, in addition to the evaluation criteria established for the Evaluation Committee, the Selection Board will also evaluate each application's alignment with the Foundation's **strategic plan** and the **priorities of the Programme**, as well as its suitability for inclusion in the Foundation's portfolio of **intramural** and **extramural** projects. If deemed necessary, the Selection Board may invite the PI or CC to attend a meeting to present their proposed research project. Following the Selection Board's assessment, the final ranking of the Full Proposals is confirmed.

The highest-ranking Full Proposals will be invited to sign a Grant Agreement with the Pasqual Maragall Foundation. At this stage a full evaluation report will be provided to all applicants.

If a selected PI/CC waives the grant, the Pasqual Maragall Foundation may contact the next highest scoring applicant.

In the unlikely event that proposals are not deemed by the external evaluators or Selection Board members to be of sufficient quality, the Foundation reserves the right to not award grants on this occasion.

Following communication of the grant award, the Host Institution and PI or CC of the awarded projects will be asked by the Foundation to provide the required documentation to verify the information included in the application and allow the Grant Agreement to be prepared.



Details of the selected projects will be published on the Pasqual Maragall Foundation's website.

7 Evaluation Criteria

All eligible LOIs and Full Proposals will be evaluated based on the topic selected in the application. Evaluators will be selected based on the topic and the keywords provided in the online application form.

7.1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

External experts will award the Letters of Intent (LOI) a score for each of the following evaluation criteria:

PI/CC/cPIs Track Record (40%)

- Ability to successfully execute the project based on demonstrable scientific expertise.
- Demonstrable independency to lead research projects and teams (awarded and executed research grants, mentorship of researchers...).
- Relevance of contributions in the last five years to the area of research proposed (e.g., publications, presentations in conferences, technology transfer...). The five-year period may be extended in certain circumstances as specified at the end of this section.

Scientific Excellence (30%)

- Degree of novelty of the research project proposed.
- Quality of the research project proposed.
- Clarity of the hypothesis and objectives.
- Potential of the project to generate highly relevant results.
- Extent to which the proposal is ambitious yet realistic.

Impact (30%)

- Scientific impact of the project in terms of its potential contribution to advancement of the research field.
- Potential impact on the society as a whole.

Selection Board members will review the LOIs and in addition to the criteria above, they will assess the applications according to the following criterion:

Alignment with the ***strategic plan of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation*** and the ***priorities of the PMRP***, including:

- Extent to which the proposal addresses the challenges of Alzheimer's or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases by providing new, non-conventional scientific solutions to create relevant results.
- Degree of demonstration of credibility in terms of scientific rigor and expert knowledge.
- Suitability for inclusion in the PMF portfolio - synergy with the Foundation's ***intramural*** and ***extramural*** projects.

7.2. Full Proposal

External experts will award the Full Proposals a score for each of the following evaluation criteria:

Research Team(s) (20%)

- For all projects (individual or collaborative), capacity of the Research Team to ensure project implementation (e.g., level of experience, complementary expertise, sufficient Research Team members).
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, the added value of the Consortium (successful previous research collaboration between the CC and the cPI(s), complementary expertise) will also be taken into consideration.

Scientific Excellence (25%)

- Degree of novelty of the research project proposed.
- Quality of the research project proposed.
- Clarity of the hypothesis and objectives.
- Potential of the project to generate highly relevant results.
- Extent to which the proposal is ambitious yet realistic.

Implementation (25%)

- Quality of the work plan including logical structure, feasibility of the timescales proposed and the inclusion of quantifiable information to allow for progress to be monitored.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, clearly defined roles for all Consortium members that are realistic given their experience.
- Access to sufficient infrastructure and resources to carry out the project in the organisation(s).
- Clear justification of the funding requested to execute the proposed research project and its distribution during the life of the project, taking into account resources already available.
- Identification of critical risks and quality of the contingency plan to be executed
- Well addressed ethical issues.

Impact (30%)

- Scientific impact of the project in terms of its potential contribution to advancement in the research field.
- Potential impact on the society as a whole.
- Extent to which the expected impact can be quantified and is credible.
- Quality of the communication, dissemination, exploitation, and data sharing plans and their suitability for the research project proposed.
- If applicable, clarity of the intellectual property strategy.

Selection Board members will review the Full Proposals and in addition to the criteria above, they will also assess the applications according to the following evaluation criterion:

Alignment with the **strategic plan of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation** and the **priorities of the PMRP**, including:

- Extent to which the proposal addresses the challenges of Alzheimer's or other age-related neurodegenerative diseases by providing new, non-conventional scientific solutions to create relevant results.
- Degree of demonstration of credibility in terms of scientific rigor and expert knowledge.
- Suitability for inclusion in the PMF portfolio - synergy with the Foundation's **intramural** and **extramural** projects.
- Ability to strengthen the mission of the Foundation in Spain through the proposed communication and dissemination activities.

7.3. Extension to Track Record Evaluation Period

Please note that in the following circumstances a researcher can request for the period of evaluation of their track record to be extended beyond five years:

- Maternity - track record evaluation period extended by 18 months per child born in the five years prior to the Call deadline. If the leave taken was longer than 18 months, the extension will be for the actual duration of time taken as leave. The same applies for child adoption.

- Paternity leave - track record evaluation period extended by the actual duration of time taken as paternity leave during the five years prior to the Call deadline. The same applies for child adoption.
- Long-term (over 90 days) illness - track record evaluation period extended by the actual period of sick leave taken or by the actual period of compassionate leave taken to care for a seriously ill close family member during the five years prior to the Call deadline.
- Other exceptional circumstances - considered on a case-by-case basis. If you think your circumstances may warrant an extension of the track record evaluation period, please contact the office at researchgrants@fpmaragall.org for advice before applying.



Detailed information on the documentation to be submitted to support each request can be found in the PMRP 2023 Call Submission Guidelines at the [Foundation's web page](#).

8 Grant Management Obligations

The obligations of the PI/CC and the Host institution will be clearly outlined in the Grant Agreement they will sign with the Foundation before the start of the project. Some key obligations are provided below:

The Host Institution is responsible for ensuring that the following obligations are met:

- Administrative and financial management of the grant in line with the Programme's rules.
- Communicating any changes to the proposed budget to the PMRP Team for prior approval.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, distribution of the grant to the other institutions in the Consortium.
- Submission of annual financial reports and accompanying external audit reports. In the Case of Collaborative Research Projects, the Host Institution must also present the reports on behalf of the Partner Institutions.
- Informing the Pasqual Maragall Foundation about the protection or registration of any projects results as intellectual or industrial property. If the results derived from the funded project are exploited and profitable, the Foundation might receive a return on investment to increase its capacity to support more research in the future.
- In the case of Collaborative Research Projects, setting up a Consortium Agreement to be signed between the CC, cPI(s) and their Institutions detailing the rights and obligation of each party.

The PI or CC is responsible for ensuring that the following obligations are met:

- Execution of the project according to the Full Proposal approved and in compliance with ethical principles and other applicable regulations.
- Submission of at least one interim technical report as well as a final technical report. The technical reporting periods will be determined according to the length, proposed activities of the project and detailed in the Grant Agreement.
- Attendance at review meetings to discuss the project's progress if requested by the Foundation.
- Approval from the relevant ethics committee(s) obtained before any project activity raising an ethical issue starts (copies of the approval(s) will be requested by the Foundation).
- Attendance at communication and dissemination events directly related to their research project.
- Acknowledgement of the Foundation and the Programme in all communication and dissemination activities.

Please note that these are not exhaustive lists and that all grant management obligations will be specified in the Grant Agreement.

Partner Institutions and cPIs accede to the Grant Agreement by signing an accession form. Signature of the accession form confirms acceptance of the rights and obligations set out in the Grant Agreement.

9 *Dissemination, Communication and Outreach Responsibilities*

General commitment to the Pasqual Maragall Foundation Researchers Programme

The recipient of the award is committed to collaborating in dissemination, communication, outreach, and fundraising activities related to their research project or the Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme. Some key requirements are detailed below.

Acknowledgements

- Dissemination, communication, and outreach activities in any form (audio-visual materials, press releases, posters, flyers, webpages, publications, etc.) must include the following text: “This project received funding from the Pasqual Maragall Foundation under the Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme (PMRP) (Grant Agreement Number 2023-XXXX)” and whenever possible the logo of the Foundation.

Dissemination of results

- Grant recipients will inform the Foundation of the results of their research, including scientific papers, awards, conferences, etc. This communication must be made in advance. The Foundation will discuss with the PI/CC the appropriate communication strategy, channels etc.
- Open access to all scientific publications relating to the project must be ensured.

Please note that these are not exhaustive lists, and that dissemination, communication and outreach responsibilities will be fully specified in the Grant Agreement.

10 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Both data privacy and information confidentiality are important aspects for the Pasqual Maragall Foundation. The processing of personal data will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the data protection regulations, specifically Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and Organic Law 3/2018 of December 5 on the protection of personal data and guarantee of digital rights.

We inform that the Pasqual Maragall Foundation will process all personal data collected for the purposes of this Call, which include, among other related purposes:

- Management of the application and evaluation process.
- Financial and scientific follow-up of awarded projects.
- Promotion of the Programme and its results.
- Any legal obligations of the Foundation resulting from its role as the provider of grant funds.
- Understanding of the current research climate in the fields of Alzheimer's Disease and other age-related neurodegenerative diseases.

The Pasqual Maragall Foundation will communicate the registered personal data to the following third parties for the purpose of evaluating the applications:

- The public agency coordinating the external evaluation process.
- The members of the Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme Selection Board.

The third parties will return and/or eliminate all personal data after the selection procedure has been finalised.

The Pasqual Maragall Foundation will store the data, excluding CVs, indefinitely as long as their deletion is not requested. CVs will be stored for a maximum of five years, unless their retention is required for longer periods due to project or grant requirements.

Interested parties may exercise their rights of access, rectification, erasure, processing restriction, data portability and objection by sending an email to gdpr@fpmaragall.org. Interested parties are also entitled to file a complaint with the Spanish Data Protection Agency.

Detailed information on data processing can be found [here](#).

11 *Acceptance of the Call Conditions*

- The submission of an application to the PMRP 2023 Call signifies the acceptance of its conditions by all participating institutions and researchers.
- The detection of non-compliance of any of the conditions of the Call may result in the Foundation rejecting the application or cancelling the awarded grant (with the request of the return of any already transferred grant amounts if deemed appropriate).
- The Foundation reserves the exclusive right of final interpretation of the information contained in the Rules for Participation and the right to make changes to the wording of this document if clarifications are required.

2023

Pasqual Maragall Researchers Programme (PMRP)



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