**MUI-START program - 15th call**

The MUI-START program is designed as a start-up fund for young scientists at the Postdoctoral level. The aim of the program is to support qualified young researchers in the preparation and generation of initial research data as a basis for a subsequent application for third-party funding (e.g. FWF, LBG, MSCA etc.). The MUI-START program supports only high-quality scientific projects. Calls for proposals are announced once a year. The 15th call of the MUI-START program includes a multi-stage evaluation procedure. Please read the following instructions carefully.

**Type of funding**

MUI-START supports individual and collaborative interdisciplinary research proposals with up to three principal investigators from different institutes or clinical departments. The maximum duration of a project can be up to 24 months. The maximum amount of project funding will be 40,000 Euros per principal investigator.

A total of 400.000,00 Euro is available for this call.

**Eligibility criteria**:

* Applicants must be employed by MUI for the entire duration of the project to be eligible for funding. Applicants should document and justify how this requirement will be met if this is not the case at the time of submission. Employment must be at least 50% (20 hours per week).
* Applicants who are employed by a third-party funded project (e.g. FWF project) are only eligible to apply if they submit a letter from the PI of the third-party funded project stating the percentage of working time the applicant can devote to the planned MUI-START project in agreement with the third-party funded project.
* Applicants must have completed a doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, clinical doctorate). Proposals from candidates with an appropriate M.D. degree and a strong record of accomplishment will also have consideration.
* No more than six years must have elapsed since the applicant's most recent academic degree (e.g., PhD). Fully justified career interruptions (e.g. parental leave, national service) are considered.
* Candidates must have a record of achievement appropriate to their academic age. A minimum of two (accepted) peer-reviewed international publications as first author is required.
* Candidates that have been funded previously by MUI-Start or TWF cannot apply.
* Only one proposal per applicant can be accepted.

**Selection criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated in several stages:

The MUI-START jury evaluates proposals according to the following criteria: excellence of the applicant's track record, scientific quality of the proposal, inclusion of gender aspects, and potential for success in applying for third-party funding.

Only proposals that satisfy these criteria will be selected for evaluation by external reviewers.

Proposals will be ranked and the best applications will be shortlisted after peer review by international experts. Short-listed applicants will be invited to interview with the MUI-START Jury. Both the reviewers' scores and the results of the interviews will be used to make the final decision on the proposals.

**Application guidelines:**

**All relevant parts of the proposal should address gender issues.**

Funds may only be used to cover project-specific costs. The following costs may be considered:

* Personnel costs: Personnel costs may be requested to hire additional staff needed to carry out the project (student assistants). A detailed justification of these costs must be included in the proposal. The MUI-START program does not cover employment costs for doctoral students or for one's own position. Personnel costs must be based either on the current collective agreement or on the FWF standard salary costs for student assistants.
* Material costs (consumables, etc.) should be duly justified; competitive quotations must be provided for costs exceeding € 5.000,00. Quotes from service units, such as Core Facilities should be added.
* If the approval of an animal experiment or the approval of an ethics committee is required, this must be stated on the application form.
* Clinical trials can be funded only if they represent a clearly defined study that can be completed in the predetermined duration of the project (max. 24 months).
* Travel expenses for one relevant conference or meeting per year may be covered, provided there is active participation in the event (e. g. poster or oral presentation). Travel, accommodation and registration’s fees will only be reimbursed up to the amount specified in the relevant MUI guidelines: <https://www.i-med.ac.at/forschung/files/rkz-richtlinie.doc>
* Double funding of a project, or of work-packages from another project (e. g. FWF; TWF) is not allowed. Additional funding sources must be declared.

**How to apply:**

Applications must be submitted online using the [Grants, Applications and Reviews (GAR)](https://fld.i-med.ac.at/public/garinfo.cgi) platform of the MUI.

**The 15th call will be open from 18 March 2024 12:00 h local time until 30April 2025 23:59 h local time.**

* Please submit your proposal as PDF file using Arial 11, 1,5 spaced. Proposals should have a maximum of 12 DIN-A4 pages (points 2 – 9; without annexes and references)
* Only proposals in English will be accepted.
* Applicants must provide the following documents together with their application:
* Curriculum vitae (indicating the duration of your MUI working contract)
* Publication list
* Academic abstract (ca. 450 words)
* Proposal
* Itemization of the requested funding
* Affirmation of the head of the department/division
* Affirmation of the head of the MUI animal facilities (if applicable)
* **Expected begin of the projects: 01.11.2025**
* Proposals should have the structure explained hereafter. Please include all predetermined points (with numbers) in the specified manner.

**Proposal structure:**

1. Cover sheet including the project title, 5 keywords, and the duration of the project (months)
2. Background and state of the art
3. Objectives
4. Working plan
5. Methodology
6. Outlook/perspectives: short overview on possible aims after completion of the proposed project (ca. ½ page)
7. Time schedule
8. Project costs: **a thorough written justification** of the costs applied for must be provided in this section.

For an overview of the project costs, use the form “itemization of the requested funding”.

1. Cooperation partners inside and outside the MUI
2. Studies subjected to regulations:
   1. Permits for animal testing should be presented to the MUI research office (Forschungsservice und Innovation) no later than the expected project start.
   2. Permits for working with genetic modified organisms must be enclosed to the full proposal
   3. Decisions of the ethics committee must be submitted to the MUI research office (Forschungsservice und Innovation) no later than the expected project start.

Additionally, all the potential ethical, safety-related and regulatory aspects of the project must be described briefly. These aspects must be addressed in the text even if the applicant believes the project does not raise any ethical concerns.

Applicants and the personnel employed in the MUI-START projects must follow the rules of good clinical practice (ICH-GCP), good manufacturing practice (GMP), and good scientific practice (GSP). Thus, the proposal should include following sentence: “*Hereby, I certify than in case of approval of the present proposal the rules of GCP, GMP and GSP will be observed”.*

1. Gender aspects in the research approach
2. Proposals must include a statement that no application for funding of the same project has been submitted anywhere else.
3. References

**Important information:**

* If cross-references to a current or a submitted third-party funded project exist, a detailed explanation highlighting the differences between both projects must be included in the proposal.
* A scientific report including a summary of the obtained results, information on publications and presentations of results in congress, and a brief report on the use of funding is expected from grant recipients at the end of the funding period.
* Submission of a third-party funding application (e. g. FWF) is compulsory for all MUI-START grant recipients. The MUI research office must receive proof of such a submission within three quarters of the planned duration of the MUI-START project. Failure to apply for a third-party funded project will result in the cancellation of the payment of last quarter of the MUI-START grant budget.
* If the PI leaves the University before the scheduled end of the project (e. g. employment somewhere else) the project funding will be immediately cancelled and a final report on the project must be provided. For parental leaves (either mother or father), the project may be interrupted temporarily and resumed at a later date.
* Proposals that do not fulfil the formal criteria described in these guidelines will be discarded without exception. Please pay particular attention to the sequence and numeration of the individual points described before and justify thoroughly in the text all the costs applied for. Use the form “itemization of requested funding” for an overview on the project costs.

Further information:

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