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FOREUM-UCB PLATINUM GRANT CALL 2026

The molecular mechanisms of non-response to TNF inhibitors in patients with spondyloarthritis

Introduction

FOREUM is committed to promoting the best talent in the field of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). Consistent with these goals, FOREUM is pleased to launch its **Platinum Partner-Supported Project Call**. This grant aims to fund excellent researchers with innovative ideas and high-quality research projects in basic-translational or clinical science related to RMDs.

Scope

This FOREUM project grant is intended to fund one excellent scientist with an established track record in RMD research for a project entitled: “***The molecular mechanisms of non-response to TNF inhibitors in patients with spondyloarthritis***”.

The grant aims to support the initiation of an innovative, independent research project for a **maximum period of 12 months**.

This research call aims to identify the molecular mechanisms underlying non-response to TNF inhibitors (TNFi) in patients with spondyloarthritis, addressing a major unmet need in treatment strategy optimisation. Despite the efficacy of TNFi, up to one-third of patients fail to respond and are less likely to respond to the subsequent alternative mode of action treatment. This could be due to the heterogeneity in underlying inflammatory pathways beyond TNF-driven disease but also upregulation of compensatory mechanisms in response to TNFi treatment. This project seeks to define the molecular mechanisms that underlie this trend.

Eligibility and Requirements

Age limit: No limit.

Eligibility:

- Applicants must hold a doctoral degree (e.g. PhD) or a medical degree (MD, DO, MBBS or equivalent) and provide evidence of independent research and academic output.
- The applicant must be employed in a EULAR member country and must be members of a EULAR scientific society OR an individual EULAR member at the time of submission.
- Collaborating partners from centres from non-EULAR member countries may participate as partners in exceptional cases (e.g. specific scientific expertise) but will not be eligible to receive direct research funding.
- Applicants must not be a member of FOREUM Committees and / or the EULAR Council Committee.

Budget

The applicant may apply for total funding of up to **100K EUR for a maximum duration of 1 year**. Continued financial support will be subject to the successful evaluation and approval of written mid-term and final reports by FOREUM's relevant committees. Submitted publications can be used as part of the report.

Applications

Letter of Intent (LoI)

Applicants intending to submit a proposal are required to apply via the AlphaFoundation grant submissions platform by **01 September 2026**. The Letter of Intent must be accompanied by a ‘lay summary’ (i.e. a summary written in non-scientific language for the general public) for review by patients. The structure and required content of the Letter of Intent are fully outlined on the Alpha platform, and access to the platform will be provided by FOREUM.

Translational and clinical projects can be submitted. In the Letter of Intent, the applicant should indicate whether the content of the project is either clinical or translational. The applicant must also provide a CV, as well as a short statement of support from the head of the centre (integrated in the Letter of Intent). Page limitations are strictly applied.

Letters of Intent will be assessed by members of the FOREUM Scientific Committee. Applications demonstrating the highest merit will be selected on a competitive basis. The secretariat will respond **by the end of September 2026** to confirm whether the proposal meets the scope, priority, and requirements of the call. Applicants whose Letters of Intent are selected will then be invited to submit a full application.

Full Project Proposal

Applicants shortlisted for the second stage (30% chance) will then be invited to submit a full proposal on the grant submission platform. The full proposal will be assessed based on the scientific excellence of the applicant, the innovation potential, impact and feasibility of the proposed project, as well as clear evidence of support and the availability of the necessary infrastructure at the host centre.

To facilitate review by patient representatives, applicants invited to submit a full proposal must also complete a lay summary.

Full research proposals must be submitted electronically via the AlphaFoundation platform by **06 November 2026**.

Participation of Patient Research Partners (PRPs)

Participation of patient research partners is strongly recommended for all research projects to provide experiential knowledge, with the aim of improving the relevance, quality and validity of the research process. For more information, please read the material on [EULAR | PARE patient research partners](#).

Evaluation and Decision

The proposals will be independently peer-reviewed for:

1. their scientific quality,
2. the applicant's expertise in conducting research in RMD,
3. the applicant's CV,
4. the feasibility of conducting the project, and
5. the appropriate involvement of patient-related research partners.

Based on the peer review process, the FOREUM Scientific Committee will make a funding recommendation to the FOREUM Executive Committee, which will take the final funding decision. One representative of the supporting industry partner may attend the Scientific Committee decision-making meeting as a non-voting observer.

Decisions will be communicated to applicants by **mid-December 2026**.

Please note that all projects submitted for this Call (LOIs and full applications) will be shared with the supporting industry in accordance with the terms of the Confidentiality Agreement. Supporting industry partners interested in directly funding a project may contact applicants whose proposals were not selected through the Call process.

Ethical Considerations

FOREUM expects a high standard in the conduct of research it funds. For researchers this includes scientific integrity and adherence to the principles of good research practice. Patients involved in the study must be treated in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

How to Apply

Applications should be submitted electronically via the following link:

Apply Here: [Please choose the Platinum / Gold level donor form](#) and then select **Platinum** from the drop-down menu.

The AlphaFoundation grant submission system will guide you through the application process and specify the **word count** for each section.

Management of the Call

The call and approval process will be administered by the FOREUM Secretariat in collaboration with the FOREUM Scientific Committee.

Call Timeline

- Closing date for applications: 1 September 2026
- Decisions on applications announced: End of September 2026
- Closing date for full proposals: 6 November 2026
- Decisions on full proposals announced: Mid-December 2026

General Inquiries

Please contact the FOREUM Secretariat at info@foreum.org.

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FOREUM is devoted to promote research in rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs)

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