REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP #2): RESEARCH CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER COOPERATIVE GROUPS

RELEASE DATE: Aug 15, 2024
PROPOSAL DUE DATE: Oct 15, 2024

The SIOP Programme for Advancing Research Capacity for Pediatric Cancer Clinical Trials (PARC Programme) is now accepting applications from country/regional/international childhood cancer cooperative groups and disease-specific groups, working in LMICs, for projects focusing on research capacity development for pediatric oncology.

The goal of this Programme is on building and enabling local and regional capabilities and infrastructure to conduct pragmatic clinical research and for SIOP to be an active partner in research particularly in low-income countries (LICs) and middle-income countries (MICs). SIOP seeks to focus on supporting workforce training (doctors, nurses, clinical research assistants etc.) as well as on supporting the development of infrastructure and collaborative networks at already established cooperative groups and disease-specific groups. With support from Amazon and Foundation S, **SIOP supports clinical research capacity development efforts in LICs and MICs globally.**

PARC funding is flexible as long as it focuses on clinical research **capacity development**. Capacity development is defined as the process of developing sustainable abilities and skills enabling individuals (at all levels: CRAs, nurses, doctors, researchers etc) and organizations to perform high quality research in the pediatric oncology field.[1] Capacity development projects in high income countries are outside the scope of this RFP.

Childhood cancer cooperative groups (national, regional or international) and disease-specific cooperative groups (national, regional or international) are defined as located in low or middle income countries (LMIC) and whereby 3 or more institutions are collaborating in clinical research of any kind with the goal of developing capacity to engage in bigger clinical trial research prpgrams with a larger target patient population. If the cooperative group has HIC partner institution, it is still eligible for PARC program participation but 100% of the funding needs to go to LMIC country insitution/cooperative group only.

Please propose how you plan to use the funds in order to **increase the capacity of your cooperative group/disease-specific group** to conduct pragmatic clinical research in childhood cancer. Funding for capacity development can be used for any combination of the following areas:

- Support for Human Resources (project personnel, CRAs, data managers, research support personnel etc)
- Support for organizational issues (data transfer, specimen transfer, documentation, infrastructure etc)

[1] https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-018-3518-7#:~:text=Research%20capacity%20building%20has%20been,greater%20ability%20to%20perform%20useful

- Support for training key personnel (on research methods, bioethics, specimen handling, data protection etc)
- Support for specialist advice (biostatistics, clinical trial design etc)
- Organization for in-person meetings of the cooperative group, incl. travel.
- Other capacity development needs of staff or institution.

Eligibility

- The lead applicant is a SIOP member with membership dues paid for the year 2024. Candidates can log in to SIOP CONNECT to check if they are SIOP members – if you can download your SIOP membership certificate for 2024 from SIOP CONNECT, then you are a SIOP member in good standing in 2024.
- Cooperative groups that have received previous support from PARC (RFP #1) should have their reports approved.
- Established cooperative group or disease-specific group with ongoing research trajectory in pediatric oncology in LIC or MIC. PARC funding needs to supplement existing research projects that are already underway.
- Projects with a duration of no more than 24 months.
- Projects with research in LICs or MICs in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, and Latin America
- To be eligible, the cooperative group/disease-specific group should have at least 75% of its constituent centres registered in the SIOP Global Mapping Program. If your centers are not yet registered, please note that it takes 10 minutes per center to register them. You can contact Dr. Maite Gorostegui <maite.gorostegui @ sjd.es> for more information on how to register a center and to verify what centers from your cooperative group/disease-specific group are already registered.
- If you are a group that received funding under PARC RFP #1 (INPHOG, POEM or GALOP), you need to have spent 75% of the funding from RFP#1 before the time of application for funding from RFP#2 (Oct 15, 2024).
- This RFP #2 is not open to GFAOP or Cancare Africa. For more info on this restriction, please contact the SIOP President.
- Cooperative groups/disease-specific groups may submit only one application per group, not mutiple applications.

This competitive Call for Proposals will provide awards of up to 75,000 EUR each (total costs for each award), for projects with duration of up to 2 years. The PARC Programme will fund at least 2 awards.

Full Application

- Full application is due by 12:00 pm noon CEST (Geneva time) on Oct 15, 2024.
- Submission link: https://siopoffice.wufoo.com/forms/s162r0dc0f9z319/
- Please use Calibri Light font, size 11, for the proposal.
- The application form consists of the following:
    - Narrative Proposal (in PDF) (5 pages max).
    - Budget Proposal (in Excel only).
    - CV of Principal Investigator (in PDF) (3 pages max).
    - Short letter of support for your application from the relevant SIOP Continental President (SLAOP, SIOP Asia, SIOP Africa, SIOP Oceania, SIOP Europe) (1 page). If you would like the contact information of a Continental President, please contact programs@siop-online.org.

- (if relevant) Copy of the Agreement between your Cooperative group and the Lead Organization/Associated NGO[2].
- (If available) Copy of the latest financial audit report for the Cooperative group or the Lead Organization/Associated NGO.
- Copy of the SIOP Membership Certificate for year 2024 or membership payment evidence of the lead applicant.
- List of all the centers who are part of your cooperative group/disease-specific group and whether they are already registered in the SIOP Global Mapping Program.

Timeline

- RFP released: Aug 15, 2024
- Applications deadline: Oct 15, 2024
- Merit Review: Oct-Nov 2024
- Award decisions are released: Dec 2024
- Transfer of funds (tranche #1): at signatute (50% of total amount)
- Transfer of funds (tranche #2): upon review and approval of Year 1 narrative and financial reports (50% of total amount).

Review Criteria

- Projects focus on increasing the **pragmatic clinical research[3] capacity development**. Support for capacity development includes but is not limited to support for human resources, organizational issues, training of key personnel, specialist advice, and meeting support.
- Projects should focus exclusively on increasing clinical research capacity in LICs and/or MICs.
- The centers which are part of the cooperative group/disease-specific group are registered in the SIOP Global Mapping Program.
- Projects that request funding to do research per se would **not be considered**.
- Priority will be given to:
  - International and regional cooperative groups and disease-specific groups over national groups
  - Existing cooperative groups over newly established cooperative groups/disease-specific groups
  - Cooperative groups/ disease-specific groups with existing research projects underway over groups with new research that has not started yet.

Budgets

- Awards are limited to 75,000 EUR total per project. Applications are limited to projects with up to 2 year duration. Budget need not be split up evenly between year 1 and year 2. Please split it up in a manner that fits your project expense needs.
- The budget template in excel has a column that requires an explanation of each budget line. Please make sure you fill it out. Sample budget explanations are given in the template.
- Please provide the latest financial audit report of the cooprative group or the Lead Organization/Associated NGO. If one does not exist, please include a project audit cost in the budget; you will be asked to procure a post-grant, independent project financial audit and may use a portion of the 75,000 EUR to pay for the audit cost.

[2] If your cooperative group is different from the Lead Organization/Associated NGO receive and administer finances and to provide financial reports, you need to provide a copy of the Agreement between the two entities.

[3] Ford I, Norrie J. Pragmatic Trials. N Engl J Med. 2016 Aug 4;375(5):454-63. doi: 10.1056/NEJMra1510059. PMID: 27518663.

- Unallowable costs: large equipment (e.g., >5k EUR).
- Requirement: please budget for a project financial audit cost to be conducted by an external audit company.
- Overhead costs (if any) should not be more than 5% of the project costs.
- Co-funding is allowable and may be described in the application. However, co-funding is not a requirement of this RFA. If you choose to report co-funding, please make sure that you list only already secured external funding. Listing co-funding does not make your application to the PARC Program stronger.
- At contracting stage, if your proposal is selected, you will be asked to provide your cooperative group or your institution's bank account. SIOP will not transfer any funds to personal accounts.
- Funds should be fully spent within the award period because no-cost extensions will be granted in very limited circumstances and are limited to 6 months only. All no-cost extensions must be requested in writing and will be reviewed by the PARC Committee Chair no later than 45 days before the end of the project. Any unspent funds at the end of the project period must be returned to SIOP by wire transfer. Spending the grant funds after the project period is not allowed.
- Cost-extensions are not possible.
- Successful Grantees will receive the funds in 2 tranches—once upon signature of the contract and the second when the year 1 annual narrative and financial reports are received and approved.

Reporting Requirements and Acknowledgements

- Progress Narrative Report is due 6 months from the start date of the project. This should be 1-page long, single spaced. No financial report is necessary at the 6-month mark.
- The first Annual Narrative and Financial Report, covering activities and expenses for the first 12 months of the project, are due within 2 months of completing year 1. The second and final annual narrative and financial report should cover the entire project period and is due within 2 months of the end of the project period.
- The full reporting requirements will be detailed in the Contract signed with successful applicants.
- Grantees should acknowledge appropriately the SIOP PARC Programme on any publications (e.g. Annual Report, Institutional Report) or on their websites with the following "This research was made possible with support from the SIOP PARC Programme. www.siop-online.org "