



Imagine for Margo & Fondatioun Kriibskrank Kanner & Kick Cancer



**FIGHT KIDS CANCER**  
SUPPORTING A PROGRAMME FOR INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

## Guidance for Applicants to the Fight Kids Cancer Competitive Call

### Fight Kids Cancer Competitive Call

*Critical Deadlines: Full Proposals to be submitted by 1st of April 2020  
16:00 (4pm) Brussels time*

Information about your application, including the personal information provided on the forms, will be processed and stored electronically by the European Science Foundation (ESF) Secretariat and representatives of the Call's Funders. In accordance with the selection process, the Information contained in your application may be passed on to external reviewers in confidence. Reviewers will be asked to destroy information after the review and selection process is complete.

Your application and personal information will be stored by the ESF electronic system for programme management purposes but will not be shared with other organisations outside the FKC partnership. We will use details provided in the application for correspondence about the call and may also use this information for future analyses of the performance of the programme.

By submitting your application to the FKC Programme you have indicated your acceptance of these data protection terms and conditions.

## Contents

1.	Background.....	3
2.	Programme Objectives .....	4
3.	Programme scope.....	4
4.	Procedures, eligibility and selection criteria .....	4
	Submission, deadlines and time schedule .....	4
	Eligibility of projects and partners .....	5
	Project Duration .....	6
	Evaluation and selection .....	6
5.	Funding.....	7
6.	Summary of required documents/sections.....	7
7.	Project Selection Criteria.....	8
	Criterion 1: Scientific excellence .....	8
	Criterion 2: Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management .....	9
	Criterion 3: Potential impact .....	9
8.	Programme structure and management.....	9
	Annex A: List of countries and entities eligible for funding .....	11
	Annex B: Financial Conditions .....	12

## 1. Background

Despite the advances made, cancer remains a leading cause of death by disease in children and adolescents, and acute and long-term effects of treatment are unacceptable. In recent years, there have been revolutionary advances in research for certain adult cancers, which are not mirrored in children.

Paediatric cancers and their treatments differ from adult cancers. Hence, there is an urgent need for research projects developed specifically for children with cancer. In the field of oncology, childhood cancer research has been lagging behind, with stagnating cure rates over the last 15 years. Some types of paediatric malignancies still have a low cure rate, or no cure and yet affected children hardly benefit from innovative therapeutic approaches. Research on those malignancies remain largely insufficient.

The range of oncology treatments and targeted therapies have been rapidly expanding over the last years. Children should not be left behind innovative and more efficient treatments.

The *Fight Kids Cancer* (hereafter “FKC”) call for projects aims to address the lack of research dedicated to paediatric cancers by ensuring a recurring endowment to the best European research projects every year. The philosophy behind the FKC call is the following:

- The FKC call originates from parents' and patients' representatives' non-government organisation (NGO)'s that are keen to steer research towards areas that will effectively benefit the young patients by:
  - **improving their survival rate**
  - **improving their quality of life during and after the treatments**
  - **improving our knowledge on cancer causes and treatment resistance**
- Every selected project will need to demonstrate the sought impact for childhood cancer patients with an efficient timeline;
- The FKC call aims at promoting trans-European collaborations and financing projects globally instead of nationally, with the objective to deliver the following benefits:
  - **Accelerating:** research teams can start working faster without waiting for the fragmented funding approval from several national funding organisations;
  - **Streamlining:** the administrative workload for research teams will be simplified due to a single application and follow-up process;
- The annual recurring nature of the FKC programme will foster greater productivity in the paediatric oncology scientific community.

A call for projects, needs to offer sufficient funds in order to be attractive for academic research centres and make a difference. This is why, for the first call, three philanthropic organisations that actively support research against paediatric cancers, decided to join forces and created the FKC call. This first call will offer **3 million euros** to support a number of the best research projects in clinical and translational research in order to accelerate therapeutic innovation for children and adolescents with cancer. These founding organisations are:

- [\*\*KickCancer\*\*](#) (Belgium)
- [\*\*Imagine for Margo\*\*](#) (France)
- [\*\*Fondatioun Kriibskrank Kanner\*\*](#) (Luxemburg)

## 2. Programme Objectives

The Fight Kids Cancer programme aims to deliver innovative and relevant research for paediatric cancer research, as well as to strengthen the development of pan-European research initiatives. Specifically, this should encourage collaboration among the leading academic laboratories, and lead to novel innovative projects. It has **three main objectives**:

1. To produce cutting-edge science to advance knowledge of paediatric malignancies.
2. To support improved interdisciplinary knowledge, methods and collaborations for the issues of today.
3. To strengthen collaboration and the development of scientific capacity across Europe.

**Philanthropy integration:** FKC will be a strongly integrated programme, as funded projects will work together with the funding organisations. This includes participating in organisation's activities, sharing their expertise in research for example through conferences. Clear pathways and financial budgets for this type of engagement should be described in the application.

## 3. Programme scope

Projects are expected to address either haematological malignancies, solid or brain paediatric and adolescent cancers.

These are two categories of projects:

- **Early phase clinical trials** evaluating innovative therapies for children and adolescents with cancer
  - Documentation for provision of investigational drug(s) must be provided
  - Conducted in at least 2 European countries
  - Co-funding of clinical trials is possible, however precise details, justification and timeline must be provided
  - Enrolment of patients must commence not later than 12 months from the start of funding
- **Translational research** projects to identify novel mechanisms of action and targets that may result in innovative new therapies or better models of disease. Pre-clinical projects including high-risk / high return proposals, or projects that leverage paediatric tumour models, will be considered. Multi-disciplinary or multi-institution collaborations are strongly encouraged.

## 4. Procedures, eligibility and selection criteria

### *Submission, deadlines and time schedule*

- **Submission**  
A single submission process will apply for full proposals. Full proposals (in English) must be submitted electronically using the ESF on-line submission system. Closure of the online platform is time sensitive, therefore you are advised to submit the proposal in advance of the deadline to avoid rejection.

For technical questions regarding submission, please contact the Fight Kids Cancer Secretariat<sup>1</sup>: [fightkidscancer@esf.org](mailto:fightkidscancer@esf.org)

- Deadlines and time schedule

The call will go through the following stages and applicants must pay attention to the deadlines outlined below:

<u>2nd December 2019</u>	<u>Pre-announcement of the call</u>
<u>Early January 2020</u>	<u>Official launch of the call</u>
<u>15 January 2020</u>	<u>Opening of the online platform</u>
<u>1<sup>st</sup> April 2020</u>	<u>Deadline for submitting proposals</u>
<u>6-13 May</u>	<u>Rebuttal phase</u>
<u>Late May 2020</u>	Recommendations on new beneficiaries from the Scientific Panel to the Programme Committee Selection
<u>October 2020</u>	<u>Earliest possible start of funded projects</u>
<u>Late May 2021</u>	<u>Latest possible start of funded projects</u>

Strict confidentiality will be ensured during the entire process regarding to the identities of applicants and the content of the proposals.

#### *Eligibility of projects and partners*

The lead institution must be an eligible research organisation located in an eligible country<sup>2</sup>, preferable one already undertaking research in the field of paediatric cancer. Other project partners can be from related fields of expertise, providing they operate as not-for-profit. Partners from countries not listed as eligible are permitted, provided they are not delivering a core component of the project upon which major activities are dependent; such partners should plan to leverage complementary funding.

Funding aimed at supporting new research projects. These research projects can be individual research projects (proposed by a single team) or collaborative research projects (proposed by a consortium of teams). An individual cannot be named as the lead investigator on more than one competing bid, however it is permissible for an individual to lead one proposal and be named as a partner on a separate proposal.

A proposal will only be considered eligible if it meets **all of** the following conditions:

- it is submitted through the on-line submission system before the deadline, 1st April 2020, 16:00 Brussels time;

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<sup>1</sup> The European Science Foundation is acting as the Secretariat for the Fight Kids Cancer programme

<sup>2</sup> Eligible Country and organisation are defined in Annex A

- it is written in English; and **must** be in **single-spaced typescript** in **Arial 11**, with margins of at least 2cm. References should be in **Arial 9**.
- it is submitted by an eligible participant (or a consortium of eligible participants). Eligible participants are listed in Annex A. If one participant is not eligible, the whole proposal will be rejected;
- it is complete i.e. all elements forming the application (on-line form and template for proposal) have been provided; Page limits are absolute and any applications which exceeds the allowable page limit will be rejected.
- the content of the proposal relates to the call topic it addresses (see section 3 above);
- requested contribution is within the funding limits specified in the call document.

### *Project Duration*

Starting October 2020 at the earliest, the duration will be 2 years for translational projects and 3 year for clinical trial projects.

### *Evaluation and selection*

The following evaluation procedure will apply:

- 1) First step: eligibility check-up

The eligibility check of full proposals will be performed by the ESF according to above conditions (see Eligibility of projects and partners).

- 2) Second step: evaluation of eligible full proposals by two independent experts

The ESF will organise the evaluation of eligible full proposals received in the light of the evaluation criteria determined by the FKC Programme Committee with the assistance of at least two independent experts per proposal. The experts will be individuals from the relevant fields of science. They will hold the highest level of knowledge and be internationally recognised authorities in their area.

Experts involved in the evaluation will sit in the Review Panel.

Each independent expert will record his/her individual opinion on each proposal assigned to him/her, and will score each of the following criterion:

- **Scientific excellence**
- **Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management**
- **Potential Impact**

All experts evaluating a given proposal will then meet to agree on a consensus assessment for each proposal. The panel of experts will make a ranking based on this input, a narrative report and provide a priority level for each project (low, medium, high). These reports will be used by the programme committee, to take the final decisions regarding selected projects for funding. During this evaluation meeting the Programme Committee may serve as observers.

Following the meeting of evaluators, all applicants will receive the consensus report. The selected successful applicant(s) will be invited to accede to the project's grant agreement by ESF who manage the programme.

## 5. Funding

For this call, up to two early phase clinical trials (1.5m€ per project) and up to 3 translational research projects (500k€ per project) will be funded. The level of available funding may be revised at the discretion of the Programme Committee. All applicants should refer to the Project Finances document for detailed description of eligible costs (see Annex B). The financial cost of each project will need to be identified through the provision of a detailed justification of resources.

All applicants should enter the 100% full economic costs of the proposed research into the budget sections of the budget template. **All costs should be in EURO (€).**

Research funding is provided exclusively to meet the costs incurred by the specific research project. All costs associated with the project must be itemised and fully justified. Therefore, if costs are complementing an ongoing activity or project, this should be clearly stated in the justification of resources. What is funded by FKC and what is complementary should be clearly described.

Requested funding will be scrutinised during the assessment process and, if recommended for funding, the ESF, on behalf of the Programme Committee, will request adequate evidence of the costing basis for all direct costs. Note that budgets may be reduced if considered excessive.

Successful projects, along with proposing excellent science research that fits the objectives and scope of this call, are expected to also provide excellent value for money. This includes fully justified and reasonable financial requests, appropriate time commitments of all research participants, and clear plans with aim to provide the maximum output in terms of science and impact.

## 6. Summary of required documents/sections

The impact from FKC projects will be measured by the way the research is directly relevant to, and able to demonstrate likely contributions to, the specific outcomes and impact, with the ultimate goal of increasing benefits to children and young people diagnosed with cancer. Successful projects are expected to deliver both academic impact (for example research papers, significant new data and new knowledge) and benefits of significant impact in order to address a central goal of FKC (see section 2: Programme objectives). The application has several elements, some of these must be completed online (for example the project summary), while others can be completed offline and uploaded. The elements described below should be included in the application form (see the detailed template available on the webpage):

- **Part A:**

Section	Pages limit	Description
Scientific excellence and implementation	7 pages maximum	The Description of Proposed Research included in the proposal contains the substance of the research application. It is essential that a coherent exposition of the proposed project is presented, addressing the hypothesis, objectives, intellectual and academic case and potential for impact on the FKC research agenda as well as meeting the core criteria of the call, the description of the proposed research. This includes an outline of the management processes for the project (for example decision boards and, coordination meetings) It is

		recommended that milestones be presented in a detailed diagram (as an Annex) providing the time schedule of the tasks and marking their interrelationships; and indicate a critical path marking those events which directly influence the overall time schedule in case of delays.
Impact	1 page maximum	All applicants are required to describe 'Pathways to Impact' approach as part of their research proposal that outlines how the proposed work will achieve impact, build capacity and benefit the wider scientific community. This should essentially outline what will be done during and after the project to increase the likelihood of the research benefitting children and adolescents with cancer.

- **Part B:**

Section	Pages limit	Description
Budget & justification	2	This should state the full cost of the project and explain why the requested resources are needed, including identifying why the proposal presents value for money. Sufficient justification for resources is needed for all expenses being requested. In short, the applicants must demonstrate why any given funding is requested, and how it will be used to deliver the cutting-edge research with impact that you are proposing.
Annexes		Gantt chart (1-page maximum), Risk management, CV (maximum 2 pages, list of 10 most relevant publications), References (maximum 2 pages), Letters of support

## 7. Project Selection Criteria

The submitted proposals should include the following sections, which are the basis of the evaluation procedure. All submitted proposals should address the following three evaluation criteria.

### *Criterion 1: Scientific excellence*

The Description of Proposed Research should address the following points:

- Specific objectives and hypotheses
- Background information including rationale and scientific issues relating to the research question.
- Methodology and approach.
- Describe project innovation, relevance to the FKC aims, potential relation to international research work in the field and anticipated achievements and outputs.

### *Criterion 2: Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management*

This section covers the details of the planning and management of the project's activities including timing, personnel, budget, deliverables and feasibility; it should also include a brief outline of the organisations involved in the consortium, as named on the applications. In particular, it should include:

- Feasibility, including documentation for availability of any investigational agent(s) and Gantt chart.
- Details on the nature of the organisations named (i.e. university, research institute, NGO, etc). Outline the specific expertise available for the research at the host organisation and that of any associated organisations and beneficiaries.
- Track record on the key named individuals/researchers, their role in the project and details of relevant experience and how they are best suited to conduct the research proposed.
- Any associated collaborations, partnerships or co-funding (either proposed or secured) that may be used in the project.
- Management of both project and resources, identifying the training and career development opportunities for personnel working on the project and the management structure within the project team.
- Identification of potential risks and risk mitigation plan.
- Data management plan: a detailed description of the proposed data management structures, plans, responsibilities and data sharing.

### *Criterion 3: Potential impact*

In particular, the Pathways to Impact section should address the following:

- How result from this research would both advance knowledge and improve outcome for children and adolescents with cancer.
- Based on these results, outline how further development should proceed.
- quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results to targeted peers (e.g. scientific, industry)
- quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities and results to the public

**N.B.** The Justification of Resources should state the full cost of the project and explain why the requested resources are needed, including identifying why the proposal presents value for money. It should include justification for all Directly Incurred Costs, Investigator effort, and necessary equipment. See Annex B for details on the eligible costs.

## 8. Programme structure and management

### Programme activities

Programme support and management is provided by ESF, which is the secretariat office for the funding organisations.

### Programme management and project reporting

Funded projects will be required to submit an annual report, reviewing the progress of the work plan, use of resources and identifying any challenges. In addition, and in accordance with each project's workplan, deliverables and milestones are to be submitted upon completion to the ESF acting as the Programme Secretariat for FKC. These reports will be shared with the Funders.

## **Annex A: List of countries and entities eligible for funding**

### Countries:

Legal entities established in the following countries will be eligible to receive funding through the FKC call:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

### Legal entities:

For the purposes of this call a legal entity must be established in a country named as eligible in the above list. A legal entity will be eligible to receive funding if they are defined as an individual, company or organisation that has legal rights and obligations. This includes institutions of higher learning, research centres, and non- profit organisations. It is anticipated that any legal entity taking part is under the direct or indirect control of a participant or under the same direct or indirect control of the participant.

Though described as a legal entity, an exclusion is extended to private for-profit organisations seeking to benefit financially from this funding source. Such organisations are not eligible to receive funding, however participation is not precluded if contributions are provided in kind.

'non-profit legal entity' means a legal entity which by its legal form is non-profit-making or which has a legal or statutory obligation not to distribute profits to its shareholders or individual member.

## Annex B: Financial Conditions

Research grant funds are provided for a specific research project and may not be used to meet costs on any other project or activity. Any commitment incurred before a research grant starting date or any commitment in excess of the amount awarded, is the responsibility of the Research Organisation. **The maximum grant amount set out in the agreed final budget can NOT be exceeded.**

ESF, on behalf of the funders, reserves the right to examine, in detail, all items of expenditure charged to an award. Additionally, the funders and other representatives from the FKC Programme Committee may request justification on the use of resources by selected Research Organisations.

The ‘maximum grant amount’ of the application is calculated on the basis of the estimated eligible costs submitted by the applicants to implement the action. Applications should be at current price levels with no allowance for inflation.

Only duly justified eligible costs may be taken into account to determine the final grant. Payment will be limited to the actual costs within the fixed amount of the grant. All costs associated with the research project must be itemised and fully justified in Section 3: Budget & Justification.

The main categories of costs which can be funded from a research grant are indicated in the section below.

In line with policies on open access publication, each beneficiary must ensure open access (free of charge, online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results. It is expected that publication of the results of a trial are made regardless of their outcome (i.e. negative or positive result). Any delays to open access, require the early agreement of the FKC Programme Committee.

Costs associated with open access should be considered a legitimate research expense and included in the overall research budget as long as:

- The costs are proportionate, reasonable and represent value for money.
- Existing arrangements and resources at the host institution are used first when available and appropriate. Where open access is sought for publications from multiple organisations, it is the responsibility of the corresponding author to lead on any costs.

### Funded costs categories

#### 1) Directly Incurred Costs

Directly Incurred Costs are costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the execution of a project, are charged as the cash value actually paid and are supported by the normal accounting practices of the organisation. The grant can only reimburse eligible costs (i.e. costs that comply with the general and specific conditions set out in this Annex). In order to be eligible, actual costs must be:

- actually incurred by the beneficiary
  - real and not estimated, budgeted or imputed and

- definitively and genuinely borne by the beneficiary (not by any other entity)
- Documented and genuinely recorded in the participant's records according to participant's usual accounting practices
- incurred during the project's lifetime (i.e. the generating event that triggers the costs must take place during the project duration)

The 'project duration' is the period running from the project starting date to the end date of the project. If costs are invoiced or paid later than the end date, they are eligible only if the debt existed already during the project duration (supported by documentary evidence) and the final cost was known at the moment of the financial report.

They can include:

#### *Direct Personnel costs*

Payroll costs for staff, full or part-time, who will work on the project and whose time can be supported by a full audit trail during the life of the project e.g. research assistants or dedicated technicians. In particular this includes:

- costs for employees (or equivalent)
- costs for individuals working under a direct contract
- costs for beneficiaries that are individuals without salary

Personnel costs are eligible, if they are related to personnel working for the beneficiary under an employment contract (or equivalent appointing act) and assigned to the action. Their cost is limited to the share of their time spent on the project, reported on timesheets.

Exceptional payroll items such bonus, gift vouchers... are not eligible.

#### *Travel and subsistence*

Funds for travel and subsistence can be used by staff where travel is required by the nature of the work and dedicated to the project.

Funding will be provided for journeys, visits and trials where these costs are approved at the outset of the grant. Each journey must be itemised, justified and fully costed in the application. Travel should be in economy class or equivalent. Where an overnight stay is required, then the accommodation cost for one night before the meeting and one night after the meeting is possible if the travel/agenda does not allow travel on the first or last day of the meeting.

FKC will consider funding the cost of low-carbon approaches to collaboration (including, where appropriate, the costs of technology or of less economic, but more environmentally friendly means of transport). Please note that FKC will not pay for the cost of proposed carbon offsetting arising from travel associated with research grants.

Requests for funding to attend conferences will be expected. These must be named, justified and costed in the application. The justification should show how the conference will either directly benefit the research or facilitate future impacts of research. There will also be engagement opportunities (e.g. Cancer races) organised by the funding organisations which the successful applicants are encouraged to participate in, and it is anticipated that budget should be set aside for travel to (up to 2) such events over the course of the project duration.

### **Equipment**

The priority for FKC grants is on research. Equipment procurement are eligible in certain circumstances where a clear benefit for the delivery of the project is demonstrated. For all items of equipment costing over €10,000 (including VAT), applicants will need to:

- confirm that the piece of equipment is not readily available for use within the host institution, or any other accessible location (for instance by making reference to any asset registers consulted)
- provide evidence that all other reasonable options have been considered
- if the equipment requested will replace existing equipment, explain what will happen to the existing equipment and why the existing equipment needs to be changed.
- state the contribution that the applicant's organisation will make towards the cost of the equipment
- explain the dependence of the project on this capital as well as any contingency plans that would be invoked should it not be possible to fund the capital elements of the proposal

In any case, the eligible cost is limited to the share of the usage related to the project. This must be apportioned with the global length of depreciation and the projects usage rate.

Example: if an equipment is bought for 25.000 € and will be used & depreciated for 5 years, but the project will only use it for 2 years for 50% of its usage time, the eligible cost will be:

$$25.000 \text{ €} / 5 \text{ years depreciation} * 2 \text{ years for the project} * 50\% \text{ of project's share} = 5.000 \text{ €}$$

Purchase of IT equipment such as computer, laptop, printer etc is not deemed eligible cost.

### **Identifiable and Verifiable**

The applicant must be able to show (with records and supporting documents) the actual costs of the work, i.e. what was actually paid for the work. Costs must be calculated according to the applicable accounting rules of the country in which the applicant is established and according to the beneficiary's usual cost accounting practices.

In addition, for personnel costs (declared as actual costs), the beneficiaries must keep time records for the number of hours declared. The time records must be in writing and approved by the persons working on the action and their supervisors, at least monthly. In the absence of reliable time records

of the hours worked on the action, the FKC Programme Committee may accept alternative evidence supporting the number of hours declared, if it considers that it offers an adequate level of assurance.

Moreover, a beneficiary can NOT transfer budget to a form of costs that it did not set out in its estimated budget. When the final amount of the grant is calculated, the eligible costs cannot include costs under budget categories that did not appear in the estimated budget, unless the initial estimated budget was amended or if these additional costs were approved in writing.

## *2) Indirect Costs*

Indirect costs are not allowable costs in the FKC programme.

Indirect costs are described as non-specific costs such as overheads. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, banking fees, library and some departmental services.

## *3) Other costs*

**In-kind contributions** free of charge and costs of linked third parties — For in-kind contributions provided by third parties free of charge and costs of linked third parties, the eligibility rules apply *mutatis mutandis*.

**Direct costs of subcontracting** (including related duties, taxes and charges such as non-deductible value added tax (VAT) paid by the beneficiary) are deemed to be eligible;

**Costs related to preparing, submitting and negotiating the proposals** — Cannot be declared as eligible for the action (they are incurred before the action starts);

**Costs related to drafting the consortium agreement** — Are not eligible because the consortium agreement should be signed before the project starts. However, costs related to updating the consortium agreement are eligible if incurred during the action duration.

**Travel costs for the kick-off meeting** — Even if the first leg of the journey takes place before the action starting date (e.g. the day before the kick-off meeting), the costs may be eligible, if the meeting is held during the action duration.

If you are in any doubt about whether a specific cost should, or should not, be covered within direct costs, please contact the FKC Secretariat at [fightkidscancer@esf.org](mailto:fightkidscancer@esf.org)