

# FONDATION VAINCRE ALZHEIMER

## 2021 GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

### Statement of Purpose:

In the European Grant Cycle, Fondation Vaincre Alzheimer (FVA) awards grants for basic, translational and clinical research that studies the underlying mechanisms of, and possible therapeutic treatments for (specific) dementia(s). Projects are mainly evaluated on whether the proposed research is likely to improve our understanding of the pathophysiology and underlying mechanisms causing Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and/or is likely to effectively promote therapeutic strategies. Note that **applications involving groups that focus on Alzheimer's Disease (AD) related dementias are strongly encouraged**. However, all applications are reviewed together on a competitive peer review basis.

It is understood that more senior dementia investigators will have other funding in related areas of research, but the application to Fondation Vaincre Alzheimer should not be used to simply subsidize these other efforts or to compensate for grant cutbacks. **Therefore, the applicant is advised to focus on a specific project that can be addressed in terms of a clear and well-defined hypothesis and specific aims and completed within a reasonable time. Please keep this in mind when preparing the research/work plan section of the application.**

### Terms and Restrictions for the grant application:

FVA grants are awarded to

- Public universities
- Public research Institutions (EPST and EPSCP only)
- The group to which the Principal Investigator (P.I.) is affiliated (not to individuals).

Funds cannot be used for

- Salary of the Principal Investigator (P.I.) except under extraordinary circumstances that must then be clearly and thoroughly justified
- Institutional overhead
- Large capital equipment
- Construction of buildings
- VAT
- Administrative overheads and other indirect costs

### **Overview of the grants available:**

- Standard Grants (€100.000 max, for 2 years max)
- PhD Fellowship Grants (€120.000 max, for 3 years max)
- Pilot Awards (€40.000 max, for 2 years max)
- Cross-Border Grants (€100.000 max or €50.000 max, for 2 years max)

**Table 1: Grant Specifications 2021**

	Standard	PhD Fellowship	Pilot
<b>Maximum project duration</b>	Up to 2 years (also possible 1 year)	Up to 3 years	Up to 2 years (also possible 1 year)
<b>Maximum amount to be requested</b>	Up to € 100.000 (in case of 1 year, up to € 50.000)	Up to € 120.000	Up to € 40.000 (in case of 1 year, up to € 20.000)
<b>Budget distribution</b>	Half-yearly payments up to € 25 000 are made by FVA. However, the P.I. can request 70% max of the budget per year. As the payments are however done each 6 months the institution to which the PI is affiliated will have to advance the amount, should 70% be requested in year 1. The budget requested should be justified in the proposal.	Half-yearly payments up to € 20 000 are made by FVA. Only the exact amount of the PhD salary costs will be reimbursed.	Half-yearly payments up to € 10 000 are made by FVA. However, the P.I. can request 70% max of the budget per year. The budget requested should be justified in the proposal.
<b>Funding (specifications)</b>	Can be used for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equipment</li> <li>- Supplies</li> <li>- Salary (except for the P.I. and Master M2)</li> </ul>	Funding exclusively reserved to pay the salary of a PhD student during the first 3 years of thesis.  You will be requested by the European Grant Manager to submit the price list of your institution (grille tarifaire) as justification.	Can be used for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equipment</li> <li>- Supplies</li> <li>- Salary (except for the P.I. and Master M2)</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility criteria P.I.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works at a French University or research institution (EPST and EPSCP)</li> <li>• Holds the academic rank of tenured researcher, associate professor or higher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works at a French University or research institution (EPST and EPSCP)</li> <li>• Holds the academic rank of tenured researcher, associate professor or higher.</li> <li>• Should be the supervisor of the thesis</li> <li>• Should provide justification for the total cost of the thesis requested (doctoral contract, salary grid)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works at a French University or research institution (EPST and EPSCP)</li> <li>• Post-doctoral level, (ATER and IR are also eligible) maximum 10 years after obtaining the PhD</li> <li>• Medical doctors ≤40 years with MD and clinical research experience (publications as 1<sup>st</sup> or last author)</li> <li>• The P.I. must ensure that he/she is paid during the grant.</li> </ul>
<b>additional information</b>	<u>This award cannot</u> be used for part or an end of a PhD's salary	• This award cannot be used for an end of a PhD's salary.	• The post-doctoral applicant who obtains a tenure position (CR or IR) during the review

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delayed start of the grant (6 months max) may be requested to obtain enough time to recruit a PhD student for the project.</li> <li>• Co-funding of PhD fellowship over 3 years with regional department is allowed.</li> </ul>	<p>process remains eligible for grant funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the applicant is still a PhD student, the P.I. should obtain their PhD before the 31st of December of the year in which they apply for the pilot grant.</li> <li>• The 10 years-period is counted from the PhD date to the date of the beginning of the funding. For maternity leave(s), the effective elapsed time since the PhD defence will be reduced by 1 year per child. For paternity leave(s) the elapsed time will be shortened by the leave taken for each child born.</li> </ul>
<b>Possibility to request Cross-Border grants</b>	Yes (please refer to the "Cross-Border Grants" section below)	No	Yes (please refer to the "Cross-Border Grants" section below)

### Cross-Border Grants

FVA also grants Cross-border Awards for collaborative projects between France and the Netherlands or between France and Germany. Depending on whether the P.I. is from a French, Dutch or German organization the application will be submitted to FVA, Alzheimer Nederland (AN) or Alzheimer Forschung Initiative e.V. (AFI), respectively.

In case of FVA, when the French P.I. submits a cross-border project to one organization, the collaborative Dutch or German P.I. does not need to submit anything to the other organization. However, as each organization funds in its own country the collaborative French or German P.I. will need to adhere to the FVA or AFI guidelines, respectively. In addition the collaborative PI cannot be a (collaborative PI) on another project in the same grant cycle. The AFI and AN guidelines can be consulted through the links below.

AFI: <https://www.alzheimer-forschung.de/forschung/forschungsfoerderung/standard-und-pilot-grants/>

AN: <https://www.alzheimer-nederland.nl/onderzoek/voor-onderzoekers-call-innovatief-onderzoek>

The following grants can be applied for as Cross-Border Grants:

- Standard Grants (€100.000 max for 2 years max)
- Pilot Grants (€50.000 max for 2 years max)

Please also refer to the details in *Table 1*, for specifications.

Additionally, for Cross-border grants, the following applies:

- Indicate the respective contributions from each country
- Highlight the added value of the collaboration and what parts of the collaboration are complementary. Why is it likely to facilitate in addressing the questions involved?
- Potential articles should be published jointly with both groups.

### **New Grant Application or Grant Renewal**

FVA will not limit the total number of years of funding that an individual researcher may receive.

A new grant cannot overlap in funding or in topic with that of an active grant, or with a grant that has been extended. Indeed, **no P.I. may receive more than one FVA grant, simultaneously**. Grantees can submit a grant application (new or renewal) at the earliest **1 year after the end of the last budget year** of their former grant.

When an applicant has received an FVA grant in the past, he/she can submit a new application for a new grant. Alternatively, he/she can submit a renewal if the application is a direct continuation/follow-up of the previously received grant. Both type of applications will undergo peer review in the same manner. When a project is a renewal, the application should clearly state the yield (publications, preliminary data of the former grant). Progress made during the previous funding period will then be considered during review of the renewal application.



### **Additional rules for FVA grants (Standard, PhD fellowship, Pilot, Cross-Border):**

- In the grant application, the scientific research plan should be hypothesis driven, coherent and focused. The work plan should be efficiently planned and it should be illustrated in a convincing manner that the proposed research can be completed within the time available.
- No P.I.(or a CB collaborative P.I.). may submit more than one grant application in the same grant cycle.
- Investigators of the same laboratory can apply if there is no scientific or financial overlap between the proposed research projects.
- A P.I. cannot be included in the personnel section of another application submitted the same year. He/she can be a consultant (time spent <5%) in other projects, which can be mentioned in the embedding section of the application.

The PI should not include in the personnel section of his/her project a French or German SAB member as collaborator of the study. For ethical reasons a French or German SAB member can be a consultant only (time spent <5%), which can be mentioned in the embedding section of the application.

### **Grant Cycle Procedure – Review of the applications:**

Awards are granted on the basis of scientific merit and quality of the applicant's research proposal, and its relevance to improving our understanding of the etiology of Alzheimer's disease or related dementias.

FVA uses a two-tier peer-review process. In the first tier, a brief Letter of Intent (LoI) is written. The LoI will be selected based on feasibility of the research plan, the applicant's past performance and relevance of the topic for Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. **FVA will preselect a maximum of 2 investigators of the same laboratory.**

Upon selection, applicants are invited to submit a full proposal that will be peer-reviewed by 3 members of the European SAB (with French, Dutch and German SAB members) as well as by a fourth external expert. In October, the applications and evaluations will be discussed and ranked in a joint meeting of the European Scientific Advisory Board.

For the submission of the proposals FVA uses the Alzheimer Research Management System (ARMS).  
<https://www.alzheimer-research.eu/>

Please refer to Table 2 below for more details on the Grant Cycle timelines for 2021.

**Table 2: Provisional timetable of Call for Proposals 2021**

Call for applications with Lol	January 4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Deadline</b> for Lol	February 1 <sup>st</sup>
Confirmation Lol was received and is eligible is sent to the applicant by the European Grant Manager	Beginning of February
Request for full application or denial letters are sent to the applicant by the European Grant Manager	Second half of April (exact date to be determined)
<b>Deadline</b> for full applications	End of May (exact date will be communicated)
Final decision is communicated to the applicants by AFI	December
Grant provision, quarterly payments	January, 2022

The Board of Directors makes decisions on funding in November and grants are intended to start in the beginning of January. To ensure that FVA is funding meritorious research proposals that have a high potential for success, the Board of Directors bases its funding decisions on the results of a formal, rigorous peer-review process, taking program goals and the availability of funds into consideration.

In line with this, the SAB and BOD will select only grants that have received a sufficient, pre-set high rank which guarantees the quality of the research. Applications that receive a low quality score, i.e. ranking below "good" (numerical score 2) get a low priority and will not be funded. In addition FVA strives to maintain a good balance in funding between:

- (i) Experience level of investigators (established versus young/promising candidates)
- (ii) Topics/areas of study within the dementia research field
- (iii) Applications overlapping with research proposals funded by other organizations



**Overlap of funding:**

If the FVA proposal overlaps, partially or completely, with any current or new research funded by other granting organizations, the BOD will not fund the project. Overlap can be scientific or financial and concerns the PI, co-PI and other collaborators of the project.

The BOD accepts to fund FVA proposals that are scientifically and financially complementary to grants from other organizations.

To avoid any funding overlap, FVA asks candidates for their applications presented to other organizations and their research projects currently funded by other organizations.

Failure to notify receipt of overlapping grants may result reimbursement of the grant to FVA.

Applicants normally will be notified by email of the Board of Director's decision concerning their application at the end of November. FVA staff is not authorized to provide information on priority scores, ranking, or likelihood of funding of applications prior to written notification of applicants. Please do not phone FVA, or SAB members, to request such information.

Your application will, similarly, be handled in a confidential way at all times.



**Commitments after grant cycle/approval:**

Participation in review process 2<sup>nd</sup> tier

Please note that applicants and grantees will be committed to review future FVA, AN or AFI applications.

### Shifting dates of the grant

After the approval of the grant the grantee should inform FVA immediately if the project is delayed (max. 6 months).

### Budget

The project will receive funds only when operational.

Grant payments are made on a half-year basis.

If budget revisions are necessary, requests must be made in writing to FVA with a clear justification:

- A cost-neutral prolongation (6 months maximum)
- Transfers of more than € 2.000 from one budget category to another requires FVA approval

FVA prefers that grant funds be expended in a timely manner in accordance with the research plan presented in the grant application. If there is more than 15% of the total grant award remaining in the grant account at the end of the grant period, permission may be requested to extend the grant period with no increase in funding. A written requests/justification must be submitted for this.

### Overlapping Grant Awards

FVA awards funds only that **FVA is the main financial supporter of the research project for which grant monies were requested. Co-funding of complementary, non-overlapping approaches are possible and should be clearly explained and justified in the application.** FVA does not allow its grants to be used for identical and/or overlapping research projects that are already funded by another source without written FVA permission and full knowledge.

**In order to avoid funding overlap, FVA reserves the right to ask candidates for applications submitted to other organizations and for research project currently funded by other organizations.**

**Failure to report the receipt of overlapping grant funds during the grants period may require, as determined at the sole discretion of FVA, the return of all, or part of, the monies awarded by FVA to the grantee.** Furthermore, the grantee is responsible for all costs expended FVA in obtaining the return of the grant award funds including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees incurred.

### Human/Animal Research Subjects

FVA requires that research supported by FVA meets or exceeds national regulations regarding the use of human subjects or animals in research. Applicants must provide written certification of approval by the appropriate Ethic Commission before funding begins.

Concerning research involving animals, FVA requires that applicants follow the "Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments" (ARRIVE) guidelines.

Applicants who wish to use post-mortem human brain tissues are strongly encouraged to request samples from the national biobank Neuro-CEB (<http://www.neuroceb.org/info-chercheur.htm>). Your samples request will be evaluated by members of the FVA SAB (review period ~2 weeks).

### Sharing of Reagents

FVA believes that biological reagents (e.g. recombinant DNA clones, cultured cell lines, hybridoma cell lines, mutant or unique organisms etc.) developed during the course of FVA-sponsored research must be made available to qualified investigators after the publication of reports using or describing the reagents. These materials represent a valuable resource for the scientific community at large, paid for by the generous contributions of FVA's donors. The availability of these reagents directly affects the ability of the members of the scientific community to replicate the experiments of others and the pace and cost of future research. Therefore, FVA requires that the Principal Investigator and the grantee institution accept the responsibility of providing biological reagents developed during the course of FVA-sponsored research to investigators who request them.

### Public Education and Acknowledgement

FVA is a publicly supported charitable organization funded by donor contributions and has an active public education program that informs donors and other interested individuals about the research we sponsor. Information provided to the public by FVA may include the title of the project, the name and institutional affiliation of the P.I., the amount of the award, and the non-technical project description provided by the applicant. Therefore, the non-technical description should not contain confidential information. The submission of this application shall be deemed consent of the applicant to the publication of this information should a grant be awarded. Awardees are aware that they may be asked by FVA to assist in the information of the general audience, e.g. by providing information on new developments in their research field or by giving an interview, a presentation or lecture at meetings and events, lab tours or workshops supported by FVA. Photos of the P.I. and his/her team must be made available without restrictions.

All publications, papers, book chapters or presentations, resulting from research sponsored by FVA must be acknowledged as follows: *“Funding was provided by Fondation Vaincre Alzheimer”*, followed by the grant application number.

### Open Access Publication

FVA supports open access and follows the national French law (Loi n° 2016-1321 du 7 octobre 2016 pour une République numérique). We strongly encourage researchers to publish in open access journals or to publish in a repository that is freely accessible.

### Discontinuation of Grant Funding

Although FVA has committed grant funding for the stated term of the grant, it reserves the right to discontinue the grant at any time in the event the work performed is in breach of the terms and obligations stated herein.

