

CALL FOR PROPOSALS on regenerative medicine: prequalification round for full proposals to the Trond Mohn Foundation

Haukeland University Hospital (HUH), together with the Faculty of Medicine, University of Bergen (MED-UiB) recently established a Center for Regenerative Medicine based on a generous financial support from the Trond Mohn Foundation (TMF). The goal of the Center is to develop excellence in regenerative medicine spanning from biomedical to clinical research and clinical trials with the long-term aim to offer patients state-of-the-art therapies and with the new Ex Vivo Facility as a central hub. To encourage high quality translational research that may contribute to the success of the Center, TMF has set aside 20 million NOK to support 3-4 projects on the thematic areas listed below. Moreover, TMF will support an additional project with 5 million NOK that is to be coordinated by HUH or HUS/UiB, that is to be carried out in collaboration with a core facility for experimental cell therapy (GMP-grade virally transduced cells) at is being established at the Oslo University Hospital (the "Bergen-Oslo" project).

The call:

The current call is a prequalification call to select 5-7 projects that will be invited to submit a full application to the TMF. Deadline prequalification call: **March 22nd**, Deadline full proposals: May 31st. Total project funding is 5 or 6,6 million NOK (project period of 3-4 years) from TMS with matched institutional funding.

Applicants must hold a main position at HUH or MED-UiB in order to be eligible to apply. The proposed projects must be submitted from either HUH or UiB, with financial commitment (50%) from the host institution. The PIs of successful project proposals will be affiliated to the center through the Center for Regenerative Medicine Management Team and by accepting the grant commit to contribute to the scientific development of Center.

The Center

The objectives of the Center for Regenerative Medicine are to coordinate groundbreaking research and to give access for patients to state-of-the-art therapies. A translational aspect is of particular importance and will initially be based on clinical trials employing the Ex Vivo Facility, but with clear ambitions to later enter regular advanced personalized treatment.

The funding is to support the development of the Center for Regenerative Medicine and proposed projects must be within the scientific scope of the Center. *The projects should meet one or more of the following criteria:*

- Basic and translational research in regenerative medicine with high potential for clinical impact, including projects in the field of translational stem cell research*, projects enabling clinical trials with advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMP) based on tissue and cells, and projects exploring novel therapies using ATMP.
- Proposed projects should exploit the research opportunities posed by the ExVivo Facility in Bergen and /or be clearly beneficial to its future development
- In line with the Bergen-Oslo project**.

Interdisciplinary projects and projects that strengthen the collaboration between the HUH and MED-UiB are particularly encouraged.

*Non-ATMP studies should apply human-based stem cell models with a potential for ATMP development or disease modelling.

**The Bergen-Oslo Project: Only one project will be selected to submit a full proposal to TMS – the application must be clearly marked “proposal as Bergen-Oslo project” upon submission to the prequalification call. The funding is intended to support scientific cooperation between research groups in Bergen and groups affiliated with the proposed core facility for experimental cell therapy (GMP-grade virally transduced cells) at Oslo University Hospital (OUS). This facility will be a production unit for genetically modified cells. Proposed projects must involve genetically modified cells, use the facility in Oslo, and include at least one collaborator in Oslo that is affiliated with this facility. The project will receive a maximum of NOK 5 million for a 3 years project.

Each project may receive a maximum of NOK 5 million (for 3-years projects) or NOK 6,6 million from TMF (for 4-years projects).

For projects that are successful in the prequalification call and later funded through TMS, the project PI will take on an active role in the Center Management Team, take part in regular meetings and other Center activities and contribute to the development of the Center of Regenerative Medicine at Haukeland University Hospital.

The application:

The proposals must meet the following criteria:

1. The application must follow to the provided template
2. The application must be written in English
3. The CV of the PI (max 3 pages) and publication list (containing all publications since 2015, and the 10 most important publications) must be appended to the application
4. The proposed projects must be in line with the scientific scope of the Center *or* be submitted as a potential Bergen-Oslo Project based on a topic relevant for the Oslo experimental cell therapy core facility and to benefit the Bergen group.
5. The applicant must be employed at either HUH or UiB. Interdisciplinary projects and projects that strengthen the collaboration between HUH and UiB are particularly encouraged.
6. One copy of the application and required attachments, compiled in one PDF file should be submitted to: regenerativmedisin.senter@helse-bergen.no by **March 22nd**
7. Applications that do not fulfill the above criteria will not be considered for funding.

The evaluation process:

The prequalification applications will be evaluated by an external evaluation committee appointed by the steering board of Center for Regenerative Medicine. The 5-7 proposals receiving the highest evaluation will be invited to submit a full application to TMF before the deadline May 31st.