



CALL for SEED GRANTS / PROMISING LEADS

2022 POLICIES & GUIDELINES

The Fondation Pour l'Audition (FPA) offers different types of calls for proposals in Hearing Sciences for:

- French research laboratories to strengthen their research excellence
- young investigators (MDs or PhDs) to promote their training and mobility
- students to train them to research and promote scientific careers of French MD residents, speech therapy and audiology students interested in Hearing.

The overall aim of the FPA research support is to train the French future talents to research, promote research excellence in France in Hearing Sciences and discover solutions for the hearing impaired.

The aim is to support new approaches, to promote multidisciplinary research and, more broadly, to implement innovations and outcomes in order to improve hearing health in the short or long term.

ARTICLE I. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

Awarded to investigators and/or postdoctoral fellows, FPA seed grants aim to promote the development of new and innovative ideas, approaches or concepts in the hearing field by encouraging collaborations with non-hearing fields. The seed grants are divided in 2 categories as follows: interdisciplinary research and basic researcher/clinician.

By stimulating new approaches and combining them with excellence, FPA wishes to promote innovations that will improve our hearing health in the future and contribute to France's influence in Hearing Sciences.

ARTICLE II. ELIGIBILITY

FPA seed grants are awarded to teams in academic, clinical or public research institutions. Each application must be proposed by a team of 2 investigators, one of them must be a hearing expert and the other a non-hearing expert.

The project must be coordinated by a French principal investigator or a French postdoctoral fellow from a French institution and involve teams in French institutions. International collaborations are encouraged therefore applications may include a foreign co-investigator.

The principal investigator and co-investigators must hold a faculty appointment (position equivalent to assistant professor or higher) in order to be eligible for a grant from FPA. The postdoctoral fellow must have an appointment with his/her host laboratory covered totally or partially by his/her host institution.

Applications must comply with FPA's mission to improve hearing health and promote translational research.

Laboratories are ineligible for funding if they hold an active FPA award at the launch of the call. Projects involving a member of the FPA Scientific Committee or Board of Directors and his/her laboratory are not eligible for an FPA research grant.

ARTICLE III. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Only research projects addressing questions in the field of Hearing Sciences are eligible.

ARTICLE IV. PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

Prepare the application using the 2022 Word form available at <https://www.fondationpourlaudition.org/en/call-seed-grants-promising-leads-823>. No other form will be accepted. **Read and follow the instructions carefully.**

The document must be filled out in English *ONLY* and must comply with the format specifications and page limits detailed in this document. **Failure to comply will result in administrative withdrawal.** Decisions of administrative withdrawal are final and not subject to appeal.

4.1 Privileged Communication

Material and information provided by the applicant in the application are considered privileged communication.

4.2 General instructions

Most of the sections in the application form are self-explanatory. The page numbering is set automatically.

Each page, except the front page, contains a heading named “Principal Investigator” where the name of the principal investigator (PI) must be entered.

A member of the PI lab cannot apply as co-investigator. Collaborators requesting funding from the FPA grant must be listed as co-investigators. Collaborators not requesting a budget from the FPA do not qualify as co-investigators but can be mentioned in the project description of the application.

The legal grant officer must be the head of the department of sponsored projects from the institution. Heads of laboratories or presidents of institutions cannot sign as a legal grant officer. Failure to comply at the time of submission will result in administrative withdrawal.

4.3 Specific instructions

Lay Summary (less than 400 words - **in both English and French**)

Describe in plain, lay language the aims of your research project, the means to be used to test your hypotheses and the relevance to hearing health. If the application is awarded, the lay summary will become public information. Therefore, **your summary must be written in simple words so that the general public can understand your research** and it shall not include proprietary/confidential information.

Project description

- Page limitations

Do not exceed 2 pages. There are no page limits for references.

- Figures

Figures, graphs, photographs, charts, tables and figure legends may be small in size but must be clear and legible. No page limits

- Structure of the project description

A. Specific Aims - **Mandatory**

List the hypothesis and the goal of the specific research proposed as well as its rationale.

B. Relevance for FPA’s mission (200 words)

Explain how your project fits FPA’s mission to improve hearing health and promote translational research.

C. New submission/resubmission

If you have submitted an application in the past, please describe the connection, if any, of the current submission to the prior submission. If there is no connection, please explain how they are different.

D. Background and Significance

Briefly sketch the background leading to the present application, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill.

E. Preliminary Data

Not essential; if there is preliminary data, please provide it.

F. Research Design & Methods

Describe the research design, procedures, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the expected results for each aim. State concisely the importance and health relevance of the research described in this application by relating the specific aims to the broad, long-term objectives.

E. Leadership Plan

A rationale for choosing a multiple PI approach should be described. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the project should be delineated for the PI and co-investigators.

F. Literature Cited (no page limit)

List all references. Follow the following format: Authors' names, Title, *Journal*, **Year**, Volume, Pages. If a publication contains more than 10 authors, only list the first 3 authors.

PI/Co-Investigator BioSketch Form (1 page max)

o *Education, Training, Positions and Honors*

List in chronological order your education, training, current and previous positions, beginning with your present position. Include start/end dates, position title, name of organization and department. In case of non-permanent/non-tenure or fixed term position, state the term of the current contract. Select and list professional memberships and academic/professional honors received.

o *Peer-reviewed publications*

List your most significant peer-reviewed publications in the last five years in chronological order beginning from the most recent ones (limited to 10 per investigator). Include accepted manuscripts in press but omit manuscripts submitted or in preparation. Follow the following format: Authors' names, Title, *Journal*, **Year**, Volume, Pages and mark with an asterisk the publications obtained with FPA funds.

o *Research support*

List active, approved, completed and pending fellowships for the last three years using the following sample:

Project number:	Start date – end date:
Funding organization:	% effort:
Title of the project:	Goals of the project:
Award amount:	Overlap (justify):

For pending applications, document the expected notification date.

Budget pages

Use ONLY Euro currency in these tables.

The maximum budget requested to FPA cannot be higher than 50.000 € per year and per project.

FPA neither covers overhead/indirect costs nor salaries for principal investigators, co-investigators and scientists with permanent or tenure-track positions.

FPA-funded personnel

Salaries for Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows or other personnel must match the salary grid of the applicant's institution. The corresponding grid needs to be submitted by the applicant.

The annual base salary represents the salary for a period of 12 months, free of taxes.

Calculate the salary for the project using the following formula: Project salary = (annual base salary) x (% effort). Fringe benefits are supported by FPA and are required for all personnel including Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows. Document the amount of project fringe benefits corresponding to the project salary. Calculate the total as follows: TOTAL = Project salary + Project fringe benefits.

Non-FPA funded personnel

List the salaries of all personnel participating to the project whose salaries will be covered by other means.

Supplies, Equipment and Travel

Document the amount of supplies, equipment and travel asked to FPA. Please note only small equipment can be requested. Travel for attending scientific meetings is not eligible as well as registration fees.

Global Budget Justification Form

The grant may support the entire project or may provide additional financial support to other funding. Document which case applies and provide details on why additional money is required.

List all personnel and their detailed roles on the project.

Itemize supplies in separate categories such as glassware, chemicals, etc. and justify their use. Each category must be accompanied with the corresponding amount of money requested.

List each item of small equipment, their price and justify their use.

Specify the destination and individuals that will travel.

Document also the amount of money funded by other means for supplies, equipment and travel and detail what it covers.

Appendix material

- *Letter of intent from the PI (one page)*

The letter should introduce the research project and its relevance in Hearing Sciences and FPA's mission which is to improve hearing health. It should also provide names and contact information (name, email address, institution) of 4 non-French independent referees judged qualified to evaluate the project. The letter can also provide up to 2 names that the applicants would prefer excluding from reviewing the proposal, if relevant.

- *Notice of approval from ethics committees*

If human or animal subjects are involved in the project, notice of approval from the relevant ethical committees are required¹. **As the time to obtain the approval may be long, notice of submission to ethical committees are accepted and must be provided at the time of application** (sponsor² agreements are not accepted). **Failure to comply will result in administrative withdrawal.** However, if the project is approved by FPA, the formal notice of approval from the ethics committee is required prior to October 30, 2022. **Failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the funding.**

- *Certificate of employment for postdoctoral fellows*

A postdoctoral fellow applying for a seed grant must have an appointment with his/her host laboratory covered totally or partially by his/her host institution. A certificate of employment signed by the department of Human Resources of his/her institution is mandatory. **Failure to comply will result in administrative withdrawal of the application.**

- *Salary grid of the institution*

The salary grid for non-permanent personnel to be funded by FPA is required (*Documents in French are allowed*).

Do not attach any documents other than those specifically requested.

¹ *i.e.* ANSM, CPP, Comité d'Éthique en Expérimentation Animale, Autorisation de projet utilisant des animaux à des fins scientifiques" from the Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation, ...

² The French equivalent of "sponsor" is "promoteur"

ARTICLE V. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

In signing the application, the PI and co-investigator, and their legal grant officers agree to comply with the FPA policies.

5.1 Electronic submission

The application (2 MB max) must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file through the e-submission portal at <https://www.fondationpourlaudition.org/en/call-seed-grants-promising-leads-823> by **May 23, 2022 midnight** (Central European Time). At this stage, no signatures are required.

5.2 Paper copy

The original paper application must contain the required signatures on the front page (for postdoctoral fellows, the supervisor's signature is required) and must arrive by **June 15, 2022** to: FONDATION POUR L'AUDITION - 13, rue Moreau - 75012 Paris, France.

Certified digital signatures & seals are accepted but not scanned signatures.

5.3 General considerations

No paper application will be returned.

The application must be complete and accurate at the time of submission. An application is considered complete only when accurate electronic and paper copies have both been received by their respective deadlines and complies with the FPA present policies. The electronic and paper copies must match entirely. No modifications are allowed. If changes are being made, the application will be rejected.

No supplementary material or updates are accepted after the deadline. The only exceptions are missing documentation requested by FPA.

Incomplete applications, applications not complying with the FPA policies or applications with false statements will be administratively withdrawn and not returned to the applicant.

Late applications will not be accepted.

5.4 Acknowledgment of receipt

Upon receipt of the electronic copy of the application by FPA, the investigators and their legal grant officers will receive an acknowledgment of receipt to the e-mail addresses listed in the application.

5.5 Maximum submissions

Only one application is allowed per laboratory. In case several investigators from a lab would like to apply for an FPA research grant, it is mandatory for the head of the laboratory to choose the one application to submit.

Investigators applying for a seed grant can also submit applications to FPA in other funding schemes but if more than one application is selected for funding, they will have to choose the single award to keep.

The same application cannot be resubmitted more than 2 times.

ARTICLE VI. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

FPA policies are intended to ensure that applications are evaluated on a fair and timely process, free of bias.

6.1 Admissibility

FPA verifies the admissibility of the applications and compliance with the present FPA policies.

Compliant applications are then submitted for review to the FPA Scientific Committee, composed of international scientists chosen for their expertise related to Hearing Sciences. To view the list of the FPA Scientific Committee members, visit: <https://www.fondationpourlaudition.org/en/support-us/research-121>.

6.2 Evaluation criteria

Proposal evaluation

The FPA Scientific Committee will review the proposals using the following evaluation criteria:

- The relevance to FPA's mission to improve hearing health and promote translational research
- The novelty and feasibility of the research project
- The expertise of the laboratory
- The scientific quality of the project
- The expertise of the investigators, their past experiences and achievements

The FPA Scientific Committee will select the award recipients during a meeting. Investigators who have never received FPA grant funding will receive a special consideration.

The FPA Scientific Committee is sovereign in its deliberations, which are confidential and not subject to any appeal in any way by the investigators or representatives of their corresponding institution.

If the quality of the proposals does not meet the FPA requirements, the FPA Scientific Committee is free to dismiss all the applications and not award any grant in the framework of the 2022 call for tender.

The awards recipients proposed by the FPA Scientific Committee are subjected to the approval of the FPA Board of Directors.

6.3 Review report

After the applicants are notified about the outcome of their applications, they will receive an anonymous review report related to their research project.

6.4 Breach of review

Applicants, as well as their institution's representatives, may not contact any member of the FPA Scientific Committee regarding their application during the review process.

Failure to comply with this policy will create serious breaches of confidentiality and conflicts of interest in the peer review process that will lead to the administrative rejection of the application.

Members of the FPA Scientific Committee are required to notify FPA if they are contacted by an applicant.

ARTICLE VII. AWARD CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Award amount

The maximal award the project could receive is set to 50 000 euros all taxes included for one year.

7.2 Award activation and management

The date for the award activation will be decided by the applicant in agreement with his/her institution but cannot be set prior to October 1, 2022.

Shortly after the award notification, a mandatory face-to-face meeting between the investigator(s), grant officer(s) and FPA will be scheduled. The related expenses will not be covered by FPA. **Failure to comply will result in administrative withdrawal.**

7.3 Grant agreement

The conditions under which FPA will fund the research grant will be addressed by signing a grant agreement issued by FPA with the coordinating institution. If the grant is not signed by the parties by December 15, 2022 the funding will be automatically cancelled.

7.4 Award overlap

The applicant must declare if he/she applied for an overlapping grant to another funding agency.

As FPA does not allow double funding, the applicant awarded different grants must choose a single award.

7.5 Laureate day

A Laureate Day aiming to explain how the award will be managed to awardees will be organized early September 2022. The presence of each laureate and his/her grant officer to the event is mandatory. **Failure to comply will result in administrative withdrawal.**

ARTICLE VIII. SUSPENSION, CANCELLATION OR ADJOURNMENT OF THE CALL

If circumstances require it or for reasons beyond its control, FPA reserves the right to modify the present policies or to suspend, cancel or adjourn the organization of the 2022 call for seed grants without affecting its liability.

ARTICLE XI. KEY DATES

Launch of the call	December 2021
Electronic application deadline	May 23, 2022 (midnight)
Original submission deadline	June 15, 2022
Award notification	July 2022
Award activation	October 1, 2022
Deadline for grant agreement signature	December 15, 2022

ARTICLE XII. SUPPORT

For assistance, contact FPA at FONDATION POUR L'AUDITION – 13, rue Moreau – 75012 Paris, France.
e-mail: research@pourlaudition.org