OPENING STATEMENT

The Italian Ministry of Health invites the submission of clinical-healthcare and biomedical research projects, prevalently translational. Submissions may be made as from the date of the announcement of this competition on the Ministry website (www.ministerosalute.it); the competition is open to all researchers working within the Italian health system. At least 50% of the available resources will be assigned to clinical-healthcare projects and the rest to translational biomedical research projects.

1. GENERAL POINTS

In accordance with current legal provisions, two distinct procedures will be followed: one applicable to targeted research and the other to "young researchers". Therefore in the present notification of competition, the procedures relevant to targeted research and the procedures relevant to young researchers are always indicated separately.

Each researcher may submit only one project under this competition. Submissions must be made online by researchers whose formal links with an Italian health system institute are certified by an Eligible Institute (EI), which thus becomes the official submitter. There is no limit on the number of projects an EI may submit.

Under the terms of former point 6, art. 12/bis Italian legislative decree 502/92, as amended by law decree 229/99, the following are defined as EIs: "autonomous regions and provinces, the Italian National Health Institute (ISS), the Italian National Institute for Occupational Safety and Prevention, Regional Health Service Agencies, Institutes for Health Care and Scientific Research (IRCCS), both private and public, and institutes researching animal diseases".

The funds will be assigned to projects that have requested total funding of not less than €150,000 and not more than €600,000 for the entire duration of the project (3 years). The proportion of the total funding to be allocated to salaries must not exceed 50%, while overheads for purely administrative costs must not amount to more than 10% of the overall funding.

2. SUBMISSION METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Young researchers

Young researcher projects are projects presented, through single EIs, by NHS researchers aged under 40 years on the closing date of this competition (2007 Budget Law n. 296 of December 27, 2006, published in the Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 299 of 27/12/06, para. 814). A researcher whose project is awarded funding is called the “principal investigator”. The principal investigator decides how the funds allocated should be spent, coordinates the research group, publishes the results of the research and is ultimately responsible for deciding who the co-authors should be (including only those collaborators who have made a substantial contribution to the work). The principal investigator is also required to acknowledge, in publications and scientific communications, the source of the funding received.
General points:
1. Candidate researchers must be registered formally before submitting their projects and this can be done only online. To register, the candidate researcher will find a dedicated page on the Ministry website (www.ministerodellasalute.it or ricerca.cbim.it) where he/she must provide all his/her personal and contact details, including a valid e-mail address.
2. Research projects must be submitted in full, by the deadline specified in this notification, using the forms provided in appendixes 1 and 2. These projects will be submitted directly to the reviewers for evaluation and subsequently to the study section (Evaluation Committee, EC).
3. The following information must be given:
   - the name of the EI with which the researcher has formal links (i.e., an employment contract or collaboration agreement) at the time of registration;
   - the name of the EI where the researcher intends to carry out the research;
   - the research project type: clinical-healthcare or biomedical (see explanatory notes attached);
   - a keyword to facilitate rapid allocation of the project to reviewers.
4. The presence of all the above requisites is verified by the competent offices. Failure to provide any of the above information will result in the exclusion of the project from the assessment process.

A. Targeted research projects
The submission process is divided into three periods:
1. February 10 to March 26, 2010 (45 days): candidates submit research projects in English (Letter of Intent – Appendix 2 plus full description of the project – Appendix 1).
2. March 29 to May 11, 2010 (45 days): EIs are able to access candidates’ details and projects and certified the candidates.
3. EIs certify (by the deadline specified in this notification) that the candidates submitting the projects have formal links with them, as stated in their applications.

A. Young researcher projects
The selection process is divided into three periods:
1. February 22 to April 8, 2010 (45 days): candidates submit draft research projects (Letter of Intent – Appendix 2) in English.
2. April 9 to May 24, 2010 (45 days): EIs are able to access candidates’ details and draft projects and certified the candidates.
3. EIs select projects (by the deadline specified in this notification), and thereby definitively choose researchers; in this period researchers may complete the drawing up of their projects (full description of the project – Appendix 1) in English.

3. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS
General points: the assessment of the projects is organised in such a way as to keep the administrative, evaluation and verification stages clearly separate. For this reason, the relative processes are entrusted to different, clearly identified subjects. All the projects are sent directly to reviewers whose names are supplied by the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR) in the USA. Projects are allocated to reviewers on the basis of the keywords (topics) supplied in the applications; this allocation process is supervised by two independent experts who, assisted by the competent offices, verify the project’s research sphere (clinical-healthcare or biomedical). All the procedures are computerised, therefore there is no movement of paper documents; in accordance with this choice, the terms “transmission”, “reception” and “allocation” are used in all the phases in which the subjects involved in this competition are able to access the web pages.

All meetings of the various subjects involved – Consensus Groups (CGs), the EC and the National Health Research Commission (NHRC) – can be carried out using the videoconference system provided by the Ministry to contain costs. All meetings conducted using this system are considered valid for the purpose of assessing and selecting projects to receive funding.
Meetings must always be recorded in minutes and the minutes drawn up must be approved, even via telematic means (e-mail). At the end of this process all documents produced are made available to the NHRC for the audit phase.
Subjects involved:
The assessment process is based on the coordinated action of five main subjects:
1. The III and IV Offices of the General Directorate for Health and Technology Research of the Ministry of Health
2. Two independent experts appointed simultaneously to the EC and to the CGs by the Minister of Health or by his/her delegate
3. International reviewers (referees)
4. CGs (for targeted research projects); the EC (for young researcher projects). The CG is always appointed by the Minister of Health or by his/her delegate, after consultation with the NHRC, and is made up of eight experts, no more than half of whom may be Italian; the EC is formed as provided for by art. 5, Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers dated 27/7/07
5. The NHRC.

3.1. ASSESSMENT PHASES
A) The administrative phase includes:

a) The collection of applications and allocation of projects to reviewers (three reviewers per project). This work is supervised by the two independent experts who have access to the project titles and keywords (topics). The two independent experts, who are assisted by the III and IV Offices of the General Directorate for Health and Technology Research of the Ministry of Health, are allowed no contact with the EC, CG or reviewers, and their task is to guarantee that the projects are assigned to reviewers with relevant expertise.

b) The evaluation of the projects by the reviewers, on the basis of the following criteria:

| The scientific quality, relevance and importance of the proposed research | 1-9* |
| The innovative content and originality of the project (in the light of the current international literature) | 1-9* |
| The methodology and strategy for the development of the project (over its three-year duration), preliminary data and bibliographical references | 1-9* |
| The profile of the principal investigator (personal and contact details) and of his/her scientific work based on his/her CV and published scientific papers: the five best, the five most relevant to the topic, taking into account the IF of the journals in which they were published, the number of citations from year of publication to time of application for funding and the principal investigator’s h-index (defined as the number of papers with citation number > or =h, considered a useful index to characterise the scientific output of a researcher2), as well as the five most recent publications | 1-9* |
| Economic congruity of the project and full financial details (also taking into account any co-funding) | YES/NO |
| Available facilities and equipment and collaborations: congruous with the proposed research | YES/NO |
| Overall judgement (half a page) | Text |
| Final score | Sum total |

(*) Maximum score=1; minimum score=9. Half-point scores can be used.

c) Activation of the web-based system for EC or CG members, who may thus see the reviewers' judgements.

d) Within two months of the end of the procedure, possibility of general access (for all competition participants) to the reviewers' judgements and the evaluations issued by the EC and the CGs.

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2 Hirsch JE. An index to quantify an individual's scientific research output. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2005 Nov 15;102(46):16569-72; and as established by the ISI Web of Knowledge database.
B1) The evaluation phase, young researcher projects: in this phase the EC establishes the intrinsic merit of the research project through evaluation sessions. First of all, the EC, on the basis of the reviewers’ overall scores, draws up a list of all the projects in descending order of merit; the EC resolves any major differences between the reviewers’ judgements through recourse to other reviewers, again anonymous, who are drawn from the CSR register; this procedure is supervised the two independent experts. In the event of rejection of a project by a reviewer the EC verifies the consistency of the reviewers’ judgements on the amount of funding requested and the adequacy of the available equipment. At the end of this process, it draws up a new list, again in descending order of merit. Should disputes arise over the evaluation of one or more project, the EC, in accordance with the present regulations, may call upon further reviewers, again anonymous and drawn automatically from the CSR register; this procedure is supervised by the two independent experts. All meetings must be recorded in detailed minutes setting out all decisions taken, including ones only slightly adjusting reviewers’ overall scores. These minutes will be sent to the NHRC for the audit phase.

B2) The evaluation phase, targeted research projects: the CG resolves any differences between the reviewers’ judgements, both within and between projects, and, on the basis of the reviewers’ judgements, draws up a single list of all the projects in descending order of merit. Should disputes arise over the evaluation of one or more projects, the CG may call upon further reviewers, again anonymous and drawn automatically from the CSR register; this procedure is supervised by the two independent experts. In the event of rejection of a project by a reviewer, the CG verifies the consistency of the reviewers’ judgements on the amount of funding requested and the adequacy of the available equipment. All meetings must be recorded in detailed minutes setting out all decisions taken, including ones slightly adjusting reviewers’ overall scores. These minutes will be sent to the NHRC for the audit phase.

C) The audit phase: this phase, carried out by the NHRC, is devoted to examination of the minutes drawn up by the EC and the CGs, and of the final reports and rankings. It is also checked that the fundable projects are relevant to the topic areas covered by this competition and that the procedures designed to guarantee an objective evaluation and the absence of conflicts of interest have been fully complied with. After the audit, the NHRC approves the allocation of all the available funds and checks that the projects selected fall, as required, within the two research macro-areas: biomedical and clinical-healthcare.

At the end of the evaluation phase, the names of the members of the EC and the CGs and of the two independent experts, the results of the selection procedures, the reviewers’ judgements, the evaluations of the EC and the CGs, as well as the full texts of the projects (only the targeted research projects) are published on the Ministry website (www.ministerosalute.it).

D) Guarantees on the absence of conflicts of interest.
Appendix 3 of this notice sets out the procedures for ensuring absence of conflicts of interest.

4. AVAILABLE FUNDS AND PROJECT SELECTION PROCEDURES
The funds available amount to a total of €101,482,381.
In accordance with regulatory constraints, the minimum quotas guaranteed to each area, as specified by the law, are the following: IRCCSs and the ISS together receive a minimum of €42 million; a total of €2 million is allocated to institutes researching animal diseases; while a total of €29,348,760 is set aside for young researchers; a quota of €6 million is allocated to the field of food safety, €3 million each to research into rare diseases, stem cell research and workplace safety, and €13,133,621 to other priority areas for the Italian national health system. Of the quota allocated to research into rare diseases, €1 million is set aside for the Eranet rare diseasess project led by the ISS. Of the abovementioned food safety quota, a total of €1 million is channelled into the Emida-Eranet project, wherein the procedures followed are those established by the consortium of participating countries; any project presented within this area must include, among the participants, an institute researching animal diseases. The guaranteed minimum quota (for IRCCSs, young researchers; stem cell research, etc.) corresponds, in the first case, to the sum of all funding assigned to projects conducted by institutions (e.g. IRCCSs, ISS) and in the second to the sum of all funding assigned to projects conducted in the given area. For example, the total of €42 million earmarked for IRCCSs and for the ISS (“institutes”) is reached by adding together all the projects, in whatever area and of whatever type (young researchers, rare diseases, stem cell research
etc.), for which the institutes are awarded funding. Ultimately, however, the guiding criterion is the scientific value of a project. Therefore, while a minimum quota is guaranteed, this quota can be exceeded if there is a surplus of projects assigned priority rankings.

Within the clinical-healthcare area, the Ministry finances all selected research projects to the value of 50% of the total funding required; the other 50% must be guaranteed by the governments of the regions in which the projects were presented and where the researchers work. This is in compliance with the decision reached by the Commission of Regional Health Councillors (10/06/2009) according to which the regional authorities undertake to provide, through procedures and means decided by them, the other 50% of the funds needed in order to carry out the projects. Projects (within the clinical-healthcare field) that are not awarded regional funding, despite being selected by the experts and reviewers, are automatically excluded.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Projects that are awarded funding at the end of the selection procedure must be presented on paper in three copies.

A single young researcher may receive a maximum gross salary of €35,000. The resources allocated to the project may be used to “top up” the salaries of researchers under the age of 40 years who receive less than this amount, providing the arrangements reached comply with the rules that govern the relationship between the researcher and his/her institution.

At the end of the evaluation process, projects selected by the EC will be rendered operational by agreements reached between the Ministry of Health and the EIs concerned (as defined by art. 12 of Italian legislative decree n° 502/92). Each of these agreements must include a statement by the legal representative of the EI in which the latter undertakes that the young researcher will be allowed to carry out his/her research activity at the chosen site for the entire duration of the project. It is also necessary to attach, where applicable, copies of any agreements reached between the EI and other organisations or enterprises that allow the researcher to carry out his/her research activity at the chosen site as well as a formal declaration of the assignment of the research project to the young researcher in question (duly signed by him/her). This declaration must be accompanied by a photocopy of the winning candidate’s identity card (which must be valid). In the event of any disputes, the principal investigator may contact the IV Office of the General Directorate for Health and Technology Research of the Ministry of Health.

6. COMPETITION DEADLINES

Submission of the project by the candidate:

1. From 8.00 a.m., 22 February, 2010
2. Definitive choice of young researchers or certification of candidates, by EIs (deadline: 12.00 p.m., 24 May, 2010)
3. For targeted research projects the competition is open from 8.00 a.m., 10 February, 2010 until 12.00 p.m., 11 May, 2010.

For the intermediate stages set out in point 2 of this notification of competition, the closing deadline is always 12.00 p.m.

The person in charge of the whole procedure relating to this competition is the Director of the IV Office of the General Directorate for Health and Technology Research of the Ministry of Health.

7. EXCLUSION FROM THE COMPETITION

The following candidates will be excluded from this competition for the allocation of research funding:

- those whose request was submitted after the deadline stated in this notice;
- those whose application is incomplete (i.e. who submit forms not completely filled in);
- those not meeting the requirements listed under section 2 of this notice “Submission methods and procedures”;
- those who have applied for funding for more than one project under this competition;
- those who fail to indicate, in the relevant declaration, their acceptance of the processing of their personal data, pursuant to art. 13 of Italian Legislative Decree no. 196 of 30th June 2003.

The Director of the IV Office of the General Directorate for Health and Technology Research of the Ministry of Health, who is the individual in charge of the whole procedure relating to this competition, after consulting the NHRC, may exclude a candidate from this competition for failure to meet the prescribed requirements. Should reasons warranting the exclusion of a candidate be ascertained after
the end of the competition, the NHRC will decree the forfeiting of all rights ensuing from that candidate’s participation; in the same way, candidates found to have submitted even one false declaration among those provided using the forms attached to this notification of competition will be excluded and forfeit all rights.

8. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

In accordance with art. 13 of Italian legislative decree n° 196 of 30 June, 2003, the personal data provided by applicants are processed for purposes relating to the management of this competition and the subsequent allocation of research funding. The provision of these data, and agreement to their treatment, is a necessary requirement for participation. The personal data of all individuals involved will be processed as part of the routine activities of the Ministry of Health, in order to comply with specific legal obligations or carry out specific tasks as required by laws, regulations, collective agreements (including corporate agreements), and EU directives. The Ministry of Health undertakes to ensure that projects submitted and not approved, as well as the relative judgements and evaluations, will not be divulged and will be stored in a secure and inaccessible way.

9. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Projects will be funded upon the reaching of formal agreements between the Ministry of Health – IV Office of the General Directorate for Health and Technology Research, and the EI, acting as guarantor, within the limits of the funds available under this competition and with reference to a single financial year. The funds will be disbursed as follows:

- 40% upon notification of the start of the research project;
- 30% after submission and approval of the interim report (which must be submitted 18 months after the start of the research);
- 30% upon approval of the conclusion of the project.

The work of verification and monitoring will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Health - General Directorate for Health and Technology Research, which will be assisted by the NHRC. Full details of this competition will be made widely available.

GENERAL DIRECTOR
Massimo Casciello MD

Approved by the NHRC, meeting on: 28 July 2010
Secretary
EXPLANATORY NOTES
Classification of biomedical and clinical-healthcare research: examples

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH
1.1 Preclinical and clinical research in genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, systems biology or biological networks
1.2 Development of disease models in vivo: validation studies and studies of biological mechanisms targeting therapeutic interventions
1.3 Phase I and preliminary studies for the evaluation of: kinetics, biological activity, toxicity and pharmacological effects
1.4 Phase I preclinical and clinical studies for the application of new high-tech diagnostic and treatment methodologies (in vivo multimodal imaging, nanoprobes, biomaterials, biopharmaceuticals)

CLINICAL-HEALTHCARE RESEARCH
2.1 Clinical activity and efficacy studies of health interventions/diagnostic tests/markers. This category includes phase II studies with clinical endpoints and phase III studies.
2.2 Comparative studies for efficacy or cost/efficacy evaluation of health interventions (technologies or organisational models) conducted in general clinical practice settings. Population epidemiology studies.
2.3 Studies on the implementation, clinical impact and monitoring (in itinere or ex-post) of diagnostic-therapeutic health interventions of proven efficacy, also for the purpose of prioritising research initiatives
All the available funds will be allocated in accordance with the prescribed quotas for the research macro-areas (biomedical and clinical-healthcare) and the regulatory constraints set out in point 4 of this notification of competition.
### Appendix 1

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<td>Rationale, specific aims and impact on the topic area</td>
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<td>Up to five of the applicant’s best scientific papers, in each case giving the impact factor of the journal in which the paper was published, the number of citations from the year of its publication to the year of the application for funding and the applicant’s h-index.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Page 3C</td>
<td>Up to five scientific papers by the applicant on the topic related to the application for funding, in each case giving the impact factor of the journal in which the paper was published, the number of citations from the year of its publication to the year of the application for funding and the applicant’s h-index.</td>
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<td>Page 3D</td>
<td>Up to five of the applicant’s most recent scientific papers, in each case giving the impact factor of the journal in which the paper was published, the number of citations from the year of its publication to the year of the application for funding and the applicant’s h-index.</td>
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<td>Facilities and equipment available for the research, collaborations</td>
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<td>Compliance with the objectives of the competition (negative responses must be indicated)</td>
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<td>Detailed financial plan</td>
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### Appendix 2

**Letter of intent**

Letter of intent containing a description of the project (preliminary description in English summarising the innovative content, aims and implications of the project in knowledge and operational terms, highlighting any critical points that could affect the achievement of the aims): number of characters: 10000 + 20% tolerance (empty space – around three pages)

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3 Hirsch JE. An index to quantify an individual's scientific research output. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2005 Nov 15;102(46):16569-72; and as established by the ISI Web of Knowledge database.
**Appendix 3**

**MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

This appendix is intended to outline potential conflicts of interest and how they may be resolved. It is possible for conflicts of interest to emerge even after the end of the various evaluation and assignment procedures. Should it be ascertained, even at the end of the process, that any subject involved in it has voluntarily omitted to make known any potential conflict of interest this may render the entire process null and void. For this reason, the Ministry of Health, mindful of the costs incurred and of the need to protect its image, reserves the right to pursue through civil channels anyone failing to adhere to the indications given in this appendix. Any doubtful or uncertain situations must, at any point in the process, be reported in the minutes provided for by the competition rules, together with the action taken to resolve them. In this way, the position of all the participants will be transparent and their behaviour will not be open to censure.

The staff of the Directorate General of Scientific and Technological Research must behave in an appropriate manner for public sector employees. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone failing to do so.

IT system managers and anyone else able to access the system for maintenance purposes, who may voluntarily or involuntarily come into possession of reserved or confidential information, may not divulge this information to anyone.

**A. The Evaluation Committee (EC)**

The members of the EC must, upon pain of invalidation of the committee’s proceedings, make following declarations before their first meeting:

1. that they have not submitted, directly or indirectly, any research proposal under this competition;
2. that they have no involvement of any kind in any of the projects submitted.

**Potential conflicts of interest arising during evaluation**

Should potential conflicts of interest come to light during evaluation meetings, the EC is required, upon pain of invalidation of the entire procedure, to report the problem in the meeting minutes.

**Potential conflicts of interest of EC members:**

1. projects whose principal investigators are researchers with whom they currently have, or have had (within the previous two years), scientific collaboration relations;
2. projects whose principal investigators work in institutes with which they currently have, or have had (within the previous two years), scientific collaboration relations.

**Correct procedures to follow:**

**In the first case**

1. The potential conflict of interest is reported in the meeting minutes.
2. The EC member refrains from appraising the project in question, abandoning the meeting room for the entire duration of its evaluation.

**In the second case**

1. The potential conflict of interest is reported in the meeting minutes.
2. The conflict is analysed by the EC collectively in order to establish its real importance.
3. If a potential conflict of interest is deemed to exist: the EC member refrains from appraising the project in question, abandoning the meeting room for the entire duration of its evaluation.

**B. Experts**

The two independent experts are together appointed to EC by the Minister of Health. Their only task is to allocate the projects to the best international reviewers (three per project). For this reason, the experts are given access only to the projects and not to the details of the applicants.

The experts, before their first meeting, must declare:

1. that they have not submitted, directly or indirectly, any research proposal under this competition;
2. that they have no involvement of any kind in any of the projects submitted;
3. that they will not seek to establish any contact with the principal investigator/researcher submitting the application, and will refrain from any discussion of this competition.

**Potential conflicts of interest arising during evaluation or allocation**
Should potential conflicts of interest come to light during the allocation of projects to reviewers, the experts are required, upon pain of invalidation of the entire procedure, to report the problem in the meeting minutes.

**Potential conflicts of interest of experts:**

1. projects in which an expert has, for any reason, interests in common with the principal investigator/submitter submitting the application
2. projects in which an expert has, for any reason, interests in the institution to which the principal investigator/submitter belongs
3. situations in which an expert has been in contact with a project’s principal investigator/submitter researcher, or discussed this competition unofficially
4. situations in which an expert is in contact with, or makes contact with, the reviewers.

**Correct procedures to follow**

1. **projects in which an expert has, for any reason, interests in common with the principal investigator/submitter submitting the application**
   1. The expert reports the conflict of interest (even potential).
   2. The expert refrains from taking part in the allocation of the project in question, abandoning the meeting room.

2. **projects in which an expert has, for any reason, interests in the institution to which the principal investigator/submitter belongs**
   1. The expert reports the conflict of interest (even potential).
   2. The expert refrains from taking part in the allocation of the project in question, abandoning the meeting room.

3. **situations in which an expert has been in contact with a project’s principal investigator/submitter researcher or discussed this competition unofficially**
   1. Any contact had must be described in detail in the minutes of the meeting. Should there emerge clearly a non-casual involvement on the part of the expert, this will lead, after consultation with the NHRC, to his/her exclusion from the procedure.
   2. The expert refrains from taking part in the allocation of the project in question, abandoning the meeting room.

4. **situations in which an expert is in contact with, or makes contact with, the reviewers**
   1. Any contact had must be described in detail in the minutes of the meeting. Should there emerge clearly a non-casual involvement on the part of the expert, this will lead, after consultation with the NHRC, to his/her exclusion from the procedure.
   2. If it is demonstrated that there has been persistent contact with a reviewer or reviewers, the expert refrains from taking part in the allocation of the project in question, abandoning the meeting room.

**C. Reviewers**

Reviewers are required to produce initial evaluations of projects on the basis of their specific experience and expertise in order to facilitate the Evaluation Committee and Consensus Groups in their task of examining and ranking a potentially high number of projects; they are not required to evaluate the researchers submitting the projects. Accordingly, their sole task is to judge the scientific value of projects, their compliance with the aims of this competition (translation of research into healthcare benefits), and their feasibility.

Before carrying out their evaluations, the reviewers must declare:

1. that they have not submitted, directly or indirectly, any research proposal under this competition;
2. that they have no involvement of any kind in any of the projects submitted;
3. that they will not seek to establish any contact with the principal investigator or the researcher making the application, and will refrain from any discussion of this competition.

**Potential conflicts of interest of reviewers:**
1. projects in which a reviewer has, for any reason, interests in common with the principal investigator/submitting researcher;  
2. projects in which a reviewer has, for any reason, interests in the institution to which the principal investigator/submitting researcher belongs;  
3. situations in which a reviewer has been in contact with a project’s principal investigator/submitting researcher, or discussed this competition unofficially.

Correct procedures to follow  
1. projects in which a reviewer has, for any reason, interests in common with the principal investigator/submitting researcher  
   - The reviewer refuses to evaluate the project

2. projects in which a reviewer has, for any reason, interests in the institution to which the principal investigator/submitting researcher belongs  
   - The reviewer declares the compatibility of these interests with the role of reviewer
3. situations in which a reviewer has been in contact with a project’s principal investigator/submitting researcher, or discussed this competition unofficially  
   - The reviewer refuses to evaluate the project