EPI-PHARE
épidémiologie des produits de santé
GIS ANSM - CNAM

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
AVENIR PROGRAM
GROUP LEADER IN PHARMACO-EPIDEMIOLOGY

Closing dates: All documents must be sent electronically before May 03, 2021 at 12 noon (Paris time).

The original signed documents must be sent by post by June 03, 2021 at the latest - postmark as proof.

Contact: M. François Cuenot
francois.cuenot@ansm.sante.fr
www.epi-phare.fr/en

December 2020

1 CALL FOR PROPOSALS GROUP LEADER IN PHARMACO-EPIDEMIOLOGY

1.1 CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

EPI-PHARE is a scientific interest group created at the end of 2018 by the French National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (ANSM) and the French National Health Insurance (CNAM) with the aim of providing public authorities with strong and independent expertise in the field of epidemiology of health products. EPI-PHARE carries out, manages and coordinates epidemiological studies in real life on health products, independent of the pharmaceutical industry, according to a structured and validated work program, based on data from the French National Health Data System (SNDS).

To carry out its work program, EPI-PHARE is developing partnerships with academic teams, with the aim of strengthening public expertise independent of private interests. EPI-PHARE funds pharmaco-epidemiology studies carried out by academic teams, welcomes and supervises interns, doctoral students and post-docs alternating with their research structure, and interacts with the DRUGS-SAFE^{R} partner center in epidemiology of health products in Bordeaux and with the REGARDS network (REproduction Gestation And Risk of DrugS) in Toulouse.

In addition to these funding systems, to go further in the realization of its work program and in the development of pharmaco-epidemiology in France, and in order to create new high-level teams specialized in epidemiology of health products from the SNDS data, **EPI PHARE proposes to fund over 4 years a Group Leader in pharmaco-epidemiology**.

This call for proposals "Group Leader in Pharmaco-epidemiology" is open to non-tenured researchers with a PhD (epidemiology, statistics, biostistics, pharmacology…) hosted or likely to be hosted in a research laboratory of a French public research organization. This call is also open to foreign researchers or French researchers from abroad wishing to return to France. The laureate must devote all of his research time to the work of the group in pharmaco-epidemiology. The goal at 4 years is to build a long-lasting pharmaco-epidemiology team, associated with a research organization or health establishment

Associated with an academic research laboratory, this group is independent from private interests and aims to encourage research in pharmaco-epidemiology, biostatistics and data-science, by offering high-level researchers, with the help of their host laboratory and their establishment, substantial means to **constitute their own research team and to implement an ambitious research project in line with the axes of the work program of EPI-PHARE**. The laureate, who will benefit from EPI PHARE's unique environment in terms of expertise and access to data, is committed to strongly and sustainably interact with EPI-PHARE.

The research program of the Group in pharmaco-epidemiology must be linked to the work programs of EPI-PHARE and the DRUGS-SAFE^{R} partner center and REGARDS network, under the coordination of EPI-PHARE.

Applicants are invited to submit projects for grants of **up to 500,000 euros per year**. The grant will cover the salary of the laureate and will also allow the laureate to constitute his own research group in pharmaco-epidemiology and to acquire the material necessary for his activity.

1.2 RESEARCH THEMATIC

As of 2019, EPI-PHARE has adopted a work program that has been validated by its Scientific Council. The work program of EPI-PHARE aims to produce new knowledge on the use, misuse, efficacy and risks of drugs in real life, ensure epidemiological surveillance of products or situations identified as constituting public health issues, and to provide knowledge in crisis situations. Structured in 3 parts, it provides health authorities with proactive and reactive expertise in field of epidemiology of health products:

1 Studies on the use and safety of health products in real life

Objective: Proactively identify misuse situations and / or health product safety issues. This first component is developed around 3 complementary approaches:

- Product-based approach: Drugs with massive exposure by the size of the populations concerned, the duration of exposure or the number or variety of prescribers; new drugs or with new indications; implantable or invasive medical devices
- Population-based approach, targeted on specific populations for which little data is available when drugs are put on the market: pregnant women, children, the elderly people, etc.
- Development of tools for pharmaco-epidemiology
    - Creation of databases and algorithms on adverse events: cerebral or gastrointestinal haemorrhages, hepatic toxicity, valvular heart disease, suicidal risk, etc.
    - Creation of a dynamic mother / child cohort from SNDS data
    - Statistical methodology, study design
    - Hospital data warehouses and matching with the SNDS
    - …

2 Response to alerts or crisis

Objectives: quantify and characterize the use and risks of health products in a situation of alert or crisis. Faced with important and unforeseen challenges, EPI-PHARE will mobilize all his expertise to quantify and characterize retroactively the use and risks of health products affected by a crisis situation in order to provide health authorities with elements for their decision-making.

3 Measure the impact of decision, recommendations, communications

Objective: measure the impact, on the use and safety of health products, of decisions, communications and recommendations from the authorities and/or possible actions or communications from industry, healthcare professionals, patients, or media.

The laureate will therefore have to articulate the work program of his future research group with the strategic axes of EPI-PHARE in conjunction with the DRUGS-SAFE^{R} partner center and REGARDS network.

This work program should be carried out using data from the SNDS, registers, existing cohorts or the matching of several data sources such as hospital data. It is not expected to constitute new cohorts or new registers in the context of the call for proposals.

4 TEAMS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECTS

4.1 SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR

Each proposal is carried by a unique scientific coordinator, who meets the eligibility criteria explained in § 6.2. In addition to his scientific and technical role, the coordinator is responsible for producing the required documents (in particular intermediate and final reports, scientific and financial reports), for holding progress meetings and for communication of results. The scientific coordinator of the project is the privileged interlocutor of EPI-PHARE.

The coordinator should not be in a situation of conflict of interest (see § 5). He will have to complete and transmit a public declaration of interests (DOI).

The coordinator, when signing the financing agreement, must be attached to a research team from one of the following organizations:

- Public research organizations (university, EPST, EPIC, etc.);
- Private non-profit research organizations (foundations, associations);
- Health facilities.

No participation, direct or indirect, of a profit-making structure developing, producing, marketing or operating the products mentioned in Article L. 5311-1 of the French Public Health Code will be accepted for the realization of the project. No participation, direct or indirect, of profit-making structures such as consultancy companies, CROs will be accepted.

4.2 BENEFICIARY BODY

The beneficiary body receiving the grant is the organization that is attached to the scientific coordinator (university, INSERM regional delegation, CNRS regional delegation, health establishment, etc).

It receives the funds and signs the funding convention. He is also responsible for the administrative and financial monitoring of the project; its public accountant validates and signs the summary statements of the expenses paid.

5 DEONTOLOGY

No participation, direct or indirect, of companies producing, marketing or exploiting the products mentioned in Article L. 5311-1 of the French Public Health Code or of companies and consulting organizations operating in the same activity sectors, will be accepted for the realization of the project.

The coordinator must complete and transmit a declaration of interests (DOI) which will be exhaustively completed: names and indications of products, names of companies, start and end dates of declared links, remuneration, etc. Links declared by manufacturers in the French Transparency Database (https://www.transparence.sante.gouv.fr) must appear in the DOI.

DOI will be entered on the portal of the French Ministry of Solidarity and Health and will be sent in pdf format with the other submission documents:

- Go to the site https://dpi-declaration.sante.gouv.fr/dpi-webapp/app/candidature/index
- On the left, click on "Institutions" and in the "Institutions" module click on "Agence Nationale de Sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé"
- Choose "Équipe d'avenir en pharmaco-épidémiologie 2020"
- Click "Candidater à cette instance"
- Click "Poser ma candidature"
- If you already have an account, log in with your credentials. If you do not have an account, click on "Création d'un compte" (In the "Adresse professionnelle" section, you must enter your mobile number which will be essential for the electronic signature of your DOI).

The coordinator should not be in a situation of conflict of interest. **As such, the coordinator will not be able (non-cumulative list - the other links will be studied on a case-by-case basis) to:**

- hold a financial participation ≥ 5,000 euros in the capital of a company falling within the scope of the ANSM;
- participate in a decision-making body in a company or consulting firm in the health products sector;
- be or have been for less than 5 years a consultant or expert for a company or consulting company on any products (or competitors) concerned by the project;

- be or have been for less than 5 years principal investigator of an industrial study on the products concerned by the project or the competing products;
- write or have written for less than 2 years an article on the products concerned by the project (or in connection with the product or subject dealt with) on behalf of a company in the health products;
- participate or have participated for less than 5 years in other scientific work (reports, expertise, studies) on the products concerned by the project on behalf of a company in the product sector health ;
- be or have been for less than 2 years in charge of a structure (laboratory director, president or member of the board of an association, learned society, etc.) receiving grants or other funding by the company manufacturing or marketing the products concerned by the project, for an amount> € 10,000.

In addition, the coordinator must update his DOI at least once a year and, if necessary, without delay when new links are established or in the event of modification of previously declared links. In addition, during the term of the funding agreement, the coordinator undertakes not to engage in new activities likely to create a situation of conflicts of interest according to the criteria listed above.

The deontological rules also apply to people who will be recruited by the Coordinator to set up his research team.

6 REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

6.1 SELECTION OF THE PROPOSALS

The main steps in the proposal selection procedure are as follows:

- examination of the eligibility of applications to the criteria explained in § 6.2 ;
- hearing before a jury made up of scientific personalities external to EPI-PHARE and members of EPI-PHARE;
- funding decision by the Director General of ANSM;
- publication of the selected proposal.

6.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be evaluated and may not be eligible for funding. The eligibility criteria are:

- files must be submitted on time;
- files must be submitted in the requested format and be complete;
- a signed version of the documents must be sent on time (§ 10) ;
- the projects must fit the scope of the call for proposals (§ 1) ;
- the coordinator must hold a PhD (in epidemiology, statistics, biostatistics, pharmacology, etc.)
- the coordinator must not be a member of the Scientific Council of EPI-PHARE;
- the duration of the project must not exceed 48 months;
- the requested budget must not exceed 500,000 euros per year;
- the project can be co-financed by a public non-profit organization exclusively;
- the scientific coordinator must belong, at the time of signing the financing agreement, to a French establishment or organization meeting the characteristics described in § 4 ;
- a letter of commitment from the beneficiary establishment and the host laboratory to recruit the coordinator and do everything possible for his installation must be part of the application;
- letters of recommendation ;

- the proposal must be independent from companies developing, producing, marketing or operating health products and companies and consultancy bodies operating in the same sectors (article L. 5311-1 of the French Public Health Code). As such, the rules of ethics detailed in § 5 must be respected ;
- all project participants must not be in a situation of conflict of interest with regard to the proposal (§ 5).

6.3 HEARINGS

For applications meeting the eligibility criteria presented in 6.2, hearings before a selection jury made up of members of the EPI-PHARE Scientific Council and members of EPI-PHARE will be scheduled. The hearings should allow the jury to assess:

- **the positioning of the project**: adequacy of the proposal vis-à-vis the scope of the call for applications, interest and impact of the project in terms of health security, positioning of the project in the national and international context and vis-à-vis the work program of EPI-PHARE;
- **the scientific quality and experience of the coordinator**: quality and experience in pharmaco-epidemiology, quality of published work, independence from private interests, planned research group;
- **the partnership with EPI-PHARE**: willingness of the coordinator to collaborate with EPI-PHARE, proposal for joint actions;
- **promotion of results**: potential and relevance of promotion actions (publications, communications, conferences, etc.), potential of the project in terms of acquiring know-how, potential of the project in terms of using or integrating the results of the project by the scientific and medical community;
- **the data management plan (DMP)**: methods of production, processing, protection and dissemination of data, intellectual property, choices made in terms of archiving, costs associated with data management.

7 IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND THE STATE OF THE ART

Where applicable, the proposal should present solid and sufficiently documented past results to justify the relevance and feasibility of the research program. These preliminary results can, in particular, be illustrated by graphical and/or quantified results. Preliminary results that have been published should be indicated. In all cases, an analysis of the state of the art and knowledge must be presented.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE TIMELINE

The coordinator must imperatively present in the submission document the provisional timetable for the establishment of his research group. The timetable must be realistic and identify relevant and appropriate decision-making milestones, as well as deliverables and valorization activities.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING ETHICAL AND REGULATORY ASPECTS

The funded project will have access to SNDS data through ANSM after signing a specific agreement for each study.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

- a coordinator can submit only one proposal;
- no other document than those requested in § 10.1 will be taken into account.

8 FUNDING

8.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

No additional direct or indirect funding by companies developing, producing, marketing or operating health products mentioned in Article L. 5311-1 of the French Public Health Code or companies and consulting organizations operating in the same sectors, is authorized within the framework of this call for proposals.

The coordinator must clearly indicate in his proposition whether additional public funding for the implementation of the project has been obtained or if requests are in progress, explaining the framework of this additional funding.

Funding a project does not release project participants from fulfilling regulatory obligations and the code of ethics applicable to their field of activity (see also § 7.3).

8.2 FUNDING

The funding is allocated by the ANSM and will be provided in the form of a grant in accordance with the funding agreement that will be signed between the beneficiary organization and the ANSM (see § 9).

The grant allows the funding of operating, equipment and personnel positions to the exclusion of that of state, hospital or regional officials.

Budget items are fungible during project implementation.

Management fees are accepted for a maximum amount of 4% of the expenses.

9 FUNDING AGREEMENT

The beneficiary organization of the selected project will have to sign a funding agreement with the ANSM before the first payment and before the start of the project. This agreement includes the following provisions in particular.

9.1 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The funding agreement indicates the terms of payment of the grant.

The first payment will be made upon notification of the agreement. Notification means the transmission of the agreement signed by the General Director of ANSM to the beneficiary organization.

The final payment will be made after submission and validation of the final project reports.

9.2 PROJECT MONITORING

In the funding agreement, the coordinator undertakes to transmit in particular scientific and financial reports according to the schedule defined in the funding agreement. The scientific and financial reports will be drawn up in accordance with standard models which will be sent to the coordinator of the selected project.

The coordinator also undertakes to respond to any request from the ANSM.

9.3 CESSATION OF FUNDING

Funding will end upon validation of the final scientific report. Funding may be stopped during research, in particular in the event of:

- failure to obtain regulatory authorizations;
- failure to submit intermediate scientific or financial reports;
- termination of the research project at the initiative of the scientific coordinator;

- change of project participants without prior agreement;
- non-compliance with the ethical rules set out in § 5;
- delay in the progress of the project making it irrelevant due in particular to the advancement of knowledge, the change in the health environment and health products or the lack of significant progress of the project in the deadlines initially announced.

In the case where funding is stopped, reimbursement of sums paid and not used or unduly used will be requested from the beneficiary organization.

9.4 PROPRIÉTÉ INTELLECTUELLE DES RÉSULTATS ET VALORISATION DE LA RECHERCHE

The results of the research are the property of the team in charge of the research.

The principle of freedom of use of reports and results by each of the parties having concluded the funding agreement is retained. In particular, each party may freely use the final report as validated by the parties, provided that the information thus disclosed complies with the conclusions of this final report. The results of the research are intended to be made public, in particular by the ANSM which may, given its legal missions, use the results and reports produced within the framework of the research.

Thus, on the one hand, the parties are free to use the results of the funded project as they wish, the beneficiary and the coordinator, however, undertake to:

- send the intermediate reports within the deadlines set out in the funding agreement;
- send the final project report as soon as it is available and within the deadlines provided for in the funding agreement;
- send with this final report a summary in French and English of the research results which may be published on the website of EPI-PHARE;
- inform EPI-PHARE of publications on the intermediate and final results of the funded research;
- Indicate in communications the source of funding.

On the other hand, the following rights are notably ceded to EPI-PHARE and ANSM, free of charge:

- the right to reproduce all or part of the reports and results in any medium and by any process;
- the right to represent reports and results in whole or in part and by any means;
- the right to edit and distribute reports and results in whole or in part, on any medium including Internet;
- the right to translate reports and results, in whole or in part, into any language;
- the right to adapt all or part of the reports or results by additions, cuts, and any other modifications and to reproduce and represent these adaptations.

This assignment is agreed to have exclusive effect for the whole world and for the entire duration of the property rights of the author or his beneficiaries.

10 SUBMISSION MODALITIES

10.1 CONTENT OF THE SUBMISSION FILE

The submission file must include all the elements necessary for the scientific, administrative and budgetary evaluation of the project. It must be received before the call for proposals closes, the date and time of which are indicated on the cover page of this document.

The entire submission file consists of 7 parts that must be fully completed:

1. the “administrative document” which is the administrative description of the project. This document includes in particular a summary which will be published on the website of EPI-PHARE in the event of funding;
2. the “budget document” which is the budget description of the project. As this document is intended for the sole use of EPI-PHARE, the section relating to the requested budget should be detailed as well as possible in the scientific document which will be evaluated by the experts;
3. the “scientific document”, which is the scientific and technical description of the project;
4. the curriculum vitae of the Coordinator;
5. the public declaration of interests of the scientific coordinator of the project;
6. a letter from the beneficiary organization and the host laboratory committing to recruit and welcome the laureate and his team;
7. letters of recommendation.

The submission documents to be used are available in Office® format (* .doc and * .xls) on the website of EPI-PHARE.

10.2 SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

10.2.1 Electronic submission

The documents in the submission file must be submitted before the closing date of the call for projects by e-mail to francois.cuenot@ansm.sante.fr; the subject line of the email should specify that the proposal is part of the call for proposals Group Leader in Pharmaco-epidemiology.

It is strongly advised not to wait for the deadline for submitting projects for electronic submission.

It is not necessary to sign documents that are submitted electronically.

10.2.2 Paper submission

The documents submitted in paper form must be strictly identical to the documents submitted electronically and must be signed by the coordinator, the director of the coordinator's home unit, and the head of the beneficiary organization:

The original signed versions must be received before the date indicated on the cover page of this document, at the following address:

EPI-PHARE – M. François Cuenot

Appel à candidatures 2020

ANSM - 143/147 boulevard Anatole France

93285 Saint-Denis Cedex - France

It is recommended to send the signed documents by mail with acknowledgment of receipt.

11 APPENDIX: PROVISIONAL CALENDAR OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Opening of the call for proposals	December 2020	
Submission of proposals	Electronic submission	Before May 3, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.(Paris Time)
	Regular mail submission of signed documents	No later than June 3, 2021 Postmark as proof
Project Evaluation	Eligibility	from May 3, 2021
	Hearing before the Jury	Summer 2021
	Decision of the Director General of ANSM and publication of results	Autumn 2021
Funding Agreement	September-December 2021	
Start of the project	January 2022	