



# Call for Proof of Concept (POC) research proposals responding to CARE Missions

2026

Mission 1. Pediatric and Rare diseases

Mission 2. Cancer

Mission 3. Inflammation and Infection

Mission 4. Aging and Brain diseases

Mission 5. Cardiovascular diseases



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## Introduction

We are pleased to announce the first call for **Proof of Concept (POC) research project proposals** in the context of the Gulbenkian Institute for Molecular Medicine (GIMM)'s Clinical and Translational research branch: GIMM CARE. CARE's major aim is to facilitate and expedite the early adoption of innovation in healthcare through ideas, technologies, products and services, serving as an independent platform for informed dialogue and collaboration between all stakeholders.

## Objective

POC projects are expected to support the **development of an initial research idea** designed to demonstrate novelty, relevance and potential for further development. For example, this could be preliminary data collection or analysis, aimed at testing whether a concept or theory can be translated into a practical application to improve healthcare outcomes.

## Scope

POC projects must consider the following CARE missions.

- **Mission 1. Pediatric and Rare diseases.** *Address critical healthcare gaps for pediatric and rare diseases.*
- **Mission 2. Cancer.** *Transform cancer into a manageable or curable condition.*
- **Mission 3. Inflammation and Infection.** *Develop transformative solutions that prevent and combat infectious diseases and immune-related conditions.*
- **Mission 4. Aging and Brain diseases.** *Promote healthier, longer lives and preservation of brain function.*

- **Mission 5. Cardiovascular diseases.** *Reduce the global burden of cardiovascular disease.*

Projects may cover any of the following healthcare goals: Prevention and early detection; Diagnosis; Treatment; and/or Quality of Life.

### Project Duration

Up to 18 months.

### Funding

Successful proposals will be selected for financial support. The maximum total funding for the call is 200,000 EUR, with a **guide value of 5,000-50,000 EUR per POC project**. These funds are intended for allocation towards *Human Resources (GIMM), Missions (Travel), Equipment, Use of GIMM Facilities (costed as internal user), Other Goods and services, Patent registration, Demonstration, Promotion and Publication and/or Subcontracts* as required. Apportionment of these funds will be contingent upon the merit and relevance of each project proposal, with express justification. Cost-effectiveness will be included in the evaluation.

**Note: funds cannot be transferred directly to another entity.** Personnel must be hired through GIMM and will be subject to GIMM's People and Culture policies (matrix reporting). Applicants should aim to make use of GIMM facilities. IP will be shared with GIMM (see specific section of application form to indicate foreground and background IP – this agreement will be finalized upon award).

### Eligibility

POC proposals are invited from teams including medical doctors, nurses, other healthcare professionals **working at ULS Santa Maria and researchers from GIMM.**

Proposals may be **led by a healthcare professional from ULS Santa Maria or co-led by a healthcare professional from ULS Santa Maria and a researcher from GIMM.**

Any team members not already affiliated with GIMM will need to become temporarily affiliated in order to be eligible for funding. Multiple POC projects responding to the same mission may be submitted and funded in parallel, however a named Project Lead may only have one active POC project at any one time. Teams will be required to declare that the described project work is not already funded by another source.

### Submission Guidelines

Interested individuals and teams are invited to submit their proposals by **9<sup>th</sup> February 2026 by email to care@gimm.pt**, attaching the **2 completed templates (1 pdf + 1 excel file), the CVs of lead and or co-lead team members and a letter of support from the Head of the Clinical Department(s) involved.**

### Evaluation Process

The evaluation process will include the following steps:

1. Proposal documents evaluation:

Submissions will be scored against the following criteria: Scientific Excellence & Rigor; Clinical Innovation & Translational Potential; Methodology & Feasibility; Responsible Research & Innovation; Candidate(s) Merit and Roles.

The submissions will be analysed by GIMM-CARE Direction plus a panel of invited biomedical and clinical experts selected based on the field.

2. Pre-selection interview with field-specific experts, if requested.

3. **Selection of projects for financing.**
4. Submission to Ethics Committee check.
5. Collaboration Agreement signature.
6. Project start.

### Important Dates

- Opening of 2025 CARE POC call: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- Closing of 2025 CARE POC call: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- Communication of results: By April 2026
- POC project start dates: To be agreed with awardees

For any questions, please contact: [care@gimm.pt](mailto:care@gimm.pt) or visit <https://care.gimm.pt/>