



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 second 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 and/or concept** 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 one or more of 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. Previously funded projects can be found here: <https://care.gimm.pt/lab/proof-of-concept/>

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. If a project requires personnel to be hired, they 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.

Eligibility

POC proposals are invited from teams lead by **medical doctors affiliated with and practicing in a Portuguese healthcare institution**, and in close collaboration with a GIMM investigator, research group, or platform (**at least one current GIMM affiliate is required in the project team**).

To be eligible for funding, the project funds are to be managed and spent through GIMM. Team members not currently affiliated with GIMM will obtain temporary affiliation for the duration of the project.

A named Project Lead (or Co-lead) may only have one active project within GIMM CARE at any given time.

Teams must declare that the proposed project work is not already funded by another source.

Intellectual Property

Projects funded under this call are expected to be developed in close collaboration with GIMM and with the use of GIMM resources, facilities, funding, support and/or know-how. For this reason, any results generated in the context of funded projects, including inventions, discoveries, data, materials, methods, software, know-how and other research outputs with potential for protection or exploitation, shall be assessed by GIMM's Funding & Innovation Office (FIO) before any public disclosure or engagement with third parties. Dissemination will not be unreasonably delayed, but may be temporarily postponed where necessary to allow the filing of patent applications or other appropriate protection measures.

Applicants must identify in the application form any relevant background IP, know-how, data, materials, software, clinical resources, third-party rights, institutional obligations or other restrictions that may be needed for the implementation of the project or for the future use, protection or exploitation of its results. Where background IP or other pre-existing rights are required for the implementation of the project, the relevant party shall grant the necessary access rights for the execution of the funded project. Where such background IP or other pre-existing rights are required for the protection, use or exploitation of project results, the parties shall negotiate in good faith the appropriate access rights or license terms, and such rights shall

be licensed to GIMM where necessary to enable the effective protection, development, exploitation and/or commercialization of the project results.

Foreground IP generated under funded projects shall be owned by GIMM or jointly owned by GIMM and the external healthcare institution, depending on the intellectual contribution of each party, institutional policies and background IP. Where foreground IP is jointly owned, the ownership arrangement shall reflect GIMM's role in funding, managing and supporting the project, with GIMM holding the larger ownership share. The specific ownership shares and revenue-sharing arrangements shall be defined in writing when such foreground IP is identified or upon conclusion of the project, whichever occurs first.

The protection and exploitation strategy for project results shall be led by GIMM and, where applicable, in coordination with the external healthcare institution. Project teams must promptly inform GIMM's FIO of any potentially protectable or commercially relevant results and must not disclose such results publicly or to third parties before GIMM has had the opportunity to assess whether protection is required.

The award of funding under this call does not grant any applicant, collaborator, healthcare institution, company or other third party any license, assignment, commercial right or exploitation right over GIMM IP or project results, unless expressly agreed in writing by GIMM.

Submission Guidelines

Interested individuals and teams are invited to submit their proposals by **July 31st 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 including IP potential; Methodology & Feasibility; Responsible Research & Innovation; Cost-effectiveness; Candidate(s) Merit and Roles.

The submissions will be analyzed by GIMM-CARE Direction plus a panel of invited biomedical and clinical experts selected based on the field. Projects submitted will be subjected to an internal pre-selection before being sent for **external evaluation**. You may find the evaluation panel composition here: <https://care.gimm.pt/gimm-open-calls/>

2. Pre-selection interview with field-specific experts, if requested.
3. **Provisional selection of projects for financing.**
4. Submission to Ethics Committee check.
5. Implementation Agreement signature.
6. Project start.

Important Dates

- Opening of Q3 2026 CARE POC call: 30th June 2026
- **Closing of Q3 2026 CARE POC call: 31st July 2026**
- Communication of results: By September 2026
- POC project start dates: To be agreed with awardees

For any questions, please contact: care@gimm.pt

FAQs

- **Can I submit two projects to this call?** *Yes, but only one can be awarded. In the case that two projects are deemed eligible for funding, the project with the highest overall score will be awarded.*
- **Must ethics approval be obtained before funding is released?**
Yes, if the project requires ethical approval (e.g. use of human samples, ...)
- **Can the MD lead be from a private healthcare institution?**
Yes, private or public institution within Portugal.
- **If the MD works across multiple services, should a letter of support be provided from all services?**
A letter of support is required from the principal clinical department that will be involved in the project (e.g. where the samples are collected, where the patients are recruited from). It is possible to submit the project application including only one letter of support from the principal department involved - the remaining letters will be required for the ethics submission process.
- **Can I apply if I do not yet have a GIMM collaborator? Will GIMM help match me?**
A GIMM collaborator (investigator or facility) is required, please email us at care@gimm.pt if a match is needed, including a short description of the requirements, and we will do our best to find an appropriate GIMM collaborator.
- **What should I declare regarding background IP?**
*Applicants should identify any background IP (i.e. existing know-how, data, materials, software, clinical resources, third-party rights or institutional obligations that may be needed to implement the project or exploit its results) in the Part A of CARE R&I Proof of Concept (POC) Proposal form.
Background IP needed to implement the project must be made available for the execution of the project. If background IP is needed to exploit project results, the parties will negotiate in good faith a license to GIMM.*
- **Can I publish project results?**
Yes, but project results must first be reviewed and approved by GIMM's FIO before public disclosure.
- **Can external partners receive rights to project results?**
Yes, external partners may use project results for their internal non-commercial research. However, any licence, assignment, commercial right or exploitation right must be expressly agreed in writing by GIMM.