

Grant Applications Policy

Stichting ALS Nederland (ALS Foundation Netherlands) funds scientific research into the causes and treatment of ALS and related diseases PSMA and PLS* (Cure/Treatment). In addition, the foundation invests in (research) projects aimed at improving the quality of care and quality of life for people with ALS and their loved ones (Care).

* Where ALS is mentioned below, PSMA and PLS are also included.

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1. Grant Conditions

Stichting ALS Nederland provides grants for scientific research into the causes and treatment of ALS (Cure) and for improving quality of care and quality of life (Care).

Cure – Causes & Treatment

Applications must fall within one of the following themes:

1. *Genetic research* aimed at the development of new treatments.
2. *Preclinical research* into new treatments, including the use of preclinical tools and model systems (cellular, organoid, animal models) for the identification and preclinical development of new therapies.
3. *Clinical research* into new treatments, including the use of clinical tools and studies for clinical development.
4. *Supporting research* for new treatments, including the development of new or improved tools, models, and infrastructures that accelerate treatment development.

Fundamental research may also be funded, provided there is a clear focus on translation into practical impact and its implications for people with ALS.

Examples of eligible research include:

- *Multidisciplinary research* linking multiple neurodegenerative diseases, provided it has clear relevance for ALS and delivers demonstrably innovative methods or insights that cannot be obtained more effectively through ALS-specific research alone.
- *Animal model research* supporting drug development (e.g. fruit flies).
- *High-risk, high-gain* ALS research: excellent research conducted by outstanding researchers, not tied to a specific theme, but based on a bold hypothesis or approach that carries risk yet has the potential for high impact for people with ALS.

Projects submitted for funding must **not** overlap with projects within the GoALS program (see below).

GoALS: ambitious and innovative long-term research program

We believe that a breakthrough in ALS research is closer than ever. To accelerate this breakthrough, we are joining forces with the ALS Patient Association and the ALS Centre to realize an innovative and ambitious long-term program: GoALS.

Stichting ALS Nederland has committed financially to this program for the coming years, meaning that a substantial portion of our funding budget is allocated to GoALS. At the same time, we continue to accept other grant applications that meet the conditions described above, provided that the proposed project does not overlap with any GoALS project.

More information about the GoALS program can be found at: <https://als-centrum.nl/goals/>.

Care – Quality of Care & Life

Applications must fall within one of the following themes:

1. *Innovations in care processes*, including research into improved care pathways and logistics, optimization of integrated care across care settings, improved alignment

between formal and informal care structures, development of care standards and guidelines, and reduction of unnecessary care.

2. *Technological innovations*, including digital care, eHealth, and data-driven improvements in care. This includes the development, interoperability, and validation of new (digital) care systems and tools.
3. *Optimization of quality of life and self-management*, including research into shared decision-making, tools and interventions that strengthen patient autonomy and self-care and/or support informal caregivers, as well as improved organization of interventions such as physiotherapy, speech therapy, psychosocial care, and palliative care.
4. *Information, education, and training*, including the development of helpdesks, (interdisciplinary) training programs, and training tools.

In 2025, the [Zorgvisie ALS 2030](#) was developed, outlining how ALS care should be organized in a future-proof manner. Stichting ALS Nederland encourages Care projects to align with this vision.

Patient Participation in Scientific Research

Stichting ALS Nederland works closely with the ALS Patient Association and believes that research is improved by incorporating early input from people with ALS and/or their loved ones. Researchers are therefore strongly encouraged to involve them even before submitting an application.

Do you need input on your research proposal? Please contact the ALS Patient Association at info@alspatientenvereniging.nl.

2. Deadlines & Timelines

Stichting ALS Nederland opens two grant rounds per year. Applications must be received on or before:

- 15 March (before 23:59)
- 15 September (before 23:59)

After submission, applications are reviewed (see Chapter 4). We aim to inform applicants of the funding decision within a maximum of three months.

3. Application Criteria

- Grants are awarded to research institutions, including academic hospitals and universities, not to individuals.
- The principal applicant must hold a permanent position at a Dutch (or occasionally foreign) research institution.
- The principal applicant may collaborate with multiple institutions within a consortium. Collaboration with patient organizations and other research institutions is permitted where this strengthens the quality, feasibility, and impact of the proposal.
- Foreign research institutions may be eligible as consortium partners if this contributes to achieving the project objectives.
- A maximum of 50% of the requested funding may be allocated to foreign partners.

- For consortium applications, a consortium agreement must be signed before the project starts. The DESCAs model agreement may be used.

Keywords

Applicants are required to include keywords describing the proposal. Correct selection of keywords is important, as they are used to identify appropriate scientific experts for the review process.

4. Review of Applications

The procedure for submission and review is as follows:

- ❖ Step 1: Submit the application as a PDF via the online application system using the standard Application Form.
- ❖ Step 2: The application is assessed for eligibility and possible overlap with the GoALS program.
- ❖ Step 3: The application is reviewed by the Scientific Review Board (WAR) and the Patient Advisory Board (PAR).
- ❖ Step 4: The applicant may be asked to provide additional information.
- ❖ Step 5: Reviewed applications are discussed during a grant committee meeting, resulting in a recommendation for approval or rejection.
- ❖ Step 6: The recommendation is either adopted or rejected by the Raad van Toezicht (supervisory board) of Stichting ALS Nederland.
- ❖ Step 7: The decision of the Raad van Toezicht is communicated to the applicant.

Scientific Review Board (Wetenschappelijke Adviesraad)

The [Scientific Review Board](#) (WAR) assesses applications on scientific quality. The board consists of international scientists from within and outside the ALS research field. Each application is reviewed by two WAR members with relevant expertise. Reviewers remain anonymous. Feedback from the WAR is shared with the applicant after assessment.

Patient Board (Patiënten Adviesraad)

The [Patient Board](#) (PAR) appointed by the ALS Patient Association and evaluates applications from the patient perspective.

Grant Committee & Raad van Toezicht (Supervisory Board)

After assessment by the WAR and PAR, applications are discussed by the Grant Committee (comprising the Operations Manager, Funding Process Manager, and two members of the Raad van Toezicht). A funding recommendation is formulated and subsequently ratified by the Raad van Toezicht.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications are assessed by the WAR and PAR based on criteria relating to:

Scientific Review Board (WAR)	Patient Board (PAR)
Scientific Assessment	Excellence Assessment
Relevance and feasibility of the project objectives.	Quality of the lay summary.
The extent to which the proposed work is novel and advances the state of the art.	Quality of the research from a patient perspective.
The extent to which the proposed strategy is fit for purpose to reach the objectives.	Quality of patient participation within the research design.
Impact Assessment	
The extent to which the research benefits the target groups, when successful.	Relevance for the target group.
Quality of the project pathways to impact, including stakeholders and end-user engagement, dissemination, and follow-up plans.	Impact on target group.
Implementation Assessment	
Quality of the approach, deliverables and milestones in the attainment of the objectives.	To what extent is the patient participation program feasible?
The extent to which the proposed work is feasible, including quality of the risk mitigation plan.	To what extent are results accessible to those benefitting from them?
Quality of the research team	

Grant Review Scores

Applications are scored by the WAR and PAR on a scale of 1–5. Based on the average score, applications are ranked. Funding decisions depend on the available budget per grant round.

5. Project Monitoring

Upon approval, a financial agreement is signed. Projects must commence within **three months** of signing (extendable to a maximum of six months with written justification).

During the project, annual technical/content and financial reports must be submitted. These reports are reviewed by the Funding Process Manager, a member of the WAR, and where applicable the PAR.

Funded projects are communicated to the foundation's stakeholders. Updates are published at www.als.nl/onderzoek/.

6. Privacy

Stichting ALS Nederland attaches great importance to the careful and confidential handling of personal data and research data provided as part of a grant application. All data supplied by researchers are used solely for evaluation and administrative purposes.

Personal data are processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and our own [privacy policy](#).