

# **APLAR SIG Grant**

## **Terms of Reference**

The Asia-Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) has observed that the practice of rheumatology in the region has been growing. To integrate the various research and clinical practices, APLAR established special interest groups (SIG's). Currently, 12 APLAR SIG's have been formed and tasked with the following activities:

- i. Recommendation of members of APLAR Scientific Committee
- ii. Recommendation of speakers of APLAR Review Course of annual scientific meetings of APLAR.
- iii. Organization of symposia of annual scientific meetings of APLAR together with the local organization committee and APLAR Scientific Committee.
- iv. Conduction of international collaborative studies in the related field.
- v. Planning and publishing of APLAR recommendation of rheumatic diseases.

The APLAR Board shall act as an ad hoc SIG Advisory Committee, which undertakes to perform the followings:

- i. Encourage the different SIGs to pursue the recommended APLAR activities, steering the SIGs toward the intended outcomes of the projects and activities.
- ii. Review and decide on the acceptance of grant applications.
- iii. Assist the SIG conveners on any problems that may prevent the completion of a project or grant both within and outside the APLAR organization.
- iv. Help in making decisions on the recommended activities of the SIGs and provide guidance on their project when requested.

The SIGs shall procure funds for the development of treatment recommendations, disease registries and collaborative research from two sources:

- A. APLAR Grant
- B. Industry Grant.

### **A. APLAR Grant**

To support each individual SIG towards efficiently accomplishing their expected activities, APLAR invites applications its APLAR SIG Grant. Four (4) grants of up to USD 20,000 each annually shall be awarded to groups with the aims of giving the SIGs an opportunity to start their expected activities listed above and do research within their special scientific fields. In particular, APLAR hopes to promote intra- and inter-group communications through face-to-face and virtual meetings directed to the recommendation drafting,

publishing and organization of scientific symposiums. This grant shall be used for consumables required for the activities and not for salaries or fixed costs. It is expected that the activity shall be completed within one (1) year of the onset.

All successful awardees are required to submit a full report to the APLAR Board of Directors upon the completion of their activity. Additionally, they are required to submit data from the work carried out for presentation at a subsequent APLAR Congress, and for publication as a full scientific article in an international peer-reviewed journal, preferably the International Journal of the Rheumatic Diseases (IJRD). An acknowledgement of the APLAR grant must be included in the manuscript.

The offer is valid only for APLAR SIGs, which include the following:

- i. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
- ii. Osteoarthritis (OA)
- iii. Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- iv. Vasculitis
- v. Spondylitis (SpA)
- vi. Genetics
- vii. Scleroderma / Myositis
- viii. Osteoporosis
- ix. Crystal-Induced Arthritis
- x. Ultrasound, Imaging & MRI
- xi. APLAR-COPCORD Epidemiology
- xii. Paediatric Rheumatology

The following documents should be enclosed with the application:

- A written statement from the leaders of individual SIG
- A summary of the project with the significance of the expected results in the context of current knowledge (maximum 500 words).
- A grant proposal of the project detailing the background, aims, methodology, and expected results.
- A budget
- A timeline of the activity project.
- Disbursement of Funds

## **B. Industry grant**

The SIG will also enjoy the discretion of procuring an industry grant, documented with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the APLAR Treasurer and the SIG

convener on behalf of of APLAR, and a representative from the industry. Following the MoU, the industry grant shall be transferred to the APLAR account. The APLAR treasurer will transfer the funds to the account of the vendor. The SIG will not procure funds locally for local transfers.

### **Grant Disbursement**

In case of grants from either source, the grant money will be transferred to vendors that manage the meeting, whether face-to-face or virtual. The sum shall be disbursed in three installments:

- a) Initial seed money.
- b) 2<sup>nd</sup> or mid-term installment after scrutinizing progress of the work and the incurred expenditure, the invoice of which need to be paid.
- c) The final installment: after receiving the report of completion and product of the project.

Members of SIG's can be reimbursed for their transportation and food for participating in the SIG meetings that were previously scheduled in the grant proposals.

The APLAR Board of Directors reserves the right to adjust the amount of grant awarded depending on the proposed budget expenditure. Any such decision taken by the APLAR Board of Directors shall be final.

### **SIG Cost Accounting System**

For each SIG project, a Cost Accounting System shall be set up internally and shall include two main components:

- i. A Cash Fund to account for all funds received from the organization (APLAR) or from any other sources (i.e., sponsors)
- ii. A Cost Center where all accumulated expenses of a project are charged and monitored against an approved budget.

Financial reports shall be prepared and submitted for the two items above.

### **Guidelines and Procedures:**

1. The SIG Project shall be strictly guided by a budget duly approved by the SIG Advisory Committee. Any additional costs to be incurred in course of the project that are not budgeted must secure the approval of the SIG Advisory Committee.
2. All transactions shall be recorded and supported by progress reports, updates, and outcomes.
3. All funds received shall be supported by official receipts indicating the amount, date, and source of the funds as well as the specific SIG project.
4. All items for disbursement shall be supported by a request for payment duly approved by the authorized approver (APLAR Treasurer). The request for payments must indicate the payee, amount, date, and charging of the disbursement to the specific SIG project Cost Center.

### **Reporting/Monitoring**

1. For monitoring purposes, semi-annual reporting of the progress of the SIG Project by the SIG convener and the Financial Report by APLAR secretariat shall be prepared and submitted. These reports shall be duly reviewed and approved by the SIG Advisory Committee.
2. The SIG Project Financial Report shall include the following:
  - i. Cash Receipts based on the Cash Fund for the period covered.
  - ii. Cash Disbursements based on the Cost Center for the period covered. The disbursements shall be compared with budget.
  - iii. Net Cash Balance (Receipts less Disbursements).
  - iv. A Final Performance and Financial Report shall be prepared upon the completion of the SIG Project.