



COPCORD Grant 2026 Announcement

(Closing Date: 31 March 2026)

Invitation

The Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) invites applications from physicians from APLAR member societies for its APLAR Community Oriented Program for Control of Rheumatic Diseases (COPCORD) research grant. Up to **three (3) grants** of up to **USD 14,000** will be awarded to doctors striving to study rheumatic disease in the community.

The aims of the grant are to give the researcher an opportunity **to study rheumatic disease in the community of their own country of residence using preferably a COPCORD model of community survey**. This grant is to be used for consumables required for the research, including salaries of assistant(s), but not for fixed costs. It is expected that the research will be **completed within one (1) year** of its initiation.

All successful awardees are required to **submit a full report** to the APLAR Executive Committee **upon the completion of their research**. Additionally, they are required to **submit the results of the research 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. An acknowledgement of the APLAR grant must be included in the manuscript.

If the applicant **fails to submit a report and a full scientific article for publication within six (6) months of completion** of the research project, the APLAR Executive committee will not accept further grant applications from applicants of the same country for a further one (1) year. An email and hard copy letter will also be sent to the Head of the Department where the applicant works and also to the President of the applicant's national rheumatology society.

Applicants should demonstrate how their research will impact improvements in rheumatology care in their community. Only complete applications with the correct supporting documents will be accepted. The decision of the APLAR Executive Committee on the award of these grants is final.

For more information on COPCORD please visit www.copcord.org

Background

Community Oriented Program for Control of Rheumatic Diseases (COPCORD), initiated by the International League of Associations for Rheumatology (ILAR) in collaboration with the WHO, was launched in the late 1980s to measure musculoskeletal (MSK) pain and disability and arthritis in the community (Stage I), identify risk factors and impart health education (Stage II), and advocate prevention and control measures (Stage III). Stage I is a house-to-house survey of population size 3500-5000 in a well described community (visit www.COPCORD.org for details).

Application

The grant is open to:

- All rheumatologists, internists, pediatricians and epidemiologists working in any Asia-pacific country irrespective to its state of affiliation with APLAR.

The applications should be drafted based on the following broad principles to be considered for reviewing process:

- The study population should strictly be from the community and not rheumatology clinics;
- The proposed studies should adhere to the COPCORD methodology (<http://copcord.org/informationnutbolt.asp>);
- The COPCORD core questionnaires should preferably be used, either in toto or parts of it, for data collection;
- The proposal should preferably comprise the following major sections – introduction, methodology, references, questionnaires/study instruments and budget;
- Similar studies carried out in the same community or elsewhere under the COPCORD umbrella should be cited in the background section; and
- Methodology should include details of study population, including sample size calculation, operational definition of variables, description of study instruments preferably translated and validated in local language, intervention, and outcome measures, if the proposal describes an interventional study, data collection, data management/analysis plans, quality assurance strategy, knowledge translation and plans for dissemination of key results.

The following documents should be enclosed with the application:

1. A curriculum vitae with a recent 2x2 inch photograph.
2. A reference of good standing from the Dean of the candidate's medical school / university.
3. A summary of the project with the significance of the expected results in the context of current knowledge (maximum 500 words).
4. A grant proposal of the project detailing the background, aims, methodology (using the COPCORD questionnaire) and expected results (see below).
5. Ethics Committee approval of the study.
6. A detailed budget with costings in USD. It is expected that the budget is to be used specifically for the research project, and not to be used to pay for salaries of permanent staff, not to be used to purchase equipment that would be otherwise be available in a clinical rheumatology department or used to pay any fixed costs associated with the normal running of a rheumatology unit.
7. A timeline of the research project.

Outline of the proposal for applying APLAR COPCORD grants.

Please study the template below for proposal development and submission it along with the application form.

1. Title of the project	Provide a short and informative title
2. Type of study	Provide the type of the study. Observational, cross sectional etc.
3. Investigators	Provide the name of the principal investigator (applicant) and all member of the investigator team including their degree and place of work.
4. Rational of the study	Provide information related to the study protocol. Why does the investigator want to do this study? What has been done before? What are the unclear or unanswered questions?
5. Study objective	Provide the study objectives. How does this study answer those questions, etc.?
6. Population of the study	Provide detail of the population of the study and the place where the study will be performed.
7. Sample size calculation	Provide the estimated sample size to be used (if any)
8. Methodology	Provide the study design, details of the participants, the inclusion/exclusion criteria (and withdrawal criteria, if any). How to find the case or randomization? What the instruments to be used to collect data (COPCORD questionnaire)? How to collect the data? If any, the COPCORD questionnaire has been validated?
9. Ethical issues	Studies related to human subjects must be accompanied by the Ethical Approval of the investigator institution.

10. Statistical analysis	Provide statistical methods to be used in the study. If the study requires complex statistical analysis, a qualified biostatistician should be involved in the project.
11. Budget	Provide details of the budget. This includes assistant's salary or stipends, materials for the study, field budget, etc. The investigator can claim for these expenses by sending the receipt to APLAR.
12. Results	What are the expected results? How will the result from the study help improvement in rheumatology care among AP countries?
13. References	Please provide relevant reference to the study.

Disbursement of Funds

At the start of the project, USD 5,000 will be transferred to the investigator's account, preferably their University's research account. But if that would incur an administrative charge, then the investigator can request to use their personal account.

Following the first transfer, the investigator will be required to provide receipts for the expenditure as the project progresses. If any individual item costs are more than USD 1,000, then 3 separate quotations are required, and the cheapest quotation will usually be accepted. Once the expenditure has exceeded the first USD 5,000, there can be 2 further disbursements at Month 3 and Month 6, depending on the proposed budget, supported by receipts, of up to USD 4,000 each.

The last USD 1,000 will be transferred once the completed research report and the final draft of the manuscript of the research project been received by the APLAR Executive Committee. In addition, awardees should submit their work for publication in an international peer-reviewed journal, preferably to the International Journal of the Rheumatic Diseases.

The APLAR Executive Committee reserves the right to adjust the amount of grant awarded depending on the proposed budget expenditure. Any such decision taken by the APLAR Executive Committee is final.

Application Period

Application for grant will open from 7 January till 31 March 2026.



COPCORD GRANT 2026 APPLICATION FORM

Instructions

- A. Please read through the application carefully and include all the required information. There are four parts to this application:
 - 1) Summary Information sheet;
 - 2) a Supplemental Information section;
 - 3) a Project Description, and
 - 4) a Biographical Sketch.

Please make sure that information for each section is complete.
- B. Submit the completed application and the related appendices, and email PDF of the application.
- C. Email application to:
APLAR (COPCORD GRANT APPLICATION 2026)
Email: secretariat@aplar.org

Grant Application Deadline – Tuesday , 31 March 2026.

Terms and Restrictions

- A. Grant of up to **USD 14,000** will be awarded to doctors striving to **study rheumatic disease in the community of their own country of residence**, for up to one-year period.
- B. Applicants must clearly demonstrate the Principal Investigator's interest in understanding of Rheumatology or his or her collaboration with an investigator who has experience in this field of research. If collaboration is warranted, a letter of support from the collaborating researcher must be included in the application.
- C. At the start of the project, USD 5,000 will be transferred to the investigator's account, preferably their University's research account. But if that would incur an administrative charge, then the investigator can request to use their personal account.
- D. Following the first transfer, the investigator will be required to provide receipts for the expenditure as the project progresses. If any **individual item costs** are more than **USD 1,000**, then **3 separate quotations** are required, and the cheapest quotation will usually be accepted. Once the expenditure has exceeded the first USD 5,000, there can be **2 further disbursements** at **Month 3** and **Month 6**, depending on the proposed budget, supported by receipts, of up to **USD 4,000** each.
- E. The **last USD 1,000** will be transferred once the **completed research report and the final draft of the manuscript of the research project been received by the APLAR Executive Committee**. In addition, awardees should submit their work for publication in an international peer-reviewed journal, preferably to the International Journal of the Rheumatic Diseases.
- F. If the applicant **fails to submit a report and a full scientific article for publication** within **six (6) months** of completion of the research project, the APLAR Executive committee will not accept further grant applications from applicants of the same country for a further one (1) year. An email and hard copy letter will also be sent to the Head of the Department where the applicant works and also to the President of the applicant's national rheumatology society.

Part One – Summary Information

1. Title of Project	
2. Principal Investigator	
Name	:
Degree(s)	:
Title	:
Department	:
Mailing Address	:
Phone	:
E-mail address	:
3. Name and address of institution at which project will be performed	
4. Dates of Proposed Period of Support (month, day, year--MM/DD/YY)	
From:	Through:
5. Consent	
I have read and agree to the terms and restrictions	
6. Signatures	
I certify that the statements made herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may disqualify me as a future applicant. I agree to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of the project and to provide the required progress reports if a grant is awarded as a result of this application. I understand that failure to submit the required reports will result in repayment of the grant.	
Name: Principal Investigator	Date
I certify that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.	
Name: Department Chair/ Official of Institution	Date

Part Two – Supplemental Information

Summary.

Please attach a description of the project's specific aims. Include the research design and the methods to be employed. If the application is funded, this description may become public information (200-500 words).

Lay summary.

Please attach a summary which concisely and clearly describe the goals, methods and importance of this project in plain language (100-200 words).

Principal Investigator:

Part Three – Project Description

Please attach a description of your project. This description should be no more than six pages in length, typed single-spaced. Please make sure to include the following in your description:

1. Title of the project	Provide a short and informative title
2. Type of study	Provide the type of the study. Observational, cross sectional etc.
3. Investigators	Provide the name of the principal investigator (applicant) and all member of the investigator team including their degree and place of work.
4. Rational of the study	Provide information related to the study protocol. Why does the investigator want to do this study? What has been done before? What are the unclear or unanswered questions?
5. Study objective	Provide the study objectives. How does this study answer those questions, etc.?
6. Population of the study	Provide detail of the population of the study and the place where the study will be performed.
7. Sample size calculation	Provide the estimated sample size to be used (if any)
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10. Statistical analysis	Provide statistical methods to be used in the study. If the study requires complex statistical analysis, a qualified biostatistician should be involved in the project.
11. Budget	Provide details of the budget. This includes assistant's salary or stipends, materials for the study, field budget, etc. The investigator can claim for these expenses by sending the receipt to APLAR.
12. Results	What are the expected results? How will the result from the study help improvement in rheumatology care among AP countries?
13. References	Please provide relevant reference to the study.

Part Four – Biographical Sketch

Please attach up-to-date CV of Investigator(s).

For Official Use Only	
Part 1 Completed	Submitted for another grant
Part 2 Completed	Fellowship Grant
Part 3 Submitted	Research Grant
Part 4 Submitted	