



Call for Letters of Intent for New Collaborative “Industry-Led Consortia (ILCs) to Advance Therapeutic Targets and Biomarkers for ALS and FTD”

Target ALS Foundation (Target ALS) and The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (AFTD) are independent non-profit 501(c)(3) foundations. Target ALS is working to accelerate ALS drug development and break down barriers to ALS research. AFTD’s mission is to improve the quality of life of people affected by frontotemporal degeneration and advance accurate diagnosis and treatments for FTD disorders. Together, we announce a new call that aims to encourage research ideation around the links between ALS and FTD and consequences for potential shared therapeutic strategies. The chosen mechanism is to fund “Industry-Led Consortia (ILCs)” that bring together investigators from pharma/biotech and academia to work on a collaborative project, including direct funding for the industry partner. We invite letters of intent for ILCs by December 2, 2019.

This call is being sent widely to the ALS, FTD research communities and beyond. As with all previous Target ALS Foundation calls, only collaborative projects will be funded. Collaborative projects for this call comprise groups of 2-4 laboratories working around a common research theme or target or a biomarker that will impact and benefit both, ALS and FTD. Each project must have a project leader (or co-leader) based in a pharma/biotech company. Involvement of companies or investigators with relevant expertise but no prior involvement in ALS or FTD research is encouraged.

The maximum budget for a lab per project – including direct funding to the pharma/biotech partner - cannot exceed a maximum of \$200,000 per lab/year (details in attached administrative document). The total budget for an ILC cannot exceed a maximum of \$500,000 per year. Confidentiality of each collaborator’s data, research and intellectual property will be strictly honored. Target ALS and AFTD do not seek ownership of any intellectual property or financial gains that result, directly or indirectly, from their funding.

Next Steps and Deadlines:

- 1) TOPICS OF INTEREST: We are particularly interested in receiving projects that focus on identification, validation and development of new drug targets or novel biomarkers relevant to both ALS and FTD. We will also consider proposals of tools to facilitate human proof-of-biology studies in both diseases.
- 2) LETTER OF INTENT: To be considered for an ILC award the proposed Project Leader or Co-leaders must first submit a letter of intent (1-2 pages). The deadline for submission is **Monday, December 2, 2019**. The letter of intent should clearly identify the scientists involved (with a short paragraph about the expected contribution of each), a defined set of scientific objectives with explicit milestones and, even for basic science or genetics projects, a short paragraph describing the present or future relevance of the project for ALS and FTD therapeutic and biomarker strategies. The letter of intent should be submitted to the President of the Target ALS Foundation (Dr. Manish Raisinghani, manish.raisinghani@targetals.org).

A given laboratory can be a member of up to two ILCs, provided that a distinct identified member of the group will be devoting >75% of their time to each project and will participate in all related project meetings.



A lab participating in more than one ILC or a lab that is currently receiving Target ALS or AFTD funding as part of an ongoing project, or as a result of no-cost extension, has to make clear how the proposed project is distinct.

3) The chair of Target ALS Independent Review Committee (Dr. Bob Miller), chief advisor of Target ALS Foundation (Dr. Chris Henderson) and an AFTD nominee to the Independent Review Committee will undertake an administrative review of the letters of intent and provide feedback to project leaders concerning potential overlap with other proposals, or modifications needed to align with Target ALS and AFTD objectives by December 6, 2019.

4) FULL PROPOSALS: Invitations for full project proposals will be sent out on **Monday, December 9, 2019** and the deadline for full project proposal submission will be **Friday, January 24, 2020**. Full proposals should be as concise as possible consistent with clear exposition of the goals and main steps of the project. The total length should not exceed 2 pages per participating group (i.e. up to 8 pages in Arial 11 pt for a project involving 4 partners). The project leader can choose to use the allowable space as they deem fit to best present the project plan. The **total length includes the following sections**: Specific Aims; Background and Rationale; Research Plan; Statement of relevance to ALS and FTD therapeutic or biomarker strategies; A bullet list indicating the specific involvement of each partner; A table indicating milestones for the first 2 years of the project; Literature cited.

5) The Independent Review Committee which will include FTD experts nominated by AFTD will complete project proposal review by **Friday, March 6, 2020** and investigators will be notified soon thereafter. Projects will be ranked on the basis of the following criteria: Biological rationale, Novelty, Synergistic potential, Feasibility of proposed experiments and Relevance to both, ALS and FTD therapeutic strategies or biomarkers.

Because of the restricted length of the proposals, projects will not be marked down for lack of detailed information or absence of preliminary data. High-risk proposals are encouraged, meaning that lack of guaranteed success will not be a negative providing that the approach is seen to be exciting. However, projects that do not appear feasible on the basis of the information provided will not be highly ranked.

6) PROJECT FUNDING: Funding will commence on **Friday, March 13, 2020**, or as soon as possible after this date depending on the time needed to subcontract with individual institutions. Details of financial and scientific reporting will be provided at this stage.

Funding for a consortium will be renewed for the second year based on submission of a satisfactory progress report to Target ALS (reviewed by the Independent Review Committee) in the 11th month of the first year. A consortium will be eligible to compete for a third year of funding from Target ALS based on a competitive review of updated consortium goals as well as satisfactory progress at the end of second year of funding.



Please note that members of collaborative consortia selected by the IRC for funding will be required to attend and present their work at the Target ALS annual meeting to be held in Cambridge, MA from May 5 - May 7, 2020.

Please send any questions or comments to Manish Raisinghani (manish.raisinghani@targetals.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Manish Raisinghani, President
Target ALS Foundation; www.targetals.org

Nadine Tatton, Scientific Director
AFTD; www.theaftd.org