

GUIDE TO THE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES OFFICE SERVICES AND RELATED PROCEDURES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
RESEARCH PROGRAMES SERVICES.....	4
RESEARCH GRANTS APPLICATION PROCEDURE.....	8
PRE PROPOSAL APPLICATION RPO SERVICES.....	10
MANAGEMENT OF AWARDED RESEARCH GRANTS	12
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING.....	14
ANNEXES:	24
Annex 1: Procedure for NIH grant proposal submission	25
Annex 2: Procedure for Research Support Letters	26
GLOSSARY	28

INTRODUCTION

The Research Programmes Office (RPO) is The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING) office that provides management and administrative services to all departments and all awarded research grants, from the pre proposal stage to the receipt of the final payment from the funding agency.

The purpose of this document is to guide research staff as to the services provided by the RPO as well as the procedures to be followed in order to obtain those services.

RESEARCH PROGRAMES SERVICES

The RPO services include the following:

a) **Proposal application assistance.**

Assist CING staff with the administrative part of the application procedure that includes:

- ✓ Assistance with the administrative paper work that might be required from the funding agency (e.g. letters of support from the Chief Executive Medical Director (CEMD) and Financial and Administrative Director (FAD), CING legal documents, registrations to specific bodies, mandates etc.)
- ✓ Budget formulation according to the rules and regulations from both the funding agency and CING internal regulations.
- ✓ Get the necessary approvals and signatures from the CEMD and the FAD that are required before the submission of the proposal according to the internal Research Grants Regulations as well as the funding agency's regulations.

- b) **Maintain and regularly update** the institute's **Research Grant Opportunities Database** with new research grant opportunities from around the world based on key words provided by the researchers.

c) Management of awarded research grants.

Although the Principle Investigator (PI) is responsible for the overall administration and management (including the financial) of the research grant the RPO can offer the following services to researchers:

1. review contract agreements and assess funding conditions, providing advise to the PI for specific clauses and issues arising from the contract agreement (including IP)
2. negotiate with funding bodies on specific financial regulations and available budget allocation
3. set up the financial system to manage the contract's financial provisions
4. prepare consortium agreements, sub contract agreements and the contractual financial obligations of partners involved
5. prepare all the necessary documents with partners obligations that need to be submitted during the project duration
6. monitoring of expenditures claimed by researchers to ensure that they are according to the funding agencies and CING's regulations as well as within the contractual budget (in collaboration with the PI, accounts and stores)
7. prepare financial statements and reports according to funding agency's requirements
8. proceed with contract amendment procedures, where needed, in close collaboration with the PI
9. assist in financial audits by external auditors for reporting purposes as well as by the funding agency for eligibility of costs claimed

10. providing information and extra documentation regarding the financial audits by funding agencies for the eligibility of claimed expenses
11. financial closure of the project and reporting of accepted vs claimed expenses
12. proceed with possible attests to funding agencies for the reconsideration of the eligibility of expenses

d) **Maintain and update the Institute's Research Programmes**

Management System. The RPO is responsible for maintaining and updating the Institute's Research Programmes Management System (RPMS) where all proposal applications and awarded grants are recorded. The information on the specific database is updated according to the information provided by PI's, the internal research grants forms submitted and the contract agreements signed.

e) Organisation of **in-house training activities** for all staff for research grant opportunities (e.g. H2020, Health Calls for proposals, proposal writing) as well as other related subjects (like Intellectual Property rights, Open access etc.).

The training activities are designed and completed either by the RPO staff or by inviting speakers from various agencies (European Commission, IPR helpdesk, RPF etc.)

f) Provide assistance and support for the organisation of **open conferences/seminars** according to the CING regulation for organising conferences and workshops. The RPO can undertake the administrative organisation of the conference workshop

based on the available budget and resources including registration, traveling, accommodation and social programme, logistics for coffee and lunch breaks etc.

g) Provide support and assistance to researchers to apply and meet their responsibilities according to the **Intellectual Property (IP) Policy** of the Institute.

h) Act as the Institute's **LEAR (Legal Entity Appointed Representative)** contact in H2020. The LEAR serves as a trusted administrative contact for the Commission, providing reliable information at the level of the organisation and not at the level of individual grants. The LEAR handles all the organisation-related data on the Participant Portal and appoints representatives within their organisation to electronically sign grant agreements or financial statements for project costs.

There can only be one LEAR per organisation. LEARs are validated by the Validation Services of the Commission as part of the organisation registration process.

RESEARCH GRANTS APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Researchers should **always** seek the prior approval of the CEMD and the FAD before submitting a grant application, thought the submission of the Internal Research Grant form, following the steps below:



Time required for the above procedure: **at least 3 working days**

The **CEMD** will approve the scientific content of the grant i.e. will examine whether it is in line with the activities/interests of the Institute.

The **FAD** will ensure that the project can be accommodated without any extra costs or the requirement of additional space and that all overheads that CING is entitled to claim have been included in the application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all project costs have been adequately budgeted and to this effect it is advisable that he/she liaises with the RPO when preparing budget estimates, especially those relating to personnel costs.

The original Internal Research Grant application remains at the RPO. Once the approved Internal Research Grant form is sent to

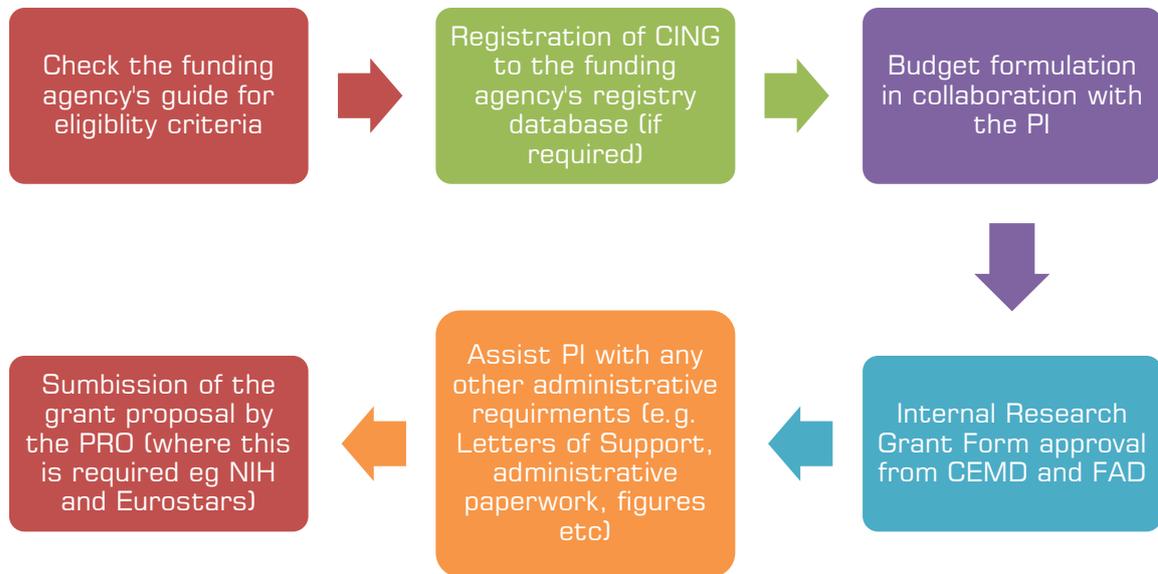
the RPO the RPMS is updated. Each proposal is assigned with a serial number (indicating the year submitted and the serial number).

Time required for the approvals: Most funding agencies specify closing dates/deadlines for applications. Applicants should allow at least 3 working days before that submission deadline for the application to be approved from the CEMD and FAD.

The Internal Research Grant Form should include:

- a) The Internal Research Grant form dully completed and signed from the applicant and the department head
- b) Abstract of the proposed grant
- c) Budget breakdown analysis and when own contribution is required, analysis from where the own contribution funds will be covered

PRE PROPOSAL APPLICATION RPO SERVICES



1) Check the **funding agency's** guide for **eligibility criteria**. As well as providing useful guidance re the application procedure, the guide should also indicate whether CING is eligible for the specific funding scheme. For this phase please allow at least 24 working hours in order to provide the RPO the necessary time to go through the guide and find out the relevant financial and administrative regulations.

2) **CING registration** to the funding agency's registry in order to be able to proceed with the grant application (like NIH, EC – H2020, Erasmus+ etc). Some of the funding agencies require that the organisation is registered and validated to their

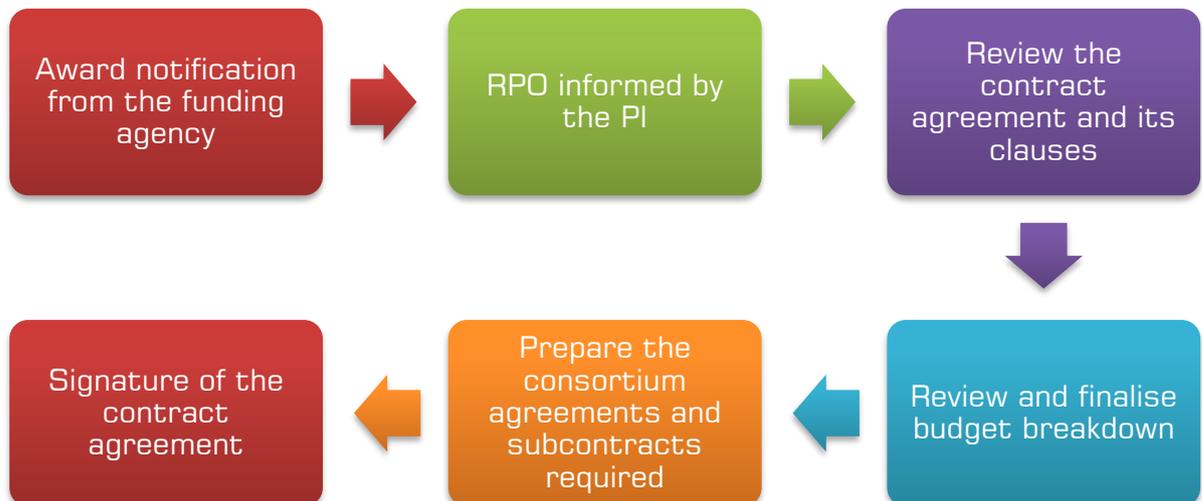
databank in order to be able to submit a proposal. The validation procedure might require some time before you will be eligible for proposal submission (e.g. 5-30days) therefore good planning is a prerequisite.

- 3) Assist the PI with the **budget formulation** according to the funding agencies and Institute's regulations. For the budget formulation allow 24working hours in order to provide the RPO the necessary time to obtain the necessary figures that might be required for the budget formulation (salary scales, quotations etc.).
- 4) Scientists wishing to submit a research grant proposal must submit the **internal research grant form** for approval (by the CEMD and the FAD) prior to the submission of the application.
- 5) Assist the PI with the formulation of **letters of support** and obtaining of the necessary signatures from the CEMD and FAD regarding the grant application. For the formulation of letters of support, please check separate section.
- 6) Assist the PI with the paper work of the **administrative part** that might be required for the submission of the application and even in some cases submit the proposal according the funding agencies' regulations (e.g. NIH proposals). For the successful submission of NIH grant proposals please check separate section.

MANAGEMENT OF AWARDED RESEARCH GRANTS

Signature of the Contract Agreement

Once the grant is awarded and the RPO is informed, the following procedures are followed for the signature of the contract agreement:



When an application is successful the PI should inform the RPO so that the grant/project is activated and the procedure for the signature of the grant agreement is initiated. The following steps will be followed:

1. **Review** the **contract agreement** (including IP issues) and assess funding conditions. Comments and amendments are

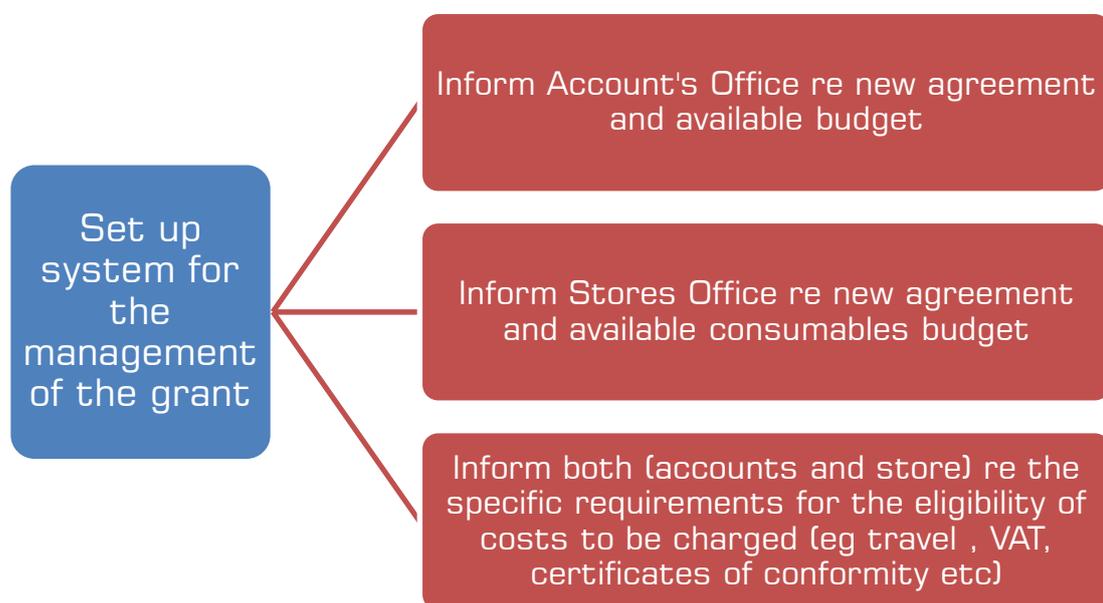
also discussed and reviewed with the FAD. For the specific action allow 3 working days.

2. **Negotiation** with **funding agency** on specific financial issues and finalise budget breakdown
3. Prepare **consortium agreements, subcontract agreements** and **partners' financial obligation agreements** that also need to be signed before the grant agreement. For the specific action allow 5-10 days depending on the funding body requirements.
4. **Liase** (if and when required) **with partners** for the approval and signature of consortium agreement and grant financial obligations. For the specific action you should allow from 5-30 days depending on the partners' response. The ultimate responsibility for persuading partners to sign the agreements lies with the PI.
5. **Signature** of the **contract agreements** necessary for the start of the grant/project.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

Set up of the financial management system

Once the grant agreement is signed the RPO will proceed with setting up the system to facilitate the management of the financial and administrative (reporting) obligations of CING and the PI.



The set up includes the following steps:

1. Inform the Accounts Office (Mrs. Vera Kazandjian) for the new grant agreement signed in order for the grant account to be activated.
2. Inform the Stores Office (Mrs. Amal Vlachou) for the new grant agreement signed and the consumables categories available budget
3. The Accounts and Stores Offices are also informed for the financial restrictions and eligibility criteria for the costs to be

charged on the specific account including travel, VAT and certificates of conformity

4. The RPMS is updated with all information of the grant agreement (start and end date, budget, CING code, partners etc.)
5. A hard copy file is created with all original documents (like the contract and consortium agreement, copy of bank transfers, reports submitted, correspondence, amendments and other requests to funding agency etc.)
6. An electronic file is also created in the Research Programmes "Basket on the server that will include the scanned contract and consortium agreement, financial reports, amendments etc. Access to this file is available only to the RPO and the FAD. The electronic scanned copies are also sent to the PI for information and filing.

Grant Implementation and closing

The responsibility for the project implementation lies with the PI (principal investigator). CING will be issuing payments out of the grant money in accordance with the instructions of the PI. It is therefore the primary responsibility of the PI to ensure that such requests are in accordance with and within the size of the agreed budget. On the contrary expenses that are over and above the contractual budget must be covered from other sources indicated by the PI.

Reporting to the sponsoring body on all matters concerning the project both scientific and financial is the responsibility of the PI. The RPO can assist the PI with the financial management and administration of the project providing the following services:



1. SPENDING AND MONITORING OF FUNDS

The RPO can generate, upon request from the PI, a report of the actual vs budgeted costs (that are already registered in CING's accounting system) through the RPMS. The specific report provides information regarding the total available budget per category (personnel, travel, consumables, services, dissemination) and the actual costs already recorded.

The RPO can also provide advice and assistance to the PI for possible costs to be claimed that are according to the funding agencies and CING's regulations as well as within the contractual budget.

Personnel

Regarding the personnel to be employed, the PI should liaise with the FAD and Personnel Office (PO) for the vacancy announcement and employment contracts. The cost of the personnel and the person months (pm) to be employed will be according to the available contractual budget and the respective pm. The RPO informs the PO of the available budget and person months (pm) as well as specific clauses of the contract agreement re personnel employment.

Personnel on research grants shall complete time sheets on a regular basis (monthly) according to the rules and regulations of the funding body. The RPO also provides guidance services for the time sheet completion (see below).

Consumables

Regarding the consumables budget and as soon as the stores are informed by the RPO of the available budget and the special clauses of the grant, the PI can start charging (according to CING internal regulations) the specific grant with the consumables required for the realisation of the grant.

Some funding agencies require the organisation to obtain certificates of conformity for the eligibility of the claimed costs under consumables. The RPO will provide assistance to the stores and PI for receiving such certificates from the Treasury. Please allow at least one month before the purchase of consumables that require such certificates.

Travel

Regarding the travel expenses researchers should follow CING and the funding agencies regulations for the eligibility of expenses claimed. Researchers should provide the accounts with all documents required (e.g. e-ticket, boarding passes, taxi transfer invoices, train tickets etc.) for the eligibility of the expenses claimed.

In addition, when the travel refers to dissemination activities researchers should follow the dissemination policy of the funding agency (include logos, wording, presentations, posters etc.) for the eligibility of the expenses.

2. TIMESHEETS

As part of the grant regulations, funding bodies require the completion of time sheets of all involved parties, so that personnel costs claimed are substantiated based on agreed monthly salaries and time spent on the grant.

The RPO has created an Excel file template for the monthly recording of time spent that can be used by researchers. Researchers are responsible for the prompt and correct completion of monthly time sheets and also get the necessary approvals and signatures from the Head of the department and the PI. RPO can advise researchers and review (according to the CING and funding agencies regulations on time spent) completed time sheets so that we can avoid ineligibility of claimed time (claimed hours during weekends, national holidays, more than weekly workable hours etc.). Please allow 2 working days for the review of the time sheets submitted.

For the time sheet completion, personnel should consider the following:

- a. The following days are public holidays and should not register any working time: 1st January, 6th January, Green Monday, 25th March, 1st April, Good Thursday (after 1pm), Good Friday, Easter Monday, 1st May, Whit Monday, 15th August, 1st October, 28th October, 24th - 26th December, 31st December (after 1pm)

- b. Annual holidays and sick leaves should be marked on the time sheets with 0 working time. The annual holiday allowance is clarified in the staff handbook.
- c. Attendance to conferences, meetings and workshops should also be registered on the time sheets with normal working hours
- d. No overtime is allowed
- e. For the period September – May the total weekly working hours for full time personnel are 38. For part timers the weekly working hours are clarified in the employment contract signed.
- f. For the period June-August the total weekly working hours are 36. For part timers the weekly working hours are clarified in the employment contract signed.

The original copy of the completed and approved (signed) time sheet should remain in the RPO's grant file for audit purposes.

3. CONTRACT AMENDMENTS

When and if required proceed and assist the PI with the submission of contract amendment request (for financial and scientific purposes) according to the funding agencies requirements.

4. FINANCIAL REPORTING

According to the contract agreement, financial reports (interim, final, quarterly etc.) should be submitted to the funding agencies, claiming costs incurred for the specific period.

The RPO will complete the financial report as per the funding agencies requirements claiming all costs incurred for the specific period including supporting documentation. The report is reconciled to the CING's accounting system and is approved by the FAD. For the first draft of the financial report please allow 5-25 working days depending on the supporting documentation (for example when the grant also includes consumables and mouse costs the preparation of the first requires more time due to the internal charging/invoicing system of the CING stores and mouse facility respectively).

When the grant involves other partners, the RPO can assist the PI to liaise with his/her partners (and their research office) for the submission of their financial report with the related documentation required by the funding agency. The timely submission of the partners' financial reports is the obligation of the partner and the PI.

Copies of financial reports (with related documentation) are kept in the RPO files.

5. EXTERNAL FINANCIAL AUDITS – AUDIT CERTIFICATE

When and if required from the funding agency proceed in collaboration with the FAD with the necessary arrangements (quotations and letters of representations/contract agreements) for the external financial audit (external auditors) and obtaining the audit certificate required with the financial report.

RPO will assist the external auditors with all required documentation for the successful completion of the financial audit.

6. FINANCIAL AUDITS BY FUNDING AGENCIES

The RPO assists in the financial audits by the funding agencies or their representatives. Extra documentation that might be required for the eligibility of CING costs claimed will also be submitted upon request.

The RPO can also assist the PI to liaise with his/her partners (and their research office) for the submission of extra documentation required by the funding agency. The timely and correct submission of the partners' financial reports is the obligation of the partner and the PI.

7. GRANT FINANCIAL CLOSING

When the grant reaches the end date and the final report is approved from the funding agency, the RPO proceeds with the reconciliation of the budget vs claimed and approved expenses and a final reconciliation report is submitted to the FAD and the PI with any pending payments.

The final reconciliation report also includes the pending funds that need to be transferred to partners. The PI should proceed and request from Accounts Office to make final payments to partners.

8. ATTESTS TO FINANCIAL REVIEW AND ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS CLAIMED

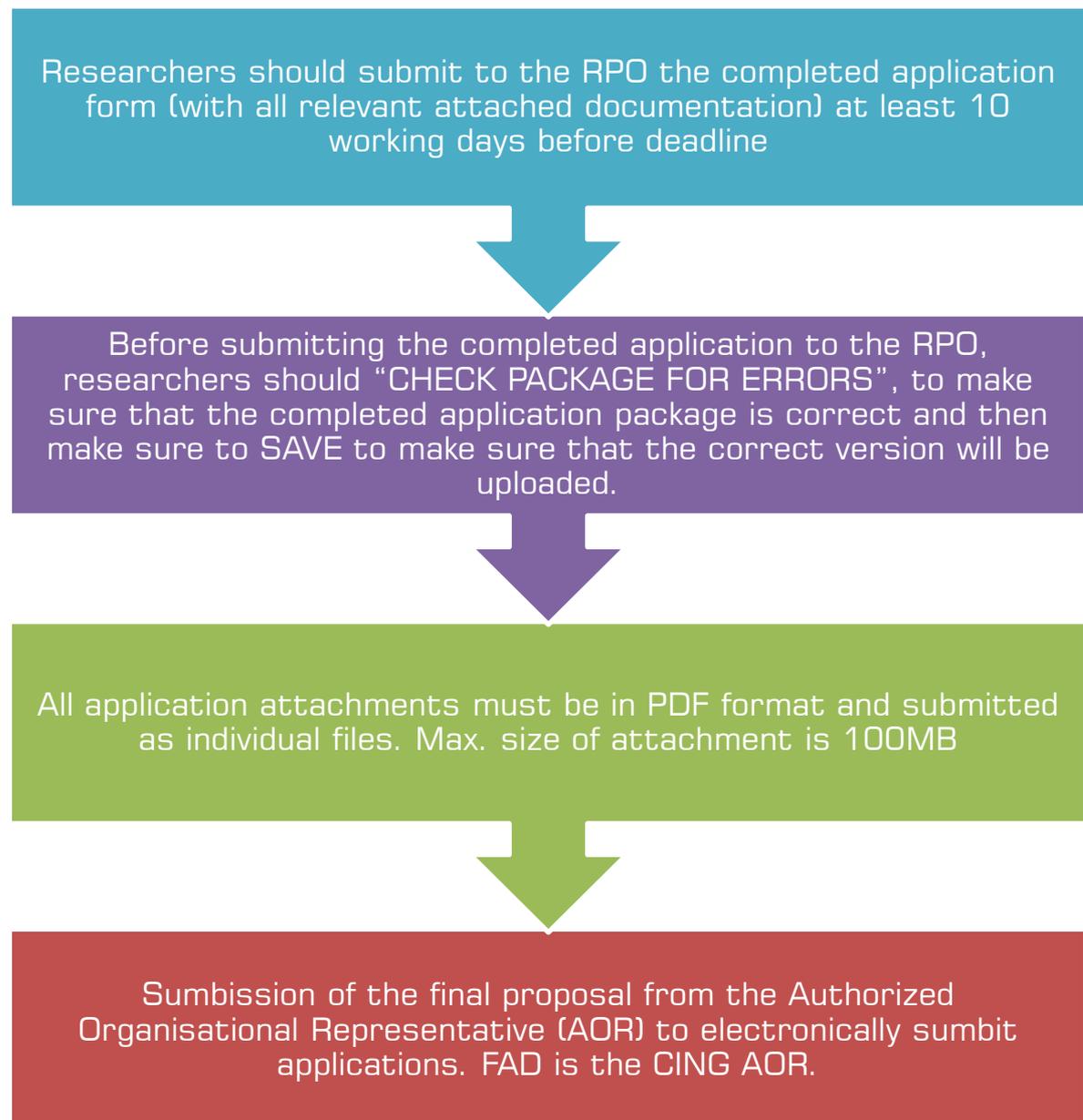
When and if required the RPO proceeds with attests to the funding agency for the eligibility of claimed costs proving extra documentation if required.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1:

Procedure for NIH grant proposal submission

For the submission of NIH grant proposals and due to the funding agency's proposal submission regulations, the following should also be followed for the successful submission of the proposal.



ANNEX 2:

Procedure for Research Support Letters

There has been a marked increase in calls where sponsors request a support letter signed by the CEMD to be submitted with the application for funding. In order to allow sufficient time for the review and signing of letters, requests for a support letter must be submitted to the RPO **5 working days** ahead of the sponsor's deadline or other institution's deadline (if another HEI is the lead on the application), whichever is sooner.

We shall endeavour to return the signed letters as soon as possible.

When submitting the request to the Research Office, please:

- ✓ Confirm that the Head of Department supports the proposal and commitment offered in the support letter
- ✓ In the case of a multi-institutional proposal, please make sure that the funding and institutional contribution from all participating institutions have been agreed before submitting the draft letter
- ✓ Submit the draft support letter, link to the call document, the outline and the budget of the proposal

The support letter should include the following information:

- Title of the proposal
- Institutions participating in the application
- Vision and aims of the proposal
- Particular strengths and expertise that the researcher(s) are bringing to the proposal
- Strengths and expertise of relevant research centres / departments and divisions, links to their research strategy and / or key themes
- Links to the Institute's strategic research initiatives and networks (where applicable)
- What support / commitments can be offered (where applicable and relevant), e.g. allocation of space, allocation of studentships, facilities, staff time etc.
- Anything else that you feel would strengthen the support to the application

GLOSSARY

CEMD	Chief Executive Medical Director
CING	The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics
FAD	Financial and Administrative Director
LEAR	Legal Entity Appointed Representative
NIH	National Institutes of Health (USA)
PO	Personnel Office
PI	Principal Investigator
pm	Person months
RPMS	Research Programmes Management System
RPO	Research Programmes Office