

This guide provides more details for writing a proposal on the AMEAR call for proposals 2023-04.

Table of Contents

Technical aspects.....	2
Relevance	2
Persons who are entitled to apply.....	2
Institutions.....	2
Countries	2
Management and support by the institution	2
Research project vs. teaching project	3
Timeline	4
Quality and clarity of rationale & research question or motivation for the teaching project, or both.....	4
Quality and appropriateness of tools and methods and materials and evaluation	4
Compliance with funding criteria.....	4
Impact and dissemination strategy	6
The project is part of a students' thesis	6
Clarity of roles and responsibilities of persons with names	6
Visibility of project, CIH and network partners	6
Rating of the scientific quality of a proposal.....	6
Review process.....	7
Required items for financial report of a project	8
Figure 1: Sample Logic model.	8
Table 1: General Resources on How to Write Grant Proposals	9

Technical aspects

- Applicants must upload the application to the web site indicated on the Call for Proposals
- Follow instructions for the structure of the proposal given in the Call for Proposals
- Current and complete affiliations of all co-applicants must be stated, including phone and email
- List of references to publications for background and methods of the proposal and to the author's own publications must be complete and follow APA style as a standard.
- We will reject applications not conforming to the above rules and not send them for review (desk reject).

Relevance

A project or research proposal must be relevant for the goals of AMEAR. These goals are:

- to strengthen the medical and health professional education research in African Higher Education Institutions
- to demonstrate clinical or community relevance of health professional education
- to foster an inter-institutional and interdisciplinary approach to health related education.

Persons who are entitled to apply

In previous AMEAR calls, graduates (alumni and alumnae) of three programmes were entitled to apply. The group of persons invited to apply was widened in the call 2003-04. Read the list in the call for proposals. Please provide evidence of your status unless you were officially known to AMEAR before.

Institutions

A proposal has names and addresses of the operationally involved institutions and countries.

Countries

One goal of the project „African Medical Education and Research Network - AMEAR“ is networking. The idea behind the AMEAR project is that entitled persons from one African university collaborate with entitled persons from another African country. A South-to-South partnership involves two different LMIC's. It is not sufficient to just mention the name of a scientist from a different country. In order to be acceptable as a full South-to-South collaboration, research activities must be conducted in both countries. For example, doing the same interventions or evaluations in both countries.

AMEAR will double the fund and conclude grant forwarding agreements for joint projects with two collaborating institutions in different African countries each up to the maximum. Applications define in a contract between the two PI's the rights of publication, and who is the first (overall) of two PI's.

Management and support by the institution

Scientists or doctors at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) who do scientific research or training have support from the HEI. Support from the HEI is critical for the success of a project. A support letter from an HEI means that the HEI has decided to support a given proposal. A support letter from an HEI typically states the amount of support that the project team and PI can expect from the HEI. Expected minimum support is managing financial and administrative issues by the HEI and granting a time budget for the project team and the PI that is sufficient to conduct the project. An applicant cannot sign his or her own support letter.

Scientists or doctors should have protection in their activity by an ethics vote. This vote comes typically from an institutional review board (IRB). An IRB vote is mandatory in clinical research, and oftentimes required in educational research. AMEAR team is seeing the IRB vote from the HEI of the

applicant at the time of submission and informs the IRB at LMU. In case that LMU staff are co-applicants, approval by the LMU ethical committee is required.

A vote from the Institutional Review Board of your Institution must be submitted. If it is not available at the time of submission, please provide a statement from your IRB with the date when you have submitted your application to the IRB.

Scientists and doctors should not take over the financial management of a grant, as the university administration does this professionally all day long and has the appropriate knowledge and experience. Scientists and doctors wish to remain secure from corruption allegations.

Time budget for the project team and the PI is the share of their contractual working time that goes into the project. PI's (applicants) are employed by a Higher Education Institution (college, university, school or whatever). Their employer expects them to do research, and for that, PI's get salary. If a PI is lucky and wins a grant for her or his research then typically she gets time for the project from her contractual working time. That may be one contribution of her university to the project. Furthermore, the HEI should also make infrastructures available such as IRB vote, project mobility, secretarial assistance, stationery, lab facilities, garbage disposal, meeting rooms, telephone and internet access, water, and toilets.

The PI does not handle money. Money goes from AMEAR to the employer of the PI, and a grant forwarding agreement is necessary. The grant forwarding agreement between LMU Hospital and the HEI of the applicant is the next step **after approval of the project proposal**.

A support letter of the institution must accompany each proposal **at the time of submission**. If other entities are deeply involved in the project, we recommend obtaining a support letter from them.

Research project vs. teaching project

Is it a research project (informing the scientific community), or a teaching project (informing the local context)?

If it is a research project: How likely and how will the project be published?

Research has a reason and researchers want to achieve something. The reasons are based on science, and form the rationale of research. There is no research without theory and without assumptions that you make. The goal of the research and the research questions are central and are related to the study design. There are resources – what is known already, competencies that you have or need to do the research, particularly research methods, there are expected results, and if research is useful or dangerous, it will have an impact. The outcome of research maybe like what you expected or may be against your expectations. Both is possible. Otherwise, it would not be research. Both ways must be interpreted. What does it mean if the result was “negative”? Authors should think in advance, about what a "negative" result might mean for the scientific community.

There is a traditional habit to concentrate on null hypothesis significance testing and communication of probabilities (p values). Currently, for educational decisions effect sizes may be of much greater interest. Therefore, applicants should consider contemporary methods, e.g. Estimation statistics.

The impact can be on communities, health systems, the environment, schools, patients, students, businesses, etc. The outcomes have significance, e.g. for the scientific community. All of these items and their relationship need to be connected logically and must be briefly explained in the proposal.

If it is a teaching or training project: **How does the applicant ascertain sustainability?**

If you are planning a training, the first thing to discuss are the goals of the training and its logic model. Without a logic model, it will be difficult to tell whether your plan for training is viable and useful. The logic model of a training must be briefly explained in the proposal.

Definition of important terms/components of the logic model: After a training, participants are doing something that they did not do before the training. What they do during the training is called learning activity. What facilitators do during the training is called teaching activity. What learners do after the training is called outcome or outcomes. Outcomes can be measured, this is called assessment. If you measure outcomes and compare with what you had intended, that is an evaluation. Evaluation is a core component of a training. An impact is something that will occur because of the outcome. Trainings need resources; otherwise, they cannot be conducted. Resources are persons with competencies, or materials, or structures, to name just a few. Resources are those that you already have, and those that you are applying for. A meeting room of a university that can be used in a training is a valuable resource since you need not hire a room in a hotel for money. All these components – goals, resources, activities, outcomes and impact, can be organized in a logic model.

Timeline

Feasibility of activities within the time frame, can the project be completed within the available time?

Quality and clarity of rationale & research question or motivation for the teaching project, or both

Research question or motivation for the teaching project must be well explained

Quality and appropriateness of tools and methods and materials and evaluation

Tools, methods, participants, materials and evaluation must be well explained.

Compliance with funding criteria

Travel cost

Consider doing a training event at your university. If that is not possible, then give **reasons** why it is not possible. If you use a hotel, a pro-forma invoice of the hotel is required. The hotel is a business, and a pro-forma invoice with signatures and full contact information of two top managers of the business are required. The pro-forma contains a detailed cost breakdown, i.e., cost per item per day per person. **After approval of the grant and the pro-forma**, Hotel (business) and customer (applicant) sign a Confirmation Letter (a template is available upon request). The route of payment is bank transfer from the university that holds the grant to the business, not through the applicant and her private money. **Immediately after the event**, applicant sends the Confirmation Letter, final invoice and list of participants with signatures of all participants to CIH office.

Cost for transportation

Only public transportation is acceptable for reimbursement. Applicant bears the responsibility for complete documentation, tickets and original receipts. Immediately after the event, applicant sends all original documents to CIH office. Unused or unpaid tickets cannot be reimbursed. Surface transport should be given preference. University cars should be used wherever possible. Flight tickets will be reimbursed only with adequate justification. Travel duration exceeding one full day may be an acceptable justification.

Cost for meals

Choose a price for a normal meal in a normal context. The reimbursement must be based on the usual standards of the HEI of the applicant. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

The Pandemic

The experience during the Corona pandemic has demonstrated that much is possible without travel, hotels etc. Why not plan an online meeting, or a blended learning approach? How about inverted classroom? Online meetings and trainings can be done with hundreds of participants. If you are requesting "Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs" then please give a justification, explain your measures against spread of the pandemic, and level of protection. Please provide a statement that your actions are in accordance with the pandemic rules of your institution (e.g. in the institutional support letter).

Cost for persons who work towards a project

Remuneration must be in line with the usual standards of the HEI of the applicant, including external experts. Contracts have to be concluded by the HEI when the HEI is responsible for the financial management anyway. Adequacy of remuneration will be assessed using 1 - degrees, 2 – responsibility, 3 - work experience, 4 – full time / part time, 5 - duration of project activity. For AMEAR, the basis is Euro, not local currency.

Personnel that you hire for a project can earn typical local salaries. Remuneration must be in line with the usual standards of the HEI of the applicant. The same is true for nurses, health officers, lab technicians, data typists, physiotherapists, scientists, etc. If tax is imposed, then add the tax. If you need external experts, then justify why you need them, what you expect them to deliver, and their fee.

Bear in mind that Center for International Health is not an NGO, a philanthropy, or a business. LMU is a public university, is obliged to be thrifty, and the fees should be adequate for this context. Money for the AMEAR project comes from Bavarian State Chancellery and is taxpayer's money, taxpayers are critical with fees.

Bear in mind that the cost accounts ("proof of use") and their appropriateness are examined internally by the auditors (and in principle by the State Audit Office). In the event of objections, funds may be reclaimed (= return the money to the Bavarian State Chancellery). For this reason, the institution of the applicant must designate a foreign currency account to receive a grant.

Per diem

The term "per diem" is ambiguous. Meals are reimbursable if they are in accordance with the usual standards of the HEI of the applicant. Daily subsistence allowance (to cover additional subsistence expenses during missions, etc.) cannot be paid where meals are provided free of charge. In general, Bavarian State Chancellery does not allow handing out cash money.

"Per diem" can be understood as money that is paid to people to attend an event. Sociology has demonstrated repeatedly that money is an extrinsic motivator and can be counterproductive when it comes to learning and working. If employers are paying per-diems based on the working contract, then that is another story and does not affect the AMEAR project. If the training is not attractive without per diem then consider improving it.

Procurement

If your project involves purchases of equipment and consumables, please explain how you are planning procurement, and who is responsible for it (cf. management scheme). A sustainable way is to purchase locally or within the country. If you are planning to purchase equipment from Germany, you have to indicate that in the proposal to avoid confusion. The responsible person must confirm procurement in writing. The AMEAR team does not procure.

Budget

The AMEAR selection committee is trying to align the financial demands of the applicant to the requirements set by LMU Hospital, the Bavarian State Chancellery and the AMEAR programme. This includes the option to change the budget.

Impact and dissemination strategy

Impact and dissemination strategy must be well explained

The project is part of a students' thesis

Teaching projects or research projects can be ideal learning environments for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students may work in a project towards their qualification thesis, or as a mandatory part of their studies (practicum, rotation), or as paid student assistants. Involving students can be a very successful strategy for recruiting long-term collaboration. Hence, AMEAR is encouraging to involve students.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities of persons with names

The question is who is responsible for what. You need to write names of real persons with the required expertise here. Different responsibilities need to be described and responsibilities need to be clearly assigned.

We suggest **to include a mentor in any project**. A mentor gives advice and feedback, and is not involved in the operations of the project.

Management scheme

Who supervises whom? How much working time is PI and each team member planning to invest? What are the required qualifications? How much working time is required from personnel paid by the project? Who is working how many hours? How much working time can be contributed by students who do unpaid project work? How much working time can be contributed by other personnel paid by the HEI? How is procurement of instruments or materials managed?

Visibility of project, CIH and network partners

Publications and communications

Journal articles and conference presentations arising out of the AMEAR project must have a funding remark or an acknowledgment like "Funded by Bavarian State Chancellery and AMEAR Centre for International Health at LMU".

Publication charges

If you are requesting financial support for publication charges, that should take place before submitting the article to the journal. Payment of fees is possible for a publication in an international journal with peer review and not under a predatory publisher and not in a predatory journal. If you are in doubt, please, ask AMEAR. If you wish that AMEAR were paying the bill directly, the bill must be addressed to LMU Hospital. Otherwise, LMU Hospital cannot pay. Direct payment is possible only after acceptance of the manuscript.

Rating of the scientific quality of a proposal

for teaching project: Strength of the Logic Model

for research project: Scientific rigor

Review process

In a first step, AMEAR team will check if your proposal is fit for review. If your proposal does not meet the formal standard, it will not be further processed (desk reject).

Other researchers and scientists will be reading and analysing your proposal. They will provide constructive criticism, check proposals against certain criteria, provide suggestions for improvement of the proposal and make a recommendation for the AMEAR selection team. Reviewers will be from Africa and from LMU. A qualified review is an essential precondition for the funding of a project. It might occur that there are no qualified persons willing or available to write a review. In this case, AMEAR cannot fund your proposal.

The AMEAR selection team will meet and discuss each proposal and the reviews as soon as the review process is complete. Oftentimes, the decision of the AMEAR team will be “accept after revision” or “reject and resubmit”. That does not imply that the project is bad or not worthy of support.

The project just needs more work. When you receive an "accept after revision" or "rejection and resubmission" decision for the first time in your life, it can be an uncomfortable feeling.

The comments of the reviewers are anonymous and you may face difficulties in understanding the comments or questions. Therefore, your first reaction should be to discuss the reviews with your co-applicants. It is even your duty to do that. The ability to process anonymous written feedback and utilise it to improve a grant proposal or a manuscript is not innate, but must be acquired through study and training.

The applicant will receive the decision of the selection team and the anonymised reviews. The applicant will see the suggestions for improvement but not the name of the reviewer. In the case of “accept after revision”, there will be a time limit of 2-3 weeks for revising the proposal, using the suggestions given by the reviewers. In the case of “reject and resubmit”, there will be more time for revising the proposal until the next call for proposals.

The PI will re-submit the revised proposal and a cover letter within the given period. Changes in the revised proposal must be marked in the revised proposal, e.g., **by highlighting the changed text**. In a cover letter, applicants describe the changes made to the proposal in a step-by-step fashion.

The cover letter should be in portrait layout and include the following columns:

Review Criteria	Reviewer	Reviewer’s Comment	Response to Reviewer’s Comment

It is the responsibility of the PI to inform all co-applicants about the reviews, the cover letter, and the revision of your proposal. If the revised proposal and cover letter are not up to the described standard, the revised proposal will be rejected.

Funding

AMEAR team has the option to adapt the budget for a proposal after final acceptance. Typically, the project budget will be transferred to the institution of the PI in two (or more) instalments. The institution of the PI signs a grant forwarding agreement with the LMU Hospital (= KUM), the institution opens a foreign currency account. Funds that have been spent for the project must be documented by original invoices and by entries in the budget table of the Bavarian State Chancellery. Using the budget table of the Bavarian State Chancellery is mandatory.

Duties of the applicant / PI

After successful application and review, the applicant receives approval from the AMEAR team. Her or his institution signs a grant forwarding agreement with the LMU Hospital (= KUM), the institution opens a foreign currency account. The applicant becomes a PI. All rules in the call for proposals apply. The PI sends quarterly progress reports and a final report when the project period has ended. The PI or a co-applicant participates in quarterly online meetings. In the case that the final evaluation of the data is not yet completed, or the research has not been published, a second final report is due within 3 months from the end of the project period. The overall project responsibility lies with the Prime Applicant. In case the Prime applicant is unable to fulfill her or his duties, should inform the AMEAR team as soon as possible in writing.

Required items for financial report of a project

- Legible receipts from finance department of the HEI with specification of price per unit and quantity. Receipts older than the date of the Grant Forwarding Agreement will not be reimbursed. Items not listed in the budget plan will not be reimbursed.
- Project specific staff will be employed by their home institution.
- For trainings: List of all participants with names, affiliation to HEI, email-address and signatures.
- Travel expenses settled according to the provisions of the Bavarian Travel Expenses Act
- Consumables (e.g. printouts) / Equipment
- For publicity work (flyer, poster, brochures, etc.) funds will be made available if the work includes reference to CIH and Bayerische Staatskanzlei (request to the AMEAR team).
- Expenditure for translations, for scientific publications.
- Consumables for setting up workshops, seminars and other academic events.
- Equipment that cost more than 410 Euros must be added to an inventory of the institution.
 - Non-refundable expenses: cancellation fees (e.g. accommodation, flights, etc.); alcoholic beverages; gifts; tip.

Figure 1: Sample Logic model.

Crucial questions are: What are the goals? How do you measure outcomes? What is the impact?

A Logic Model

Resources are those that you already have, and those that you are applying for to conduct your project	What you are planning to do with the resources, including teaching and learning activities	After completing your planned activities, you will have delivered the intended services	After you have delivered the planned services, the target group will display changed behaviour that you can observe	An impact is something that will occur because of the outcome.
Resources	Activities	Output	Outcome	Impact
Your planned work		Your intended results		

Table 1: General Resources on How to Write Grant Proposals

2A: Reading Resources:

1. Blanco MA, Gruppen LD, Artino AR Jr, Uijtdehaage S, Szauter K, Durning SJ. How to write an educational research grant: AMEE Guide No. 101. Med Teach. 2016;38(2):113-22. doi: 10.3109/0142159X.2015.1087483. Epub 2015 Nov 2. PMID: 26524428.
2. <https://globalhealthtrainingcentre.tghn.org/elearning/>

2B: Video Resources

1. <https://bit.ly/3w9UbEC>
2. <https://bit.ly/3cmgFtU>
3. <https://bit.ly/31kgb1a>
4. <https://bit.ly/3vYK7Oz>
5. <https://bit.ly/3smD6oF>
6. <https://bit.ly/2QAgy5D>
7. <https://bit.ly/3liKUMa>