AIRC Grant Management Guidelines

Eligible Costs
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Guiding Principles

As a general guiding principle, AIRC supports 100% of the additional costs generated by a funded project. The Principal Investigator (PI) is fully accountable for the budget allocation. Expenditures need to comply with AIRC administrative guidelines and with purchasing rules in force at the Hosting Institution. The PI and the Legal Representative of the Hosting Institution are jointly accountable for the financial statements included in the Administrative Reports. The Hosting Institution has to provide the PI with the necessary infrastructure (rooms, labs, major equipment, etc…), personnel, administrative and grant management assistance, and employ him/her for the whole duration of the grant. The Hosting Institution should pay for the PI's salary in case it is not an eligible cost according to the grant rules. The project duration is defined in the Call for Proposal; funds are granted yearly and must be spent in each funding period (one year plus three months buffer); should the project be delayed, the PI can ask for a no-cost extension of the funding period. Costs incurred before the project start-date or beyond the end date are not allowed. Expenditures should be consistent with the approved budget. Major discrepancies should be notified to AIRC during the project execution: they should be carefully described and scientifically justified.

Eligible costs categories are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Direct Costs

The following budget categories are eligible and can be directly allocated to the grant.

**Consumables and supplies**
This budget category is meant to cover the purchase of all of laboratory supplies for the project execution: plasticware and glassware, reagents and diagnostics, cell lines, etc. It covers all supplies that have no residual value after use. Laboratory animals can be accounted for in this item too, if necessary. It is not allowed to use these funds to purchase material not directly related to the research activity, such as stationery or other non-specific material (gloves, overalls, PPE, etc.). These costs are included in the "Indirect costs".

**Small bench instrumentation**
The purchase of laboratory instruments of small size and/or little economic value (e.g. bench centrifuges, power supply, mixers, etc.) falls under this budget category. AIRC does not provide a detailed list of eligible instrumentation, however only the purchase of instruments strictly related with the funded research activity is allowed. The purchase of personal computers, printers and other personal electronic devices is not allowed. However, such instruments may be included in the "Indirect costs" for the time of use in the project. This does not apply to workstations for data analysis, biostatistics, etc. or to computers for lab instrumentation management, if explicitly required in the project application: they can be purchased after obtaining AIRC authorisation. The purchase of software and other licenses is allowed exclusively for the purposes of the research.

**Equipment**
The purchase of major equipment is allowed only within specific Calls. For the use of specific laboratory instrumentation, including complex and costly equipment, the rental or leasing of such equipment is allowed, as long as it is used for the specific aims of the project and has been authorized by AIRC. The amount allocated must be calculated according to the period of actual use of the equipment. In no case the rental agreement can exceed the project duration.
**Services**
Consulting fees, external companies activities and analytical services (e.g. microarray services, histology services, sequencing, data processing, etc.), patent costs can be included in this budget category.

**Maintenance contracts**
Maintenance contracts activated on equipment which is already available in the laboratory are allowed, provided that the equipment is mostly used for the project. Animal facility costs and animal care services are eligible as maintenance contracts, too.

**Publication costs**
Costs for the publication of scientific research papers in peer-reviewed journals are eligible. Open access costs are allowed as well.
Publication costs for books or book chapters are allowed only if strictly related to the project subject.

**Meetings and travel costs**
Conferences and seminars registration fees and travel costs to attend scientific meetings are eligible only if project data are presented or if the meeting/conference subject is strictly related to the research project.
Meetings and travel costs are allowed only for researchers included in the personnel of the project; exceptions to this rule must be communicated to AIRC in advance.

Travel expenses are also allowed for courses and/or training in external laboratories. Costs are allowed only for researchers officially included in the project and for activities closely related to the research topic.

**Personnel Costs**
Support is provided only for personnel working 100% of its time on the project. Each Call indicates the personnel that can be paid with the grant (e.g. early stage researchers, technicians, project managers, etc.) and the maximum number of units. Applicants should ascertain that the Hosting Institution can take on personnel as indicated in the application, under the kind of financial support requested.
The general policy of AIRC is to provide fellowships to researchers in the early stage of their career; the financial support requested should be consistent with the gross amount provided to fellows at the same career level at the Hosting Institution. Integration of AIRC financial support by the Hosting Institution is permitted, but two salaries are not allowed.

**PI Salary**
Each Call indicates whether the PI's salary can be paid - partially or in full - with the grant. It is usually allowed in grants specifically designed for junior PIs setting up their first lab; it can be requested only if strictly necessary and if the PI does not hold a permanent position at the Hosting Institution yet. The Hosting Institution carries administrative responsibility for the entire salary even if it's covered by AIRC funds.

**Indirect costs**
Indirect costs generated for the project execution at the laboratory are eligible. The maximum indirect costs covered are the 15% of direct research costs.
Indirect costs include, for instance:
- costs of workstation for the researchers involved in the project;
- consumables generally associated to laboratory activities and not directly attributable to the project;
- personnel of the research group, but not directly involved in the funded project (e.g. scientific secretariat, technical support staff);
- use of common scientific facilities.
Overheads

Overheads include costs not specifically related to the research activities, that the Hosting Institution has to bear to ensure the project execution and management. The maximum overheads allowed are the 10% of the sum of direct and indirect costs.

Overheads include, for instance:

- grant management;
- facility management, including utilities;
- human resources;
- administrative costs.