EORTC Quality of Life Group

Grant Application Guidelines 2027

The EORTC Quality of Life Group (QLG) invites applications for a new round of grants with a **deadline for submission by 5.00pm (CET) 15th of February 2027.**

Applications will be considered for any form of research relevant to the field of health-related quality of life (HRQoL) in cancer that falls within the research focus of the group, namely the development, testing and application of measures for assessing the HRQoL of patients with cancer (See Appendix A describing the aims of the EORTC QLG as per its Standards of Conduct).

Besides module development projects, strategic and research projects aiming to strengthen liaisons between the EORTC QLG and the EORTC Disease Oriented Groups (DOGs) will be given extra priority. It is also possible to submit applications that focus on research to improve our understanding of the effects of cancer and its treatment on the HRQoL of diverse populations of patients with cancer and/or to investigate the possible cross-cultural differences in these effects. Projects looking at psychosocial aspects in oncology or psychosocial interventions **do not** fall within the remit of the EORTC QLG.

Applicants should ensure that their proposal is well aligned with the QLG's ongoing research portfolio, including commissioned calls and projects currently under development. To support this, researchers are encouraged to contact Principal Investigators of relevant active projects to explore potential synergies, avoid unnecessary duplication, and identify opportunities for complementary work.

As commissioned calls operate within finite resources, projects that create meaningful links with ongoing QLG activities are particularly encouraged. Such feed-in or spin-off initiatives can strengthen the coherence, efficiency, and overall impact of the QLG's research programme.

Grants are awarded only to active members of the EORTC QLG as principal investigators (i.e., applicants have to be active members at the time of grant application, see Appendix B for membership rules). In the case of projects aiming to strengthen liaisons between the QLG and DOGs, members of a DOG group can apply for a grant together with an active EORTC QLG member (shared principal investigatorship).

Types of grant applications

We invite three types of grant applications:

1) Study (module): Generation of new data according to the Module Development Guidelines.
2) Study (non-module): Generation of new data with the aim of applying or further refining existing EORTC measures in a clinical or methodological context.
3) Research project: No collection of prospective patient data (e.g. retrospective analysis of existing data sets).

Please note that **all fast-track applications** should be submitted to the Project and Module Development Committee (PMDC). For more details contact the PMDC: pmdc@eortc.org

Budget limits

We invite applications for small and large project grants. The maximum budgets (excluding per-participant-payment, ethics, governance/contracting costs, overheads) are as follows:

Type of Project	Maximum budget
Study (Module): Phase I-II	€250,000
Study (Module): Phase III	€235,000
Study (Module): Phase IV	€350,000
Other small projects	€175,000
Other large projects	€350,000

For details on how to budget per-participant-payment and general guidance on costing, see **Appendix C.**

Format of the applications

An application can only be submitted after submission of a written short outline (not applicable for commissioned calls), presentation at an EORTC QLG meeting (coordinated by the Project and Module Development Committee (PMDC)), and succeeding endorsement by the EORTC QLG EC. The application has to follow the grant application form (title page, lay summary, project description, references, budget, CV, signed letter of intent from collaborators, proof from financial departments and DOG confirmation letter) and **has to be submitted as a single pdf**.

Please find below the requirements that must be met for the grant application:

- The maximum number of PIs on a standard grant is two. If there are two PIs, one PI will be the lead PI (whose institution is the legal sponsor) and the other PI will be the co-PI. The co-PI must be from a different institution to the PI. Commissioned call grant applications can also include an ECI-PI in addition to 2 PIs.
- Collaborators: All proposed collaborators should provide a short, signed letter of intent describing what their contribution to the project will be. Signed letters of intent should be attached to the end of the application form and submitted as one file. Letters of intent submitted with the short outline application are also acceptable for the full grant proposal, provided they are attached to the final application.
- If the project is in collaboration with an EORTC Disease Oriented Group (DOG), an endorsement letter from the DOG must be submitted with the full grant application, if not submitted at the short outline stage. (Note: Collaborative projects with DOGs will be input on the EORTC system as a QLG-DOG study. The PI(s) will be responsible for keeping the DOG involved in the work and ensuring that their contribution is acknowledged in publications, if applicable.)
- Confirmation that you have read, understood, and agreed to comply with the key conditions if a grant is awarded (see Appendix D).
- Lay summary (Word limit 300 words, **using plain English** so it is easy for a non-scientific audience to understand).
- Project description including strategic assessment (maximum of 5 pages). The strategic assessment should briefly describe how the broader QLG project portfolio has been considered and explain how the proposed research complements, contributes to, or enhances existing initiatives.
- References (maximum of 15 references).
- Proof from the financial department of the institution(s) that the budget has been reviewed and approved (e.g. signed letter or email confirmation from financial department). A signed letter or email confirmation must be provided by **each** institution receiving funding (except where the requested funding is exclusively for travel costs).
- CV (maximum 1 page, including the 5 most important publications in the last 5 years)
- Names and contact email addresses of minimum **3** external reviewers (i.e. not QLG members) Proposed reviewers should have no present research collaborations or have co-authorship in the last 3 years with principal investigator(s).

If you are conducting a phase I study (module) or a phase I / II study (module) please see appendix E for additional instructions on what to include in the grant application.

The grant application guidelines are available on https://qol.eortc.org/active-members/. The grant application form can be obtained from qol.grc@eortc.org. Applications should be submitted electronically to Dr Johannes Giesinger (Chair of Grant Review Committee) at: qol.grc@eortc.org by **5 p.m. CET, 15th February 2027.**

Peer review procedure

All grant applications will undergo a thorough review process that involves the Project and Module Development Committee (PMDC) (for fast-track applications), the EORTC Directors, the EORTC Protocol Review Committee (PRC) (for non-modules requiring PRC review), the EORTC QLG Grant Review Committee (GRC), and the QLG Executive Committee (EC).

Grant applications will be rated on the following criteria: (1) scientific quality; (2) relevance to the field; (3) feasibility of the project; (4) "value for money"; (5) qualifications and track record of the applicant(s) and (6) meets the strategic agenda of the EORTC QLG.

The EC will meet to make the final decisions. Conflict of interest (COI) of EC members is declared at the start of the meeting. Those with a COI do not participate in discussing the specific application. The EC will inform the PI(s) on the final decisions.

Provisional Timelines

- 15th February 2027: Deadline for grant submissions to the GRC, GRC checks eligibility of the grant applications
- March 2027: Eligible grant applications will be reviewed by EORTC Directors
- March/April 2027: Start review process of eligible grant applications via GRC or PRC
- April 2027: GRC internal meeting to discuss proposals not requiring PRC review
- May 2027: EC meeting to discuss applications with reviewers' feedback
- June 2027: EC makes funding decision and informs PIs

Appendix A. Aims (from EORTC QLG Standards of Conduct, June 2024)

The EORTC QLG actively involves patients, clinicians, and researchers from diverse disciplines to drive excellence and innovation in quality-of-life research and education. The QLG advocates for quality-of-life assessment as a critical component of the cancer care pathway and aims to contribute to sustainable improvements in the quality of life of people with cancer internationally.

The aims of the QLG are to:

- Develop, validate, and maintain reliable instruments for measuring patient-reported outcomes (PROs), health-related quality of life (HRQoL), and other patient-centred outcomes in cancer research and clinical practice.
- Promote the assessment of quality of life as a key outcome in cancer care, clinical trials, observational studies, survivorship research, and other well-designed research programmes.
- Advise and support the EORTC, its groups, and collaborating researchers on the design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation of PRO and HRQoL assessment.
- Conduct research to better understand the impact of cancer and its treatment on quality of life across diverse patient populations and cultural settings.
- Advance methodological research in PRO and HRQoL measurement, including innovative approaches to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
- Investigate and promote the use of emerging technologies and data science approaches to support the assessment and monitoring of patient-reported outcomes.
- Contribute to education, training, mentorship, and knowledge dissemination activities that promote excellence in quality-of-life research and the EORTC approach to PRO and HRQoL assessment.
- Foster interdisciplinary, international, and cross-cultural collaboration within the EORTC and with external academic, clinical, patient, and non-profit partners.
- Support the broader EORTC scientific strategy through research and knowledge development in fields including, but not limited to, survivorship, outcome research, translational research, imaging research, health technology assessment, molecular epidemiology, cancer biology, and emerging data science methodologies.

Appendix B. EORTC QLG membership

Active members are actively involved in at least one of the Group's activities, e.g.:

- Module development;
- An EORTC field study;
- Other research activities of the QLG;
- Providing advice to the EORTC on QOL assessment;
- Serving as an officer on one of the Group's committees.

Group membership procedure
Individuals wishing to join the EORTC QLG can do so by going onto the EORTC QLG website and completing the membership application form QLG membership | EORTC – Quality of Life

To become an active member, a person has to:

1. Attend 2 meetings within 2 years; at the third meeting you attend, you will become an active QLG member
2. Be actively involved in EORTC Quality of Life Group research.

To maintain active membership the individual has to continue with EORTC QLG-related research activities and attend a minimum of 2 QLG meetings within every 2 years.

Before becoming an active QLG member, the individual will be registered as a QLG corresponding member and will be included in the EORTC QLG mailing list.

Corresponding members also include individuals actively supporting the EORTC approach to QOL assessment who are unable to attend meetings because of distance (e.g. NCI-Canada representatives) or cost (e.g. Eastern European colleagues). At the discretion of the Executive Committee individuals interested in the Group's work but unable to attend meetings may be kept informed of the Group's work and invited to collaborate, e.g. in research, as appropriate.

Appendix C. Guidance on costing grant applications

A full detailed breakdown of costs and justification for all funding is required for all items listed in the budget per year of the project. Do not include a budget item called “Other” or “Miscellaneous”. If you have budget items that do not fit into the regular categories, add lines as necessary and describe the budget item. If several institutions will receive money (except for participant payments) please create separate budget tables and a joint table, containing the total costs.

Costs that Count Towards the Budget Limit

The following budget items count towards the budget limit specified for the different types of studies.

Personnel costs

Please list each proposed member of study personnel in the budget table. In the budget justification section, please indicate if the position is full-time or pro-rata, the salary scale used, the level and point on that scale and justification for the salary level chosen including the responsibilities each member of study personnel will undertake.

Principal investigator/Co-Principal Investigator(s)’ salaries **cannot** be included in the budget of the grant. ECI-PIs named on a commissioned call cannot request salary either.

In general, collaborators are not expected to request salaries. Salary requests are limited to dedicated study coordinators. Collaborators are recognised indirectly through authorship and/or per-participant payments, depending on their contributions.

For the ECI grant applications, the ECI-PIs can request salary in the budget of the grant. Non-clinician ECIs must dedicate a minimum of 80% of their time and clinician ECIs must dedicate a minimum of 50% of their time to the ECI project.

Travel expenses to attend EORTC QLG meetings

These are paid to persons employed on the grant and the principal investigator(s) to attend the EORTC QLG meetings at a maximum of 1000 Euro per person per meeting. Additional travel costs may be requested if they are required for the conduct of the research proposed.

Translation costs

Translations of issues in a Phase I module study can be done by the collaborators or by a translation vendor. They are not coordinated by the QLD Translation Team, unless discussed and agreed on the process. If a translation vendor is used, then the costs **must be included** in the budget.

Translation costs for all languages for new modules that have completed Phase II (i.e. have a preliminary module consisting of items/questions as in the reviewed and approved Phase I-II report) or are in Phase III are covered by the EORTC QLG and **should not be included in the budget.** For each language, a commitment form from the collaborator (s) is required. For Phase IV, if new translations are needed, please contact the Translation Unit (dagmara.kulis@eortc.org) to discuss the costs that have to be included in the budget.

Translation of any additional non-EORTC questionnaires used in some studies **should be included in the budget.** These translations may be done via EORTC QLD to ensure their quality.

EORTC Headquarter costs
If the project includes any form of workload for the EORTC Headquarters that are not related to translations (e.g. regulatory activities, database management, statistical support etc.) please contact the GRC at gol.grc@eortc.org at the earliest opportunity during the development of this grant proposal to discuss these costs.

Costs that are in addition to the Budget Limit
The following costs are in addition to the budget limit specified for the different types of studies.

Payment per participant (PPP)
The payment will depend on the number of proposed administrations of questionnaires and on whether one-to-one interviews will be conducted. All proposed administrations need to be completed for payment unless a participant withdraws from the study. Questionnaire administrations are capped at 3 administrations. The payment per participant (PPP) does not apply to focus groups or Delphi studies.

Single administration of questionnaire(s)	75 Euro
2 administrations of questionnaire(s) per participant	150 Euro
3 administrations of questionnaire(s) per participant	225 Euro
One-to-one interviews	150 Euro

Ethical approval costs
For studies where ethical approval costs apply, please include the maximum budget allowed (10,000 Euro) in the budget table. This 10,000 euro budget will be managed by EORTC HQ and paid out as necessary following invoices from ethical approval committees. Ethical approval costs over 10,000 euro will be processed by EORTC HQ on a case-by case basis**.** The budget for ethical approval costs cannot be re-assigned to any other budget item.

Personnel to support governance processes
Given the increasing workload and complexity of governance and contracting processes, a 4-month full-time person can be employed (in addition to the study personnel on the grant) who is responsible for all governance aspects. Justification for the salary level chosen to carry out these tasks should be provided in the justification table of the budget. Ongoing projects that can show they still have to deal with governance issues can also request this funding.

Overheads
A maximum of 25% for overheads on all costs (excluding per participant payments, any EORTC **non-salaried** costs e.g. ethical approval costs, or payments made directly to third party vendors) can be requested. Please indicate in the justification table the list of budget items the overheads cost has been applied to.

Open Access Publication Costs
The EORTC QLG will cover the article processing charges for open access publication for articles published on behalf of the EORTC QLG. The fees for open access **should not be included** in the budget. At the time of article acceptance, authors can request the additional costs from the EORTC QLG Group treasurer (see Appendix F for more details).

Hardware costs
Costs for computers or other hardware are not eligible costs and **should not** be included in the budget. Institutions are expected to use overhead costs to provide computers and other hardware for employees funded through the grant.

Appendix D Key Conditions if a grant is awarded

Please read the following carefully to ensure that you have read, understood, and agreed to comply with these key conditions if your grant application is successful in securing funding from the EORTC QLG.

Collaborator contracts
Contracts need to be established with all collaborators who receive payment for data collection and/or are involved in transferring data to the PI's institution during the study that will subsequently be transferred to the EORTC HQ after the completion of the study. It will be the PI's responsibility to ensure that contracts are concluded between the EORTC HQ and each collaborating site before data collection starts at that site. If you require further information regarding this, please contact the QLG treasurer.

Intellectual Property (IP) Rights
Any Intellectual Property (IP) rights arising from your research supported by the grant (except the copyright on the publication), including any generated data and the data collected from the participating centres will be owned by the EORTC. This data can be re-used for future research projects, in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and as per EORTC Data Sharing Policy (available at EORTC website: www.eortc.org/policies-guidelines).

Data transfer
Upon submission of the final draft manuscript to the EORTC QLG Executive Committee (EC), a copy of the pseudo-anonymised data and of the requested support documents should be transferred to the EORTC in accordance with all relevant data protection legislations.

Data privacy
In the case of research led by a non-EU PI, when processing personal data from EU individuals, the non-EU PI/institution, as data controller, must comply with the requirements of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This includes complying with data protection principles and data controller's obligations as defined under the GDPR, such as lawful basis, data minimization, accountability, etc. Additionally, the non-EU PI/Institution must appoint an EU Data Protection Representative as specified in Art. 27 of the GDPR, who will serve as the contact point with EU Data Protection Authorities.

Publications
Prior to submitting a publication to a journal, the publication must be sent to the EORTC QLG Publication Editor for review and approval by the EORTC QLG Executive Committee. All publications that have been approved by the EORTC QLG must include '*on behalf of the EORTC Quality of Life Group*' in the authorship list.

Appendix E. Guidance on applying for a Phase 1 or a Phase 1&2 module grant for developing an EORTC questionnaire

Questionnaire development follows the Module Development Guidelines. The 5th edition of the Module Development Guidelines should be consulted and is available on the QLG website.
If you are applying for a Phase 1 or a Phase 1&2 module grant for developing an EORTC questionnaire, please include the following information in the **methods section** of the grant proposal:

- The planned **literature searches**
- A **recruitment matrix** for the **healthcare professionals**, including all relevant and applicable information about the planned sample (e.g., cross-cultural distribution, expertise)
- A **recruitment matrix** for the **patients**, including all relevant and applicable information about the planned sample (e.g., cross-cultural distribution, disease site, disease stage, treatment, gender, age). An example of a recruitment matrix can be found in Appendix 1 of the Module Development Guidelines
- The planned methods for the **healthcare professional** and **patient interviews**
- A description of the **steps** and **rules** that will be used to **select the final list of issues from Phase 1** (to be converted into questions or items in Phase 2)
- **If the application is for Phase 1&2**: a description of the planned consultation process that will lead to the preliminary questionnaire (to be pre-tested in Phase 3a if applicable).

Appendix F. EORTC QLG Open Access Policy

1.1 Overview

Authors **must** publish work related to their study on behalf of the EORTC QLG. Authors are strongly encouraged, but not required, to publish their research with open access. However, open access fees will only be funded for publications that are published on behalf of the EORTC QLG.[1]

Allowing free online access to our research will:

- Maximise the availability and usability of our work
- Ensure the research we fund can be built upon

1.2 Funding

The EORTC QLG will cover the article processing charges for open access publication for articles published on behalf of the EORTC Quality of Life group. For the fees to be covered, the following must be true:

- The article reports the results of work funded or part-funded by the EORTC QLG
- The article must have been reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee
- The article must include 'on behalf of the EORTC Quality of Life Group' in the authorship list

We expect authors to:

- Be aware of the costs of publishing in various journals
- Only submit to journals they consider represent value for money
- Only submit to journals that allow authors to include 'on behalf of the EORTC Quality of Life Group' in the author list

1.3 How to obtain funding

- The fees for open access **should not be included** in the initial grant application - these will be provided on top of the grant funding
- At the time of article acceptance, authors can request the additional costs from the EORTC QLG treasurer
- Institutes need to pay the invoice and all the costs will be reimbursed by the EORTC QLG afterwards: this has the advantage that we can profit from agreements between publishers and institutes (which are not in place between the EORTC and publishers)

[1] To apply for publication on behalf of the EORTC QLG, manuscripts are reviewed by the EC. In case a manuscript is not endorsed, it cannot be published on behalf of the QLG; in such cases, authors are invited to submit a revised manuscript.