

Research

2024 AO Spine Middle East and Northern Africa Research Award

Call for Proposals and Proposal Guidelines



A grant opportunity for spine research in the MENA region

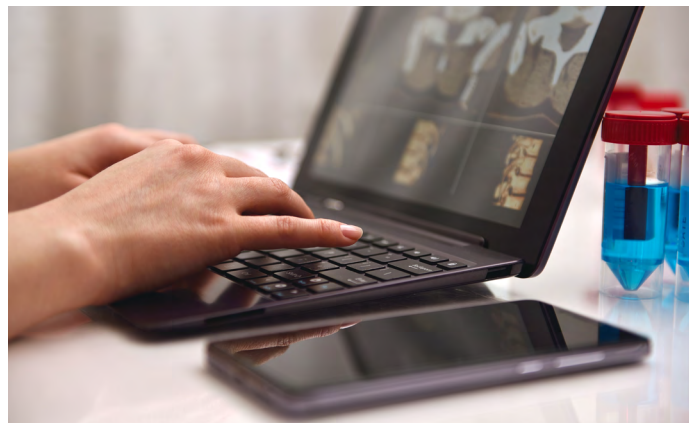
1. Introduction and eligibility

The AO Spine Research Commission is pleased to announce the 2024 AO Spine Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) Research Award. This grant is funded by AO Spine, a clinical division of the AO Foundation, a medically-guided, not-for-profit organization, a global network of surgeons, and the premier education, innovation, and research organization for the surgical treatment of trauma and musculoskeletal disorders, based in Switzerland.

This grant opportunity supports and encourages scientists and clinicians in the field of spine research who are practicing and residing in the MENA region to conduct spine research relevant and unique to the MENA region. In other words, research that could only be done in the MENA region.

The aim is to encourage scientists and clinicians who have a desire to perform high-quality, clinical multicenter spine research to engage in research that will develop or eventually lead to the development of a research network that will conduct multicenter studies not only relevant to the MENA region, but have worldwide impact.

This invitation for proposals is open to AO Spine members from the MENA region.



2. Funding

One award up to CHF 30,000 and for the maximum duration of two years will be granted.

Salaries for the applicant (main applicant and co-applicants) will normally not be approved. If the project is only possible with some funding for the applicant, it must be clearly shown that the funding requested is essential, project specific, and well documented. Written and signed confirmation from



the institution director/head is required with the application that no alternative source of income is available (including salary, stipend, or grant).

Funding for research networking meetings related to the project (i.e. in-person consensus meetings) will be supported. Only project-specific travel expenses with a maximum amount of CHF 2,000 for conferences will be covered. It is encouraged that all recipients disseminate their findings at the **Global Spine Congress**, AO Spine's annual meeting.

Applicants should note that indirect costs shall not exceed 5% of the overall budget. Payments will be made to the Institution and not to the individual applicants, provided that the Institution agrees to hold such payments in accordance with the terms of the specific grant.

Additional funding from other AO institutions or any other sources must be disclosed in detail. If other funding is/or becomes available, it must be made clear how this will affect the overall budget of the project, should the application be successful.

3. Applications

To receive the application form, please contact your AO Spine regional staff representative or send an email to research@aospine.org.

Each applicant must submit their proposal to research@aospine.org.

The deadline for submission is March 1, 2024 (23:59 CET).

Applications which do not conform completely to this application format or which ignore or fail to comply with any part of the guidelines will NOT be considered. This includes word count and page numbers. Only proposals from registered AO members will be considered.

4. Application evaluation and selection process

A blinded peer-review process that will lead to the selection of awards will be conducted through scientific evaluation by the AO Spine Research Commission.

The decisions are final and binding. A concise critique will be provided only for successful awardees. No critiques will be provided to support the final decision in all other cases.

Applications are rated on their scientific merit, clinical relevance, and feasibility:

Engagement: Is there a clear and plausible plan for forming a research network or a pilot to eventually form a research network?

Relevance: Is the project clinically relevant to the region and have strong rationale based on the resources of the region?

Research Question: Is the research question clear, and does it match the rationale?

Approach: Is the methodology appropriate to answer the research question?

Feasibility: Can the investigator deliver the expected result within the estimated timeframe (max. 2 years) and complete the work?

Budget: Is the budget reasonable for the expected deliverables?

Overall impression: Will this research have an impact on spine care either within the region or worldwide?

5. Results and reporting

An interim progress report regarding the research project must be submitted to the AO Spine Research Commission 6 months after the work commences, using the research grant report form provided.

Then a second interim report will be submitted at 12 months after the work commences. A final report must be submitted at the end of the project, no later than 24 months after the work commences and shall include a description of the grant's accomplishments and an accounting for the funds received under the grant.

If the work cannot be completed within the 24-month timeframe, AO Spine must be notified and a written request to extend the grant must be submitted for approval. The AO Spine Research Commission reserves the right to discontinue the grant, with return of full funding by the recipient, if for any reason it is determined that the activities for which the grant is intended to address cannot be met.

AO Spine, AO Foundation must be cited as the source of funding in any publication, presentation, or in any publicity resulting from the award or its results. It is encouraged that successful applicants present their research findings at the [Global Spine Congress](#) and submit their work for publication in the [Global Spine Journal](#).



6. Retention of records

AO Spine shall retain all records pertaining to all grants including grant applications, names of reviewers, scoring sheets by reviewers, correspondence, progress reports, and distribution of funds.

7. Miscellaneous

For support on how to develop a robust grant proposal, take advantage of [AO PEER—AO Program for Education and Excellence in Research](#). It provides a collection of useful research learning tools, including grant writing and study protocol development, designed by surgeons, for surgeons.

8. Timelines

The following are non-negotiable deadlines:

Open call-for-proposals: January 15, 2024

Deadline for proposals: March 1, 2024
(23:59 CET)

Grants announced: May 2024

Contract start: June–September 2024

First interim report: 6 months from the project start date

Second interim report: 12 months from the project start date

Final report: June–September 2026



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