



وزارة الصحة العامة
Ministry of Public Health
دولة قطر • State of Qatar



NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM (NRP)

UNLOCKING THE MIND

ADVANCING NEURO AND MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

QRDI-MOPH Joint Funding Call

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

SECOND CYCLE



January 2026

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SECTION 1. Acronym List

GAG	Grant Application Guide
IP	Intellectual Property
KI	Key Investigator
LPI	Lead Principal Investigator
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
PI	Principal Investigator
PR	Peer Reviewer
QRDI	Qatar Research, Development and Innovation
R&D	Research and Development
RFA	Request for Application
RO	Research Office

SECTION 2. Snapshot

SCOPE	
Competition Opens	January 14, 2026 (12 PM, Doha time).
Submission Deadline	Proposal submission by LPI: March 11, 2026 (12 PM, Doha time). Final submission and RO vetting: April 01, 2026 (12 PM, Doha time).
Announcement of Awards	August/September 2026
Applicant Eligibility	- The LPI must hold an approved terminal degree as defined in the list of terminal degrees link. - The LPI must be affiliated to an approved submitting institution inside Qatar.
Research Questions	- Epidemiological Studies on Mental and Neurological Disorders in Qatar - Precision Mental and Neurological Health - Emerging Technologies for Mental and Neurological Health - Neuromodulation and Behavioral Therapies - Neurodevelopmental Research and Early Interventions
Awards Parameters	Each award is up to QAR 547.500 (US\$150,000) per year and up to two years.
Co-Funding/Cost-Sharing Opportunities	QRDI encourages co-funding/cost-sharing contributions, in cash or in-kind.
IP Policy	QRDI Intellectual Property (IP) Policy can be found at link .
How to Apply	Register and submit the full application through the online submission system website: https://oss.qgrants.org/ . The Grant Application Guide (GAG) is available in the document library at the link .
Related Documents	Applications must comply with all the policies and guidelines available at link and in the the document library at the link .
Contact	All enquiries and requests should be submitted via QRDI support system, at link .

SECTION 3. OVERVIEW AND CALL OBJECTIVES

In response to the National Development Strategy-3 outcomes, Qatar Research, Development and Innovation Council (QRDI Council) in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), is hereby launching the second cycle of the joint call on **Unlocking The Mind: Advancing Neuro and Mental Health Research**. This call aims to assist the MoPH to achieve its strategic objectives, by providing research opportunities focused at developing implementable new/customized solutions that address some of the key priorities identified in Qatar's National Health Strategy 2024-2030. Specifically, this call aimed at:

- Enhancing neurological, mental health and wellbeing statuses in Qatar through investing in applied research.
- Enhancing diagnosis, prevention, intervention, and treatment methods with a direct impact on both mental health and neurological conditions.
- Improving early diagnostic capabilities for conditions such as depression, anxiety, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- Exploring precision medicine and personalized healthcare strategies.
- Enhancing data collection, integration, and analysis to drive effective policy-making and public health planning.

SECTION 4. RESEARCH PRIORITY AREAS

Applicants are urged to submit applied research proposals aimed at exploring innovative approaches for diagnosing, preventing, and treating mental health and neurological disorders in human participants. The use of modern technologies such as AI applications in clinical settings, digital tools, service innovations, neuromodulation, omic investigations, and prevalence studies is strongly encouraged. Proposals should demonstrate original approach, methodological rigor, and provide tangible implementable solutions to the research priority areas raised below.

4.1. Epidemiological Studies on Mental and Neurological Disorders in Qatar

This priority area aims to understand the prevalence of both mental and neurological disorders in Qatar to inform coordinated health, social, and economic policies. The goal is to transition towards a more sustainable system that promises improved population health outcomes. This includes studies that collect and link biological, clinical, environmental, and social data from patients, cohorts, and other relevant groups. Furthermore, epidemiological research on dementia, neurodegenerative conditions, and neurodevelopmental disorders should focus on understanding their social and economic impact, risk factors, and early prevention strategies.

4.2. Precision Mental and Neurological Health

This priority area aims to improve the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of mental health and neurological conditions by considering various factors such as genomics, epigenomics, neurobiology, environmental influences, life experiences, and neurodevelopmental aspects. It explores how these factors interact to impact outcomes for conditions like depression, ASD, Alzheimer's disease, and epilepsy. Moreover, it addresses the influence of social and cultural factors on mental and neurological health outcomes, taking into account the psychosocial, religious, and cultural nuances specific to Qatar's diverse population. Also, this priority area encourages the exploration of the impacts of social media and digital technologies on individuals' mental well-being.

4.3. Emerging Technologies for Mental and Neurological Health

This priority area aims to utilize data-informed decision support systems and healthcare solutions using smart technologies. The goal is to leverage these technologies for personalized interventions and precision diagnostics. The research includes the integration of data-driven algorithms, AI-based early warning systems, and patient-centred care approaches to enhance prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies for both mental health and neurological conditions.

4.4. Neuromodulation and Behavioral Therapies

This priority area targets research on neuromodulation techniques, behavioral therapies, and digital interventions across all life stages. The objective is to refine neuroscience-based metrics and develop innovative therapies that can deliver personalized treatments more efficiently. Additionally, digital interventions that provide scalable and accessible solutions to behavioral and neurological challenges are strongly encouraged.

4.5. Neurodevelopmental Research and Early Interventions

This priority area aims to understand and address neurodevelopmental disorders like ASD, ADHD, and intellectual disabilities. Studies should focus on early diagnosis, the impact of genetic and environmental risk factors, and the development of interventions to support children and adolescents in their social, cognitive, and emotional growth. Research can also investigate the effectiveness of different educational and therapeutic approaches, aiming to foster inclusivity and improved quality of life for affected individuals and families.

SECTION 5. AVAILABLE MOPH RESOURCES

Applicants may leverage the MoPH resources when relevant to their proposal. In such cases, applicants need to identify and justify the utilization aspects of the resources in the relevant section of the research plan. For proposals utilising MoPH resources, that will be funded through this call, a supporting letter from MoPH should be uploaded in the joint funder support section. The MoPH supporting letter template is available at [link](#) and should be signed and stamped as indicated in the template. For MoPH supporting letters requests and enquiries, please contact the MoPH at; sasmail@moph.gov.qa.

SECTION 6. ELIGIBILITY

6.1. Eligibility of Proposal

The proposal must be within one or more of the specific research priority areas described in **Section 4**.

6.2. Eligibility of Lead Principal Investigators (LPIs)

6.2.1 The LPI must be affiliated of an approved submitting institution inside Qatar.

6.2.2 An eligible LPI must hold a terminal degree as defined in the list of terminal degrees at [link](#).

6.2.3 The LPI can submit only **one application** in this cycle. In addition, the count of an individual's active participation in the ANMR calls under previous or current cycle, as an LPI or PI, must not exceed three roles excluding projects that end before 1st September 2026.

6.2.4 MoPH staff are not eligible to participate as LPIs, PIs or as other team members in this call.

6.2.5 Other research team members eligibility, please refer to the "Personnel Requirements" document available at the [link](#).

6.3. Eligibility of Submitting Institution

All academic, public, private, and other (e.g., non-profit and NGOs) entities in Qatar with QRDI-approved Research Offices are eligible to apply to this call (see [link](#)).

6.4. Eligibility of Collaborative Institutions

6.4.1 Institutions inside or outside Qatar are eligible to collaborate with the submitting institutions.

6.4.2 Collaborative institutions must include at least one affiliated PI.

SECTION 7. TIMELINE

The following table shows important dates for this cycle.

Timeline for the Advancing Neuro and Mental Health Research Call 2 nd Cycle	
Description	Dates
Online registration of ROs and key investigators	Always Open
Open proposal submission as well as RO vetting*	January 14, 2026 (12 PM, Doha time).
Deadline for proposal submission by LPI	March 11, 2026 (12 PM, Doha time).
Deadline for RO vetting	April 01, 2026 (12 PM, Doha time).
Awards announcement	August/September 2026

*RO vetting starts once the proposal is submitted.

SECTION 8. APPLICATION

8.1. Application Submission

8.1.1. LPI should submit the proposal via the online submission system [link](#).

8.1.2. LPI should submit a research plan using the template available at [link](#).

8.1.3. To be considered valid, proposals should be vetted by the RO of the submitting institution.

8.2. Application Type

8.2.1. LPIs must select “New” for newly submitted proposals.

8.2.2. New application may also include proposals that did not pass QRDI Council screening in previous cycles.

8.2.3. Proposals that passed screening but were not awarded in other scientific research programs are allowed to be resubmitted in the subsequent cycle as “Resubmission”. Resubmission is only allowed from the most recent program/call.

SECTION 9. BUDGET

9.1. Grant Size and Duration

9.1.1 Each award is up to **QAR 547,500** (US\$150,000) per year and up to **two (2)** years.

9.2. Budget components

- Please refer to the budget components document in the document library at the [link](#).
- All Capital equipment cost must be allocated and purchased inside Qatar only.

9.3. Co-Funding and Cost-Sharing

Co-funding and cost-sharing are encouraged, (see co-funding and cost-sharing policy [link](#)).

9.4. Grant and Effort Allocation

9.4.1 At least 65% of effort and 80% of total annual budget should be expended inside Qatar.

SECTION 10. PROPOSAL VETTING AND SCREENING

All proposals must be vetted by the submitting institutions to ensure compliance with the institutions' and QRDI policies. Proposals will also be screened by QRDI/MoPH to ensure compliance with the program's rules and regulations. The screening criteria are available in the document library at the [link](#).

SECTION 11. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

11.1. Peer Review (40% of the Overall Score)

Proposals are reviewed by a minimum of three international experts in the field of the proposal. The reviewers are solicited by QRDI to evaluate the proposals' scientific merit against the criteria listed below. The reviewers will provide narrative feedback meant to benefit successful applicants in conducting their projects and help unsuccessful ones improve for resubmissions. Any proposal that scored "Poor" in any individual criterion, will not be considered for funding.

The evaluation criteria are:

11.1.1 Scientific Excellence (Excellent; Good, Average, Unsatisfactory; Poor) (30%)

- The proposal describes novel and original ideas or objectives.
- The project addresses an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field.
- The scientific premise of the proposal is sound and significant.
- The methodology is robust and feasible.
- The alignment of the proposal to the call's priorities areas is clear and strong (Section 4).

11.1.2 Implementation (Excellent; Good, Average, Unsatisfactory; Poor) (30%)

- The proposal describes clear, measurable, feasible, and achievable objectives within the proposed resources.
- The work plan describes clear, measurable, and well-coordinated tasks and milestones.
- The allocation and deployment of resources, such as personnel, equipment, and time, are adequate and justified.
- The research team members are well qualified, relevant, and complementary.
- The caliber of the LPI and their research management and leadership are adequate.
- The collaboration is well justified.

11.1.3 Budget (Excellent; Good, Average, Unsatisfactory; Poor) (20%)

- The budget is appropriate and justified.
- The co-funding/cost-sharing commitments, if any, are realistic and significant.

11.1.4 Potential Impact (Excellent; Good, Average, Unsatisfactory; Poor) (20%)

- The potential of the proposal to generate or further knowledge; in terms of being a breakthrough or a step change.
- The potential for the research outputs to generate and contribute to economic and social benefit.
- Potential to disseminate scientific outcomes and transfer knowledge and technology.
- Enhance scientific capacity in the proposal's research area.

11.1.5 Research Compliance (Comments only)

- The proposal is compliant with the relevant regulations to ensure protection of human subjects.
- The proposal is compliant with the relevant regulations to ensure protection of children.
- The proposal is compliant with the relevant regulations to ensure vertebrate animals.
- The proposal is compliant with the relevant regulations to ensure protection from biohazards.

11.2. Programmatic Review (60% of the overall score)

Following the peer-review evaluation, proposals will be shortlisted. Subsequently, a panel of experts will perform a programmatic review designed to assess and rank all shortlisted proposals in terms of relevance, importance, and potential to generate impact.

The programmatic criteria are:

11.2.1 Relevance for Qatar (Excellent; Good, Average, Unsatisfactory; Poor) (25%)

▪ **Strength of Alignment**

- The proposal is well aligned to the general objectives and the priority areas of the call.
- The proposal is capable to address local challenges and realise opportunities.

11.2.2 Potential Impact for Qatar (Excellent; Good, Average, Unsatisfactory; Poor) (75%)

▪ **Involvement of End-Users**

- The proposal has the potential to involve and address the needs of research end-users and enhance their capacity to utilise the research outcomes and benefit from them.
- The proposal maximises the utilisation of the MoPH and/or end-users' resources, i.e., facilities, expertise, and support.

▪ **Plans to Apply the Project's Results**

- The proposal outlines adequate plans to disseminate its outcomes to the local end-users and the public at large.
- The proposal has the potential to create positive international visibility for Qatar.

▪ **Potential Contribution to Qatari Society and Economy**

- The proposal can produce tangible measures (including creation of intellectual property, start-up companies, spin-out, enterprises.) or the potential for commercialisation into new products, services, or technologies.
- The proposal is capable of developing solutions to national needs (for example socio-economic, health, and environmental aspects).
- The proposal contributes to developing local talent (such as training of graduate students in the project/involvement of RAs, postdocs, and junior researchers in the project)

Ethical compliance is also assessed by experts as part of the programmatic review.

At the end of the review and ranking processes, proposals are categorised in terms of their competitiveness and grouped as shown below. Funding decisions will be made based on the available budget. The final funding decision will group proposals as shown in the table below:

Final Review Ranking

Group	Description
A	The proposal was evaluated to be highly competitive.
B	The proposal was evaluated to be moderately competitive.
C	The proposal was evaluated to be uncompetitive.
D	The proposal was not shortlisted for panel review.