

CALL FOR THEMED WORKSHOP APPLICATIONS

ENMC THEMED WORKSHOPS

Introduction

In addition to the open, regular workshop applications, where topics of the workshops originate from the workshop organisers, now also a **call for themed workshops applications** is introduced by the ENMC. For these type of workshops, every year the ENMC will designate a special theme, which is prioritised by the needs of the neuromuscular patient and research community. The themes are topics, which require the efficiency of the ENMC platform to bring different stakeholders from all over the world together and to help evolve the discussions and collaborative work to be done. Although the theme is chosen by the ENMC, applicants are fully in charge of identifying the theme-related gaps in knowledge and the coinciding issues they face in the own daily practice or research. This awareness of theme-associated questions will steer the applicants to identify the set of workshop objectives and deliverables, which will determine the workshop programme and list of attendees. A well thought through workshop proposal and concise description in the application is an important preparatory tool to foster constructive and effective workshop discussions and stimulate follow-up work to be done.

Patient representatives together with experienced researchers and clinicians from the neuromuscular field can adopt the chosen theme and apply for an ENMC workshop in the September review round. It is highly encouraged that people from different stakeholder groups unite as an organising committee to steer the workshop on the special theme and create a larger consortium for the future.

Applicants are encouraged to describe if and how they want to make use of the online workshop format, which is now also offered by the ENMC in addition to the face-to-face/hybrid meeting. The virtual meetings can be very helpful in the preparation of the official workshop weekend and the follow up of the action plan defined at the workshop. Although the face to face meeting is limited to a maximum of 30 participants, the virtual meetings have the advantage to also invite additional experts who can bring in their research and voice on the chosen theme.

Differences between Open and Themed call for workshop applications (see Table 1)

With an “**Open Call**”, ENMC provides workshop funding opportunities focusing on neuromuscular topics identified by the applicants or organisers themselves. Of the ENMC annual workshop budget at least 90% will remain available for open call workshops (in total 9 ‘open’ workshops can be selected each year). These open call workshop applications can be submitted and will be assessed by the ENMC twice a year (in March and September), according to our regular review procedures. The conditions above guarantee that ENMC

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provides sufficient resources and opportunities to address the topics coming spontaneously from the neuromuscular field.

With a “**Themed Call**”, ENMC provides workshop funding opportunities for 1 or 2 themed workshops per year, focusing on pre-identified themes which are:

- preferably applicable across many neuromuscular conditions and if relevant even sharing experience outside the neuromuscular field (transversal workshops)
- topics and/or diseases that are not often discussed in a workshop
- topics that are groundbreaking and strategic, which may steer the NMD community.

A theme should also adhere to some basic criteria of the Themed Workshops, being:

- multidisciplinary, i.e. a heterogeneous group of participants, such as clinicians, health care professionals, scientists, patient and pharma representatives, technical experts and external specialists etc. will be needed.
- unique, i.e., the theme is of added value for the neuromuscular community indicating that there is no duplication of efforts and the theme has been embraced by representatives of our partner organisations (like WMS, EURO-NMD, Treat-NMD).
- sustainable, i.e., the topic requires development of a long-standing platform or consortium, to build upon the workshop outcomes for the future.

The themes, identified by RC, EC members and associated partners were discussed and prioritised at the General Assembly Meeting (GAM) on 15 April 2023. The two highest scored themes were selected by the EC for the next call for the Themed Workshops. The number of chosen themed workshops may vary dependent on the number of received open and themed applications, and whether themed workshop applications are complimentary to one another. In the latter case, workshop applications may be merged to one large ENMC themed workshop or organised as a sequential set of meetings.

Themed workshop applications can be submitted and will be assessed by the ENMC only once a year (see timeline below).

A themed workshop application will not be compared with the open call applications and vice versa. The assessment of the two different calls will be done by the Research Committee separately and independently.

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Table 1: Differences between open and themed call for applications

ENMC workshop applications	Open Call	Themed call
Workshop topic	Comes spontaneously from the NMD field	Is identified by the ENMC (GAM and EC) every two years
	Can be both condition-specific and NMD broad	Mainly NMD transversal topics (topics which are relevant for multiple NMD's and even for diseases outside NMD field)
Workshop applications can be submitted	Twice per year with a deadline of 1 March and 1 September	Once per year, with a deadline of 1 March
Workshop organisers	Max. 4: mostly academic and clinical representatives, but stakeholders from other disciplines are welcome to engage as workshop organisers as well. Pharma representatives however may be invited as workshop participants only.	Max. 4: multi-disciplinary team of organisers is preferred in the themed workshops, including representatives from academia, clinicians, patient representatives, health care/economic or regulatory professionals, but excluding pharma representatives.
Workshop participants	Multi-disciplinary workshop groups are encouraged including representatives from academia, clinics and patient organisations and/or individual people affected by a NMD, health care (psychology/physiotherapy/surgery etc) and economic or regulatory professionals, pharma representatives etc.	
Max. number of participants (excl. 3 early careers and patient representatives)	20	30
Feasibility criteria	According to ENMC guidelines	According to ENMC guidelines and theme proposal
Quality assessment	By the RC	By the RC
Workshop selection	By the EC	By the EC
Annual Budget (10 workshops)	8-9 workshops	1-2 workshops (dependent on the amount of selected regular workshops)

Abbreviations: EC (Executive Committee), ENMC (European Neuromuscular Centre), GAM (General Assembly Meeting), NMD (Neuromuscular disorders), RC (Research Committee)

Similarities between ENMC Open and Themed call for workshop applications

Themed workshop applications follow basically the Open call “Grant Application Guidelines”. The rationale for the chosen Theme in a given year and the research questions that may be addressed in the Themed workshop application will be announced via the regular ENMC channels (Twitter, LinkedIn, July newsletter etc.). The Themed Workshop Application form will be pre-populated with available information. Potential applicants are requested to go to <https://www.enmc.org/workshops/how-to-apply/> to download the Themed Workshop Application guidelines and template form. The regular application forms and biography templates for Early-Career researcher candidates can be used.

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Planning of the Themed Workshop call 2023

The following time window is applicable for the next theme identification and subsequently the selection of associated workshop applications (see also Table 2):

November 2022: Submission of and input on the list of themes for the Themed Workshops by RC and EC

January 2023: ENMC office to send the themes to Associated Partners (who may have input on the list and add new themes) and Company Forum (just for their information and preparation to the GAM)

April 2023: Discuss themes during the GAM followed by selection of two themes at EC meeting 15 April 2023

July 2023 – Feb 2024: Office communicates about the Call for Themed Workshops to the NMD network, including a short background and rationale for the selected workshop theme supported by diagrams (see p5).

March 2024: before 1 March 2024, Themed workshop applications should be submitted to enmc@enmc.org. This will provide organisers more than 8 months' time to think about the theme, to form an organising committee and perform pre-work about the priority, feasibility, and ongoing initiatives, all in the end to prepare an excellent workshop application.

March 2024: RC will perform the online assessment of the received Themed workshop applications, independent of the open call applications.

April 2024: The RC will focus on the scientific quality and relevance, and judge whether the programme and participants are in place to achieve the aims and deliverables. They will provide recommendations and a priority list to the EC. The EC will discuss whether the applications will answer the unmet need of the patient community and will fall within the scope of the ENMC.

April 2024: EC decides on the best themed workshop application(s).

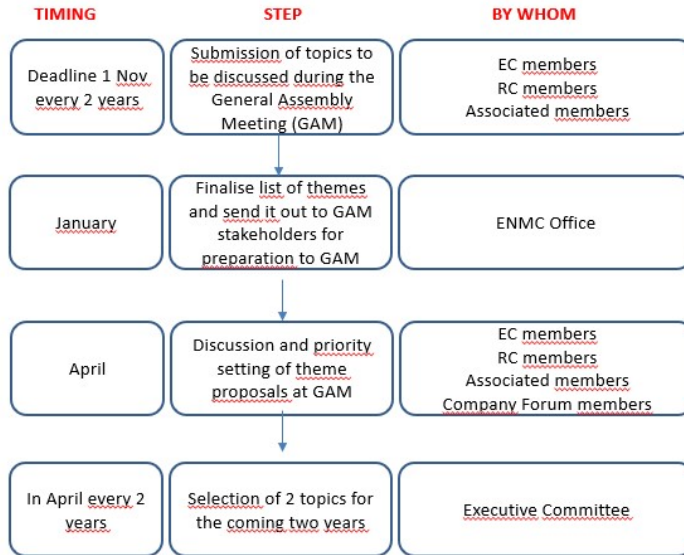
May 2024: Office will communicate the decision and will work together with the applicants in organising the workshop(s).

Q4 2024 or 2025: Execution of the Themed workshop(s) in a face-to-face setting.

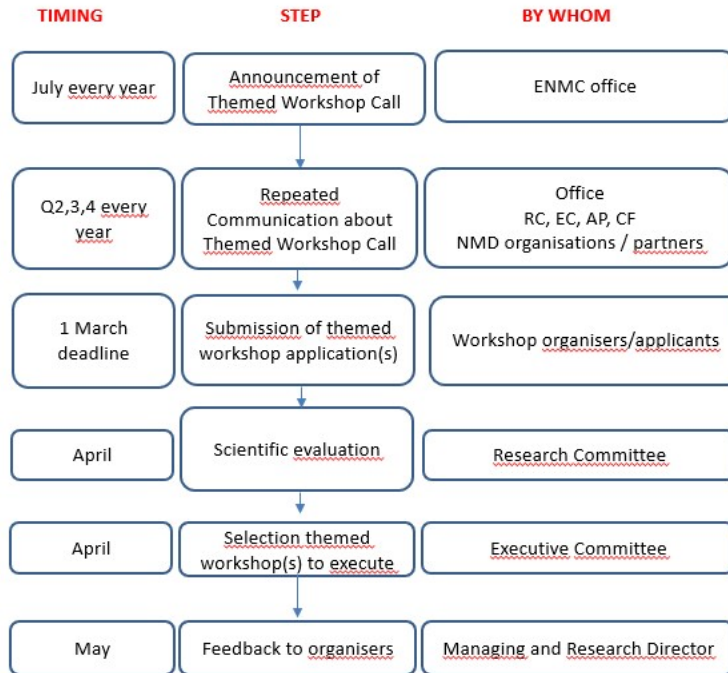
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Table 2: Themed Call Process

1. Theme identification for the themed call



2. Evaluation of themed workshop applications



3. Execution of themed workshop