



A MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION  
**FIGHTING CANCER TOGETHER**

# Application guidelines 2019

## SPARC MBC Challenge



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# 1. The SPARC MBC Challenge

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## About the SPARC MBC Challenge

Pfizer and UICC are working in partnership to offer the Seeding Progress and Resources for the Cancer Community (SPARC) Metastatic Breast Cancer Challenge, a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at empowering advocacy groups, hospital networks, support groups and other organisations worldwide as they initiate projects supporting metastatic breast cancer patients and helping to reduce the number of women diagnosed at an advanced stage of breast cancer.

Launched in 2015, the SPARC MBC Challenge has already benefitted 40 not-for-profit organisations worldwide through SPARC grants. The SPARC grants consist of seed-funding, capacity building and convening opportunities to launch and strengthen new projects addressing the needs of MBC patients. Awardees are integrated into the SPARC network of alumni where they can share best practices, learn from others and share resources.

In 2019, ten additional organisations will be selected to receive a SPARC grant, bringing the SPARC network to a total of 50 organisations. The grant is expected to stimulate and support a new area of activity in the field of metastatic breast cancer for the organisation that will be selected,

A maximum of USD 25,000 will be given to the selected organisations to start their project. The duration of the project is expected to be up to a maximum of 14 months, with the latest possible start date being January 2020. New grantees will access both online training opportunities and face-to-face workshops on key topics, from those related to metastatic breast cancer to programmatic management. These in-person meetings will also help to facilitate the sharing of best practices and learning, particularly across SPARC projects with similar focus areas. Each project will be paired with an expert in metastatic breast cancer who will provide specific guidance of the project implementation and facilitate new contacts for the organisation. Finally, grantees will benefit from UICC platforms that will showcase their projects, thereby reaching a greater visibility and facilitating connections with UICC member organisations.

The awardees are selected by an independent, external steering committee (the Selection Advisory Group), consisting of leading experts in the fields of cancer and chaired by globally renowned oncologist and leading breast cancer advocate, Dr Fatima Cardoso.

To find out more about the SPARC programme and to learn about previously funded projects, please visit the SPARC [webpage](#).

## Objectives

The primary objective of the SPARC programme is to empower and support patients living with advanced breast cancer to lead lives of a higher quality, and to strive to reduce the incidence of de novo advanced disease through improvements in the health system more broadly.

In support of the primary objective, an additional objective of the programme is to enable SPARC grantee organisations to increase their capacity, knowledge and visibility through training, mentorship, and peer-to-peer learning with other SPARC grantees.

## Focus areas

There are three priority topics for the SPARC grants, and applicants must choose one as the focus of their project. SPARC grants will be awarded to those proposals which demonstrate a good understanding of the project setting and opportunities to stimulate sustained change.

- **Information and support gap:** Developing health information and/or support services specifically adapted for advanced breast cancer patients. The objective is to improve the patient's ability to navigate diagnosis, treatment, care, and/or palliation (depending on the needs in the particular setting). Additional elements may pertain to improving communication between health professionals and patients, informed or shared decision-making, understanding the role of clinical trials, and all initiatives supporting care givers, patients and their loved ones. Strengthening the level of social, economic, psychological and spiritual support for patients may also be part of this topic.
- **Raising patient voices and awareness:** Amplifying the patient's voice in health systems and wider society and decreasing the incidence rate of de novo advanced breast cancer. The objective is to reduce stigma and increase public awareness around MBC. Through increased awareness, projects will encourage earlier presentation and access to timely treatment to decrease the incidence of locally advanced and metastatic disease at first diagnosis. Please note that projects on breast cancer screening per se are not encouraged. Earlier presentation projects must include a component specifically addressing metastatic breast cancer patients.
- **Policy and health system gaps:** Improving the national response to the diagnosis and management of advanced breast cancer. The objective is to provide planners and policy-makers with guidance on the unique challenges of metastatic disease, including the patient's perspective, and how to address these challenges in the National Cancer Control Plan. Advocacy initiatives in the MBC space are encouraged. Additional elements may pertain to resource-adapted management guidelines, necessity of early introduction to supportive and palliative care, and ensuring equitable access to timely and appropriate care, for example widespread access to WHO essential medicines and devices.

## The SPARC MBC Challenge grant

In 2019, 10 SPARC grants will be attributed to cancer organisations around the world. The SPARC grant consists of the following aspects:

- **Seed-funding:** Between USD 15,000 and USD 25,000 will be provided to enable the initiation of a new project in a SPARC focus area
- **Peer-to-peer learning:** The grantee organisation will be included in the SPARC network, a group of 50 organisations tackling MBC across the world and will exchange best-practices with them
- **Conferences:** The grantee organisations will be given the opportunity to attend relevant international conferences related to MBC
- **Mentorship:** Renowned experts in breast cancer will mentor each SPARC project individually
- **Training:** Grantee organisations will access the SPARC Master Course, including online and in-person learning around MBC and insights on project management skills

## 2. Application process and criteria used for selecting projects

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### The Selection Advisory Group

The SPARC applications will be reviewed by the SPARC Selection Advisory Group (SAG), consisting of international experts in breast cancer and chaired by Dr Fatima Cardoso. The SAG is invited and appointed by UICC to evaluate SPARC applications and make recommendations to UICC on which organisations to select. The selection process is conducted by international peer review and Pfizer is not involved.

### Application stages and timelines

Application to the SPARC MBC Challenge is a two-stage process. Organisations meeting the eligibility requirements are welcome to apply and submit a Letter of intent (LOI). Once the LOIs are reviewed, selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal application. Full proposals are by invitation only, based on review of the letters of intent submitted.

The main SPARC selection timelines are:

- **Call for Letters of intent:** End of Feb. to Mid-April 2019
- **SAG review of the Letters of intent:** Mid-April to mid-May 2019
- **Invitations to submit the full applications:** Mid-May 2019
- **Call for full applications:** Mid-May to end of June 2019
- **SAG review of the full applications:** early July to end of August 2019
- **Grantee organisations are announced:** mid-October 2019

Please, note that extensions will not be granted, and incomplete applications or those received after the deadline will not be considered.

### Eligibility criteria

Decisions on eligibility will be made by UICC in consultation with the SPARC Selection Advisory Group whenever appropriate. Eligibility criteria are as follows;

- **Non for profit:** Applicants should be organisations or institutions that are non-for-profit, active in the field of cancer and should submit documents supporting their non-profit status (unless already UICC members)
- **Organisational strength:** Applicant organisations should have a track record of implementing cancer projects successfully and should have been registered as an organisation for a minimum of two years.
- **New grantees:** Applicant organisations should not have already received a SPARC grant.
- **Tobacco and alcohol industries:** Applicant organisation should not have relationships with the tobacco or alcohol industries, and if they do, should provide additional information on the nature of the relationship.
- **New project:** The applicant should submit a novel and sustainable project in the areas of patient information, patient support, raising patient voices, awareness, advocacy and policy making. Projects that have already started will not be funded. Projects related to screening or detection of early breast cancer only, with no link to MBC will not be funded.
- **Geographical scope:** Applications are welcomed worldwide, excluding the United States of America.
- **Project duration:** Projects should have a maximum duration of 14 months and can start as early as October 2019 and not later than January 2020. They should plan the end date by February 2021.

- **Use of funds:** Funds requested for the project shall not exceed USD 25,000 and should not be less than USD 15,000. The project funds should not cover medical education programmes for medical personnel, medical supplies or equipment, medical services (i.e., tests, interpretation of tests, treatments, medication), patient treatment, fundraising events, travels, lodging, registration for conferences, research projects other than those that seek to understand quality of life issues in medically underserved MBC populations, professional dues or membership fees, liability insurance, rent, advertising unrelated to the project campaign and programme incentives. Indirect costs such as overheads that are not directly linked with the project will not be covered. Any contribution to direct costs such as staff salaries must be appropriate to the level of overall funding required for the project. If a substantial amount of staff salary is included in the budget, the applicant should indicate how this is sustainable, in particular, after the grant period is over. Applicants who have already received funding for their project, or who are planning to obtain for co-sponsorship by a third party are not eligible.

## Selection criteria

The SPARC Selection Advisory Group will evaluate all eligible applications in consultation with UICC according to the following criteria:

- **Organisational capacity (LOI):** The organisation carrying the project is able to deliver against the project objectives.
- **Project relevance and efficiency (LOI):** The project addresses a demonstrated gap identified locally or regionally. The intervention strategy proposed to address the gap is efficient, adapted to the local context and built upon the success of similar initiatives developed elsewhere. Whenever possible and appropriate, it is encouraged that projects are run in partnership with other institutions and in collaboration with the national health system.
- **Potential for impact (LOI and full app):** Projects should maximise impact for patients at risk of or living with stage III or IV breast cancer. The project has a positive influence on the local context (ex: influence on public policies, improvement of services and support to patients, increase the awareness of MBC, build local capacity).
- **Feasibility (Full app):** The project goals are achievable based on the requested grant funding and project timeline. The timeline is realistic and achievable within the scope of SPARC Round 3. The budget proposed is in line with the activities of the implementation plan and project description, provides sufficient detail and does not include any funds for items not permitted to be funded through the SPARC grant, as per the eligibility criteria.
- **Clarity (Full app):** The objectives articulated in the proposal are clear and in line with at least one of the SPARC priorities. The implementation plan is sufficiently detailed to allow understanding of the scope and activities of the project, including key milestones and timelines. Expected impact and outcomes of the projects must be clearly articulated in the project proposal.
- **Sustainability (Full app):** The project is sustainable, for example it will continue to deploy positive effects after the end of the project or will continue to be implemented after the end of the project through other resources. The project does not create a dependency.

## 3. Online application guidelines

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### Grant management system

UICC uses an online grant management system called ProposalCENTRAL to manage the application process. All application materials and attachments must be submitted electronically through the UICC grant management system.

### Guidelines to send your online application

Please find below the steps to send your application:

1. **Access ProposalCENTRAL** at: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com>.
2. If you are a 'new' user in ProposalCENTRAL, click the '**Register**' button under 'First Time Users' and complete the registration process.  
If you are already registered in ProposalCENTRAL, please access the site and **log in with your existing user ID or e-mail address**.
3. After you log in, please complete the first two sections of your Professional Profile (second tab from the left) before starting an application. You may also find it helpful to set up your institution under the 'Institutional Profile'
4. To start an application, select the Grant Opportunities tab (grey tab furthest to the right). A list of applications will display. Find the UICC program that you wish to apply for (in this case SPARC Metastatic Breast Cancer Challenge) and click the 'Apply Now' link (second to last column) to 'create' your application.
5. Please note that **some information requested by the system is NOT mandatory**. You are not requested to fill in sections such as "enable other users to access this proposal" or "personal details of applicants".
6. At the end of your application, you should click the '**Submit**' button. A confirmation email will be sent by ProposalCENTRAL to confirm that the submission has been received. If you do not receive an email confirming the submission of your application, please contact ProposalCENTRAL immediately.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the application was completed correctly, all required information is present, and that the proposal was officially submitted through ProposalCENTRAL.

### Contact points for application questions

If you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, please contact ProposalCENTRAL Customer Support immediately: phone: 1-800-875-2562 or (703) 964-5840, and/or e-mail: [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

Questions regarding application content can be directed to [SPARC@uicc.org](mailto:SPARC@uicc.org)

## 4. Letter of intent (stage 1)

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### Selection criteria evaluated at the LOI stage

The letter of intent is the first stage of the application process of the SPARC MBC Challenge grant. Applicants will have 6 weeks to apply and provide a summary of a new project proposed to address MBC issues locally. The SAG will review and evaluate three main criteria at this stage:

- **Relevance and efficiency** – The relevance of the project to the issues in applicant's country/region
- **Organisational capacity** – The organisation's ability to deliver against its project objectives
- **Potential for impact** – The project will create a lasting change in improving the lives of patients diagnosed with advanced breast cancer in a measurable way

The applicants will be asked to complete four categories to describe their project:

1. Project information
2. Organisational capacity
3. Project relevance and efficiency
4. Project description

### Questions asked at the LOI stage

#### Project information

1. **Title of proposed project** – Enter a concise caption
2. **Name of the project leader and title within the organisation** – Enter the name of the project leader and his/her title
3. **Focus area** – Please indicate which of the three SPARC focus area your project is addressing (Information and support gap / Raising patient voices and awareness / Policy and health system gaps).
4. **Project narrative** – Please concisely describe the issue you would like to address, the project you intend to carry out, the expected outcomes and impact of your project and why your organisation is best-placed to deliver such a project (max 420 words).
5. **Project start and finish dates** – Indicate the estimated start and finish date of your project. Projects are for a duration of 14 months maximum. The earliest start date possible is October 2019, and the latest end date is February 2021.
6. **Budget** - Mention the overall amount you are requesting from UICC. A budget summary is requested as part of the LOI narrative, with a more detailed budget breakdown being requested at the full proposal stage. Please note that the range of a SPARC MBC Challenge grant is between USD 15,000 and USD 25,000.
7. **Use of the funds** (tick a box)
  - a. I confirm that the funds requested for this project will not cover medical education programmes for medical personnel, medical supplies or equipment, medical service, patient treatment, fundraising events, travels, lodging, registration for conferences, research projects other than those that seek to understand quality of life issues in medically underserved MBC populations, professional dues or membership fees, liability insurance, rent, advertising unrelated to the project campaign and programme incentives.
  - b. The funds will be used for some of the costs mentioned under question 7a. Please specify:
8. **Funding from other organisations** (tick a box)
  - a. I confirm that our organisation has not yet received funding for this project and is not planning to obtain for co-sponsorship by a third party
  - b. Our project is planning to obtain funds by a third party. Please specify:
9. **Geographical scope** – State the country/countries or region(s) where your project will take place.



10. **Is your project a new project?** (tick a box)
  - a. Yes, it is a new project
  - b. No, it is not a new project

## Organisational capacity

11. **Date of creation of the organisation** – Please indicate the year in which your organisation was created
12. **Organisation website** – Please share the url of your website
13. **Organisation description** – Describe how your organisation is involved in cancer control, outline its current programs, its role in your region or country and how many staff or volunteers are involved
14. **Organisation affiliations** – List your key partners including national and international networks
15. **Annual operating budget** – Summary of your annual operating budget including major income, revenue and/or funding sources
16. **Previous projects** – Provide an example of a project of a similar size than the grant you are applying for and that you have implemented in the past as part of your organisation. What was it about, what was its impact, what was its budget and source of funding?
17. **Are you a UICC member?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
18. **For non-UICC members**, please provide a proof of Non-profit Status (upload pdf)
19. **For Indian organisations**, please provide proof of your Foreign Contribution Regulation Act status (upload pdf)
20. **Conflict of interest** (tick a box)
  - a. I confirm that our organisation does not have relationships with the tobacco or alcohol industries
  - b. Our organisation has relationships with the tobacco or alcohol industry. Please specify:

## Project relevance and efficiency

21. **Project relevance** – Provide background on the gaps that your project aims to address. What is currently being done in your country or region to address this gap? What are the specific needs of your target group? (300 words max)
22. **Project approach** – Describe which strategy, approach and methods you propose to reach your project goals
23. **Project efficiency** – Why do you think that your intervention strategy is the most efficient way to address these needs? (200 words max)

## Project description (brief)

24. **Project goals** – Describe your measurable objectives
25. **Project implementation** – Briefly outline key activities and project deliverables needed to achieve your project goals
26. **Collaborations** – Outline any partners you will be working with on this project and their main role
27. **Anticipated impact** – Outline the impact of your project including how it will improve the lives of women diagnosed with advanced breast cancer
28. **Summary budget** – Please provide an outline only, a full budget will be requested in the full proposal
29. **Sustainability** – Briefly outline your plans to run and fund this initiative after the end of the grant period, or explain how your project will continue to deploy positive effects after the end of the project
30. **Further information (optional)** – Add any other information you feel is relevant to your application) and link this to the needs of your target population within the geographic area you propose to serve
31. **Referees** – Please provide the name, position, organisation and email address for up to 3 people who could act as referees

## 5. Full application (stage 2)

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### Selection criteria evaluated at the full application stage

The applications meeting the eligibility criteria and obtaining the highest scores at the “letter of intent” stage will be invited to submit a full proposal application. The Selection Advisory Group will review and evaluate four main criteria at this stage:

- **Feasibility** – The project goals are achievable based on the grant funding amount and timeline
- **Clarity** – The objectives articulated in the proposal are clear, the implementation plan and budget proposed are well presented.
- **Potential for impact** – The project will create a lasting change in improving the lives of patients diagnosed with advanced breast cancer in a measurable way
- **Sustainability** – The project will be measured and maintained beyond the grant period in a sustainable way

The applicants will be asked to fill-in four categories to present their project:

1. Project description
2. Project impact
3. Potential mentors

### Questions asked at the full application stage

#### Project description (developed)

1. **Gaps addressed** – Briefly describe the gaps addressed with your project
2. **Project goals** – Define your measurable objectives in line with the overall goal of the project
3. **Project approach** – Describe which strategy, approach and methods you propose to reach your project goals and why you think this will be an effective intervention to bridge the gap addressed
4. **Project implementation** – Outline key activities and project deliverable needed to achieve your project goals. Please upload a project timetable (Gantt chart) indicating the activities, deliverables and milestones of your project. An example of chart can be found [here](#) (upload pdf)
5. **Collaborations** – Outline any partners you will be working with on this project and their main role
6. **Key personnel** – Please indicate which key personnel will be working on the implementation of the project (number of staffs, their title/skills, if they are part of the team or to be recruited).
7. **Risk management plan** – List the risks you foresee with your project and how you plan to mitigate them (including delays in the project implementation)
8. **Deliverables** – List the deliverables and outputs for your project
9. **Budget** – Please upload a detailed budget breakdown (upload pdf)

#### Project impact

10. **Anticipated impact** – Outline the expected impact of your project for your target audience and for other indirect audiences. What is the impact expected at the end of the project? And in the longer term?
11. **Plans for measuring success** – Outline your plans for monitoring and evaluating the success of your project, including the main key performance indicators you will be using and how you will be measuring them.
12. **Plans for sustainability** – Outline your plans of how to continue and fund this initiative after the end of the grant period

- 13. Further information (optional)** – Add any other information you feel is relevant to your application) and link this to the needs of your target population within the geographic area you propose to serve

### Potential mentors

- 14. Potential mentors** – Awarded projects will be paired with a mentor who will provide guidance in the implementation of the project. Please suggest the name, position, organisation, email address for up to three mentors. Please note that UICC may select other mentors in the event your application is successful.

## 6. SPARC Terms of reference

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Once the Selection Advisory Group and UICC selects the 10 projects which will receive a SPARC grant, UICC will contact all applicants in September 2019 to inform them about the final status of their application.

By becoming a SPARC grantee, organisations accept to:

- Sign a Terms of Reference letter with UICC (September 2019)
- Support UICC in the preparation of the announcement of SPARC awardees in October 2019 (September 2019)
- Attend the Global Alliance Conference (November 2019 in Portugal)
- Report on the progress of the project (June 2020 and February 2021)
- Attend the World Cancer Congress (October 2020 in Oman)
- Liaise regularly with their project mentor (ongoing)
- Contributing to UICC communications around SPARC by sharing information on their projects with the wider cancer community (ongoing)
- Participate in online learning opportunities as well as best-practice sharing workshops with other SPARC grantees (ongoing)



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