ANNUAL PLAN 2025

TINNITUSFREE FOUNDATION

The TinnitusFree Foundation is a campaigning and fundraising institute that aims to increase Tinnitus awareness and prevention, and the search for a cure. The exact cause of tinnitus is currently unknown. There is no known cure – but there are hundreds of deceptive claims.

OUR AMBITION IS TO FIND A CURE FOR TINNITUS. FAST.

Tinnitus is best viewed as a **“phantom noise”**. It is the medical term for “hearing” a continuous sound in the ears when there is no external source for that sound. Tinnitus can come in many forms, such as ringing, squeaking, whistling, hissing, buzzing or white noise. It can appear to originate from one or both ears, from within the head, or even externally.

It was originally assumed that the cause of tinnitus lay in the auditory organ itself. However, recent research shows that the brain is responsible. Hyperactivity in the auditory cortex in the brain causes the emission of continuous signals when there is no sound present, hence the term, “phantom noise”

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AS YET, THERE IS NO KNOWN CURE.

POSSIBLE TRIGGERS

Hearing loss
Hearing damage
Stress
Burn-out
Fatigue
Posttraumatic Stress disorder
Panic disorder
Anxiety disorder
Depression
Head- (skeletal fracture), neck-, or Barotrauma
High blood pressure
Diabetes
Atherosclerosis

Alzheimer's disease
Chronic middle ear infection
Otosclerosis
Covid
High cholesterol level
Meniere's disease
Lyme disease
Mental disorders
Vestibular Schwannoma
Ear surgery
Von Hippel-Lindau disease
Age-related hearing loss

2025 OBJECTIVES OF THE TINNITUSFREE FOUNDATION.

1.
WAR ON TINNITUS FUNDING.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE WAR ON TINNITUS.

Prof. Dirk De Ridder & Divya Adhia, Brai3n Clinic, Gent, Belgium & Research Unit University of Otago, New Zealand

Research objective: this proposal is a high risk, high gain approach to finding a solution for tinnitus on a short time frame, i.e., 3 to 5 years, consisting of 14 groundbreaking medial research projects. The goal is to reduce and ideally abolish the sound in contrast to most tinnitus studies that attempt to reduce the suffering associated with the tinnitus. All proposals are easy to roll out in tinnitus clinics if proven successful.

Concept of War Research approach: this approach has been proven highly successful in fighting AIDS. Our approach is to develop treatments based on the concept of war, on how a war is fought: use whatever available relevant scientific information exists to create a strategy that is multimodal and surprising. The surprising approach is essential because traditional evidence-based approaches have so far failed to develop any FDA or CE approved treatments after many years of tinnitus research.

TOTAL PROJECT COST: €2,001,781

GOAL TINNITUSFREE FOUNDATION: TO RAISE €347.605.

This is the total cost of the three priority research projects, designated by the research team:

1. Finding an objective marker for tinnitus: €136.742
2. Rewarding reconditioning stimulation with transcranial focused ultrasound of nucleus accumbens €97,116
3. Photobiomodulation for tinnitus €113,747

2.
THE NEUROMODULATOR RESEARCH.

THE NEUROMODULATOR RESEARCH

Prof. Dirk de Ridder at the University of Otago and Prof. Wouter Serdijn from TU Delft have designed a prototype of a device that stimulates tinnitus patients transcutaneously (via the skin) by means bursting type of electrical stimuli, paired to tinnitus sound presentation.

The idea is to remove the salience of the sound by pairing the tinnitus sound to a “rest, digest and restore” stimulation of the vagus nerve. It is hoped that by removing the behavioural value of the sound it will disappear from consciousness.

This project is currently in its clinical testing stage at the university of Otago, New Zealand. Initial testing will conclude in May/June 2025.



TINNITUSFREE OBJECTIVE:

TinnitusFree made a financial contribution towards this research. If the tests are positive, research will be conducted into how the technical concept can be miniaturized (so it becomes a wearable consumer product) and made suitable for production. TinnitusFree intends to be part of the business model and business organization.

3.
BIG DATA RESEARCHES.

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1. The Crowd Wisdom research consists of an online, anonymous survey with questions about how one developed tinnitus, one's occupation, lifestyle and diet. The research then uses data analysis algorithms to discover patterns in the obtained information. All questionnaires come with a recommender system. After completing the questionnaire, he/she automatically receives recommendations from the group of patients that he/she is most similar to, The recommender system provides real-time feedback on your tinnitus. The methodology is collaborative filtering, known from Amazon and Spotify, where the system makes recommendations by comparing user data.
This feature is highly appreciated by tinnitus patients.

2. TinnitusFree has launched a study to determine the scale and **impact of tinnitus amongst music creators.** The findings of this research can help shape advocacy of this problem and support for musicians and other music industry related jobs, from music rights organizations, musician unions, sound companies, governments, the medical profession and insurance and health care industry.

TINNITUSFREE OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote the Crowd Wisdom research, expand and improve participation.

2. The Music Creator Research is currently available in English and Dutch. TinnitusFree wants to add Spanish, French and German. The cost of adding another language is around €17.500.

4.
SOCIAL MEDIA.

2023-2024 LEARNINGS.

- Lack of urgency: tinnitus won't affect me
- Tinnitus is too abstract
- Lack of relevance: no need to be part of the solution.
- Lack of Awareness of the TinnitusFree Foundation.
- Misperception: tinnitus is just a practical inconvenience
- we expanded our reach internationally. More than 70% over our followers are now international, <30% are Dutch
- Following, impact and engagement increase substantially when we use 'sponsored' posts – i.e. paid promotion.

A number of the studies that we support are in the clinical trial phase. We need to scale up our messaging and show that clear progress is being made to find a solution (also made possible by an increasingly application of AI.)

These messages make Tinnitus patients feel 'seen', which helps them accept the condition. It gives them perspective.

We want to generate more awareness on LinkedIn, to reach more 'industry' (music, construction, army, medical, audio, army). We expect this to expand our potential for funding and business partnerships,and give our sponsors and potential sponsors a 'push'.

To achieve this, we need expertise and budget for sophisticated targeting as well as sponsored posts.

They will bring our content in line with our core objective of raising funds, align it with the algorithms of the social media channels, and target our advertising.

The budget will include a portion for for sponsored posts. Meta is reasonably affordable. LinkedIn is expensive.

Estimated costs amount to a total €26.000,--.

THANK YOU.

TINNITUSFREE FOUNDATION BOARD

Wiebo Vaartjes (formerly Executive Vice President and CEO at Philips Lifestyle Entertainment), **Chairman.**

Gerrit te Spenke (formerly Tax Attorney at KPMG) **Executive Secretary.**

Prof. Dirk de Ridder (MD PhD, Neurological Foundation Chair in Neurosurgery, Dunedin School of Medicine, New Zealand), **Board Member.**

Ben Giezenaar (formerly partner Mojo Concerts), **Treasurer.**

Anne de Jong Managing Director of NVPI (Dutch Association of Producers and Importers of Image – and Sound carriers), **Board Member.**

MANAGEMENT

Frank van Hoorn / Van Hoorn Company.

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