

CALL for Research Proposals on Personalized Medicine, 2019

1. Aim and scope

The call concerns funding for joint projects between members of D-BSSE (ETH Zurich) and the University of Basel in the broad area of Personalized Medicine. In principle, there are no constraints on the research topics, but the call is directed towards biomedical studies and does not include Medtech proposals.

The overall aim is to foster collaborative research projects in the area of Personalized Medicine and to intensify collaboration between the two institutions, ideally also integrating expertise of other life science research institutions such as the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), the Basel University Hospital and the Friedrich Miescher Institute (FMI).

A total of 4 million CHF over the next five years will be made available through the generous support of the two Basel Cantons via the "Impulsinvestition für die Ausweitung der Kooperation zwischen dem Departement für Biosysteme der ETH Zürich (D-BSSE) und der Universität Basel", with the vision to combine expertise and optimize the network in medicine (ranging from bench to bedside) in order to enhance the existing potential in the interest of the Basel region as a research location and knowledge hub.

2. Key information about the call

2.1 Call for proposals

Starting 2016, and for 3 consecutive years, an annual call for research proposals will be issued. The program will be managed by D-BSSE in collaboration with the University of Basel.

An average of two projects per year will be supported to a combined maximum of 800 kCHF. Each project can be financed up to a maximum of 400 kCHF and must necessarily represent a collaboration of a group at BSSE (ETH Zurich) and the University of Basel within the field of Personalized Medicine.

Maximal funding duration per project is 3 years. Accordingly, funding can be requested for 3-year doctoral positions and for consumables.

2.2 Deadlines for the 2018 call for proposals

The deadline for the submission of applications is **25. October 2019**. The applications must be submitted electronically and as a single file in pdf-format to grants@bsse.ethz.ch.

Notification of the decision will usually be given within two months of the submission deadline. Projects may start immediately after approval and at the latest within four months after the reception of the decision letter.

2.3 Project partners

Each proposal must have one partner from D-BSSE and one partner from University of Basel. Both partners serve as co-PIs on the project. Other partners may participate in the projects but will not be directly financed.

3. Requirements for the proposals and for their submission

3.1 Formal requirements

- A. The PI / co-PI must be an employee of ETH Zurich at D-BSSE or the University of Basel with at least an earned doctorate and hold at least a 50% position for the intended duration of the project. External co-applicants are welcome but cannot receive funding. The formal doctoral supervisor must either be a PI or a co-applicant.

- B. A single PI must not submit more than one proposal per call but may act as a co-applicant or collaborator in another proposal without receiving funding.
- C. The proposal should consist of:
 - (i) A cover sheet in which the lead PI is identified and basic information is given (position, institution, address, email) and in which the title of the project, funds requested and key words/ disciplines are indicated. All team leaders associated with the proposal must also be clearly identified.
 - (ii) An executive summary (maximum 300 words).
 - (iii) The scientific proposal, including the state of research, the research plan, expected milestones, as well as a list of literature references. The research plan should include sufficient scientific and technical details so that the reviewers understand the potential and limitations of the approach. The scientific proposal should not exceed ten pages per proposed project (A4, single line spacing, 10-point Arial font or equivalent).
 - (iv) A clear statement (maximum one page) explaining the added value of the planned collaboration, relevance to personalized health, the translational potential together with plans for future funding and strategic vision.
 - (v) A budget outlining the requested funds and justification. In addition, available resources for the realization of the project should be indicated.
 - (vi) CVs and publication lists for the past five years must be submitted for all involved PIs.
- C. Applications and supporting documentation must be written in English.
- D. Applications that are identical or similar to an application that has been rejected or has only been partially funded by another granting agency prior to submission will be rejected on formal grounds.
- E. ETH Zurich strives to promote gender equality in scientific research. Gender must be consistently taken into account from the proposal to the research and dissemination phase if it involves humans as research objects (e.g., as patients, consumers, end-users or as citizens in surveys) and must be considered in the experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. If the gender dimension is not being considered, a justification must be supplied why it is not being addressed.
- F. If applicable, relevant ethical, legal and social considerations should be included in the proposal. The prospective research must also comply with the existing ethics regulations and adhere to the principles of research integrity valid at the ETH Zurich.

3.2 Eligible costs

The maximal funding per project is 400 kCHF. Eligible costs must be directly linked to the project and may include:

- a) salaries of doctoral students (standard salary rates are applicable)
- b) cost for consumables
- c) service / usage fees for technology platforms
- d) travel expenses
- e) costs to harmonize datasets (patient data, omics data).

Construction and equipment cost as well as the salaries of the PI and the co-applicants are not eligible for funding. Costs must be justified in the proposal.

4 Evaluation and assessment criteria

The decision on funding is based on a strict, quality-based evaluation process. A Scientific Evaluation Committee will appraise all proposals and make a funding recommendation to the attention of the Vice President Research & Corporate Relations of the ETH Zurich, who makes the final funding decision. The Committee consists of a member each from ETH Zurich and the University of Basel, and two external members.

The main criteria considered in the scientific evaluation are:

- a) Relevance to the Personalized Medicine theme and prospective impact
- b) Scientific excellence
- c) Originality/ novelty of research objectives
- d) Suitability and state-of-the-art of approaches
- e) Feasibility (incl. the financial planning as well as organization and management of the study)
- f) Competence and relevant experience of the applicants in the proposed project
- g) Appropriateness of collaborators: added value with respect to the combined contributions from the partners
- h) Interdisciplinarity and translational nature of the collaboration.

5. Reporting

A scientific and financial report must be submitted yearly, as well as a final report upon the conclusion of the project. The final report should describe the achievements and advances made during the course of the research project, give reasons for not achieving the original goals (if applicable) and list all outputs (e.g., dissertations, publications, patents, presentations at international conferences).

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