BCPM Call for Young Investigator Pilot Projects

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Deadlines

Release date: Monday, July 5th, 2021
Application due: Friday, August 27th, 2021, 17.00h CET
Decision announcement: Wednesday, November 3rd, 2021
Start of projects: November 2021 (or later, depending on ethical approval)
Maximum project duration: 18 months

Submission instructions

Project proposals are to be submitted using the official template (see the Call for Projects section on www.bcpm.unibe.ch. Applications should be submitted as a single PDF document to info@bcpm.unibe.ch. The subject line of the e-mail should read “BCPM Project Application”. Receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.

Incomplete or non compliant applications, or those received after the deadline will not be considered. Please direct questions to Timo Staub (timo.staub@bcpm.ch, +41 31 632 83 25).

Purpose

The goal of this call is to give the opportunity to young researchers to lead their own independent pilot project and gather pilot data for pursuing another grant such as SNF Ambizione or PRIMA, or maybe even a bigger project grant coming from a funding body such as SNF, be it alone or in collaboration with other PIs. Applicants who have already got an Initiator Grant from the University of Bern might also apply, so that lab costs can be covered via this call.

Projects can be of basic or applied research, but should remain within the domain of Precision Medicine. Examples of relevant applications might include but are not limited to projects that address population-based genetic screening for associations with clinical traits, pharmacogenetics studies, oncology related studies linking genomics with outcome, treatment, or prevention.

Funding is expected to help young candidates to receive external funding to pursue research in the area of precision medicine. The ultimate long-term goal is to accelerate the discovery and development of interventions intended to improve therapeutic outcomes, diagnosis of disease, or prevention of disease.

Where relevant, proposals should consider collaborating with the core facilities/platforms of the University of Bern and Inselspital. Check out the platform list on the BCPM website for more information: https://www.bcpm.unibe.ch/research/platforms/biobank_bern/.
Budget

The total budget for this call is CHF 450’000. Applicants may request between CHF 30’000 and CHF 150’000. Funding will be contingent on obtaining the appropriate protocols (e.g. ethical approval).

Applicant Eligibility

This call is open to all young researchers and scientists, from postdocs up to assistant lecturers, under the condition that they have a primary non-professorial appointment at the University of Bern and/or the Inselspital.

The applicant must provide a written Letter of Support from his or her current mentor and primary investigator, confirming that the applicant will be employed and will have access to the necessary facilities/labs for the complete duration of the project.

Applicants should prepare for a grant application within the maximum project duration of 18 months.

Proposal Eligibility

Proposals must address the research topic described above, and must be compliant with the specifications mentioned in the template.

Selection Criteria

Applications will first be screened for overall completeness and feasibility. Only eligible applications will be considered. Proposals will then be evaluated by the Scientific Review Board (SRB). External experts might be involved. The projects will be evaluated on the basis of scientific merit, impact with regards to precision medicine and feasibility.

Expenditure Guidelines

Allowable expenditures:

- Costs for laboratory supplies and expenses such as materials, reagents, cryogenic vials, next generation sequencing (NGS), mass spectrometry, etc.
- User fees for Core Facilities.
- International travel and conference/meeting expenses will only be covered if they result in an accepted abstract or conference presentation.
Non-allowable expenditures:

- PI salary support
- Secretarial/administrative personnel
- Capital costs/equipment, including maintenance/service contracts
- Office furniture and supplies
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of buildings/laboratories
- Rental of laboratory or office space
- Personal computers
- Non-medical services to patients
- Purchasing of periodicals and books
- Dues and membership fees in scientific societies

Grant Guidelines

To responsibly manage funds, the following guidelines have been instituted. **Acceptance of an award indicates agreement to abide by these guidelines.** Failure to abide by these guidelines will jeopardize eligibility for future grants and/or BCPM Membership:

1. If a grant is awarded, the PI(s) must agree to provide a final progress report, including an overview about the results which have been reached (publication, clinical outcome, etc.). A presentation might also be required.

2. Publications resulting from the research supported by this grant must contain the acknowledgment “Supported by the Bern Center for Precision Medicine”.

3. Any additional publications or grants resulting from the present grant must be reported.

4. The funds awarded shall be used solely for the purposes specified in the grant, in strict compliance with the application submitted and as executed by the recipient.

5. Grant money from the BCPM comes from a University business credit (Betriebskredit), and cannot be transferred to a University third party credit (Drittmittelkredit). It can only be transferred to another Betriebskredit. You may also choose to manage BCPM funds at the Inselspital, but you are not allowed to re-direct BCPM funds from the Inselspital back to a Drittmittelkredit at the University.

6. Grant recipients must respond to requests for information from the scientific leadership and administrative staff about their project.

7. Recipients might be asked to participate in a progress update meeting or conference to describe their research.