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Call for applications: INKUBATOR seeding grants for collaborative cancer research with a focus on cancer genome dynamics and stratification-based therapy

General information

The Comprehensive Cancer Center Niedersachsen (CCC-N) with its two partner sites Hannover Medical School (MHH) and University Medical Center Göttingen (UMG) is among the 14 oncological centers of excellence of the Deutsche Krebshilfe. With support from the State of Lower Saxony, the INKUBATOR program within the newly established "Interdisciplinary Center for Cancer Research" (IZKKF) aims to accelerate innovative translational cancer research with a focus on either a) Cancer genome dynamics and cellular plasticity or b) Stratification-based therapy. The program´s specific mission is to offer a highly flexible start-up funding for ambitious cancer research projects that are not yet advanced enough for third-party funding. Tandem applications from MHH and UMG applicants are highly encouraged and will be preferentially supported.

Eligible applicants

Postgraduate researchers (f/m/d) employed at either MHH or UMG with an academic degree (PhD, Dr. med.) and a track record in oncological research at any stage of their career are eligible. **Applications by early career researchers and junior research group leaders and DFG / DKH first time applicants as well as tandem projects from MHH and UMG are highly encouraged and will receive preferential consideration.**

Eligible projects

Funded projects must be in an early stage but advanced enough to demonstrate promising preliminary results or proof of feasibility. **Since the goal of the program is to support projects with a high probability of later third party funding, applicants must convincingly show how the funding will be used to achieve this.** Funding of the applicant´s own position is not regularly supported (strict exceptions with a very strong justification may apply). Applicants should also demonstrate how their projects fit into the long-term CCC-N scientific research topics "genome dynamics & immune regulation" (i.e., hard-wired or transient molecular mechanisms that allow tumor cells to adopt to their environment and/or to escape therapy-related damage) and "stratification-based therapy" (i.e. translational projects preparing or developing targeted treatments based on specific features of cancer cells). Typical funding budgets will be 100-150.000 Euros per partner site for up to 2 years. In the case of tandem projects with two or more applicants from both MHH and UMG, both applicants will receive this funding from their respective institution site (i.e. total funding of up to 300.000 Euros). Successful applicants will be expected to present their interim results at the annual scientific CCC-N symposia and will have to submit a short end report upon completion of their project.

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How to prepare your application

Your application must contain the following information in the following order:

A) **Motivation letter (1 page)** with a short introduction of the applicant(s) and their background and current situation, together with a brief outline of the proposed project.

B) **CV (1 page)** with all relevant information and a maximum of 5 publications and previous and current funding, in particular funding by the DFG and Deutsche Krebshilfe. In case of other current funding, applicants must justify in the main application how the project aligns with their other projects (see below).

C) **Main application (maximum 10 pages in total, Arial font size 11) with the following parts:**
C1: Project summary (1 page) – Key features: Central research hypothesis of the project with an indication of how the projects will go beyond existing knowledge / most relevant preliminary results how does the project connect with the two CCC-N research topics / potential clinical relevance / perspective and estimated time to third party funding.
C2: **Introduction / background:** Describe the scientific background and current state of the art. Define the scientific or clinical relevance of your project**.** Explain how the project fits into the two CCC-N main research topics (see above) and how your project connects with other research in CCC-N.
C3: Scientific aims and milestones
C4: Own previous work and preliminary results
C5: Work plan and justification of the requested budget: Demonstrate the steps and methods by which you will reach important milestones. Outline potential risks and how you will manage them. If applicable, address ethical or data protection issues. Give an estimated timeline. This description is the justification for your budget plan and will be decisive for the success of your application – all costs must be justifiable from your work plan! In case of other current funding, applicants must detail why their project does not interfere with existing funding.
C6: Composition of the research group and relevant scientific collaborations: Does your group have the necessary expertise to successfully perform the work described? Is access to relevant samples or patient cohorts granted? Will parts of the project rely on internal or external collaborations with other partners?
C7: Expected outcome and translation into third party funding: Describe the expected results and impact of your project and your plans for publications and third-party grant applications. You will need to convince your reviewers that your project will have the potential for high impact publications and / or external funding.

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Application timeline

The deadline for your application is 30.09.2025. Please send your complete application (parts A-C) in a single PDF file via email to **inkubator.izkkf@med.uni-goettingen.de**.

Applications will be reviewed externally. Expected start of funding for elected projects is January 2026.

For questions and further inquiries, please contact

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We look forward to receiving your application!