



## Call for proposals 2020

# Cancer Biology and Basic Sciences



INCa has set up a new portal for the submission and the evaluation of the projects (<https://projets.e-cancer.fr/>). Coordinators and evaluators have to register to access to the projects submission or evaluation.

*Please note that the proposals are selected in two phases:*

- 1. Letter of intent, deadline : November 4<sup>th</sup> 2019*
- 2. Full application, deadline : March 26<sup>th</sup> 2020*

Online submission:

<https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Appels-a-projets-en-cours/PLBIO-2020>

## Contents

1	Context and objectives of the call for proposals .....	3
2	Scope of the call .....	3
3	Participation terms and conditions.....	4
3.1	Project duration.....	4
3.2	Project coordination.....	4
3.3	Eligible teams .....	4
3.4	Grantee.....	5
4	Proposal evaluation and selection procedures.....	5
4.1	Selection procedure .....	5
4.2	Evaluation process.....	5
4.3	Admissibility and eligibility criteria.....	6
4.3.1	Admissibility .....	6
4.3.2	Eligibility .....	6
4.4	Evaluation criteria .....	7
4.4.1	Letter of intent .....	7
4.4.2	Full application .....	7
5	General provisions .....	8
5.1	INCa funding .....	8
5.1.1	Funding regulations.....	8
5.1.2	Projects' duration .....	8
5.1.3	Eligible expenditure.....	9
5.1.4	Scientific and financial reports .....	9
5.1.5	Cumulative funding .....	9
5.2	Publication and communication.....	9
6	Timetable of the call for proposals .....	10
7	Submission procedure .....	10
7.1	New submission procedure: PROJECTS portal .....	10
7.2	Project selection in 2 steps:.....	11
7.2.1	Letter of intent .....	11
7.2.2	Preselection proposal.....	11
8	Contacts .....	12

## 1 Context and objectives of the call for proposals

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One of the priorities of the French National Cancer Institute (INCa) is to provide support for fundamental cancer research through the funding of original projects in order to generate new knowledge and increase the competitiveness of French research teams at the international level.

The objectives of the call for research proposals “Cancer Biology and Basic Sciences” are hence to:

- Support projects that are original in their subject and approaches, ambitious and feasible in their objectives;
- Foster cross-disciplinary research associating partner teams from other scientific fields to biomedical teams;
- Stimulate research on emerging and innovative topics to open new perspectives in oncology.

## 2 Scope of the call

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The “Cancer Biology and Basic Sciences” call for research proposals is opened to all areas of basic research and scientific fields involved in the fight against cancer aimed at acquiring new knowledge, and developing new tools and opening new therapeutic perspectives.

Multi-disciplinary projects, which have contributions from fields other than biology, are encouraged. The biology part of the project must be significant and relevant.

### Note:

- Are considered out of scope of this call for proposals:
  - Fundamental research projects which are not related to cancer;
  - Projects focusing on translational research (call for proposals “Translational research in cancerology, PRT-K 2020”);
  - Clinical trials (call for proposals “Programme for Hospital Clinical Cancer Research”, PHRC 2020);
  - Projects on human and social sciences, and epidemiology (call for proposals “Human and Social Sciences, Epidemiology and Public Health”, SHSESP 2020);
  - Projects which are eligible for the calls for proposals launched by the ITMO Cancer (Multi-Organism Thematic Institute) and managed by Inserm.
- A same project cannot be submitted simultaneously to several INCa calls for proposals ;
- A single letter of intent/finalised project cannot be submitted to calls until the result of the non-selection of the same letter of intent/project has been notified by INCa to the coordinator.
- Recommendations : This call for proposals is highly competitive, it is strongly recommended to principal investigators to propose applications taking account of the call for proposals scope and which respect the following criteria :
  - Projects with scientific relevance to cancer;
  - Projects which are original in their study subject and approaches;
  - Projects relying on a strong methodological strategy, including alternatives approaches and mechanistic studies;
  - Projects relying on a proof of concept (preliminary data).

## 3 Participation terms and conditions

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### 3.1 Project duration

The project duration is of between 36 to 48 months.

### 3.2 Project coordination

The project coordination is carried out by **one PI only**.

- The project coordinator is the team manager of team 1 in the frame of the project (He/She can be different from the hierarchical head of the team 1) ;
- He/She should belong to public institutes and work in France ;
- He/She might be a civil servant or employed on a contract. Young researchers with no permanent position are eligible if their institution allows it ;
- He/She undertakes to commit at least 30% of his/her time to the project. As a result, he/she will not be able to coordinate more than 3 projects funded by INCa simultaneously. The devoted time of each personnel involved in the project should be indicated in the application ;
- The coordinator is not allowed to submit more than one project to this call for proposals.

In addition to his/her scientific and technical roles, the principal investigator is also responsible for the coordination of the project and for implementing the collaboration between the partners in the project, the production of the required documents (scientific reports), the meetings, progresses and results communication.

**Applications from young PI are highly encouraged<sup>1</sup>.**

### 3.3 Eligible teams

The projects must involve at least two teams belonging to **different research units and/or institutions**.

#### **Origin of the teams:**

The teams must belong to the following institutions:

- Public research organisations (universities, EPSTs, EPICs, etc.);
- Non-profit organisations (associations, foundations, etc.);
- Healthcare institutes (hospital, etc).

For-profit organisations, industrial partners and/or foreign teams can participate as long as they secure their own funding for the project.

Each team pointed out a team manager in the frame of the project (who can be different of the hierarchical head of the team).

Please note that in accordance with the MoU signed between INCa and the MOST of Taiwan, research teams from Taiwan are encouraged to collaborate with teams from France to participate in

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<sup>1</sup> A young PI should have defended his/her doctoral thesis (or PhD equivalent) since less than 10 years (ie after January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009)

this call as long as they secure their own funding, which may be achieved by submitting the proposal to the MOST of Taiwan following the relevant requirements. These projects will be evaluated both by INCa and MOST.

### 3.4 Grantee

Participating teams must appoint an institution that will receive and manage the grant (“grantee”).

- The grantee will have to distribute the funding allocated to the research teams involved in the project through their respective institutions, and therefore must have a public accountant.
- The grantee is contractually responsible towards INCa for the completion of the project and the transmission of all scientific and financial reports required.
- The grantee is also responsible for the transfer of the funds to the participating teams. This transfer must be completed within a reasonable time.

**Note:** For projects whose coordinator is based in Paris region, the grantee will be the Ile-de-France Cancer Centre Public Interest Group (GIP Cancéropôle Ile-de-France) which will be responsible for distributing the funds to beneficiary teams.

## 4 Proposal evaluation and selection procedures

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The evaluation will be conducted by an international & independent scientific evaluation committee whose members are recognised for their scientific and medical expertise and who will review the letters of intent and the full proposals. Full projects will be also evaluated by external evaluators.

Reviewers and evaluators undertake to:

- Comply with the INCa code of ethics (<http://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Deontologie-et-transparence-DPI/Acteurs-de-l-evaluation-de-projet>).
- Commit themselves about confidentiality of any confidential documents and information provided, duty of discretion shall remain applicable in any case.
- Declare direct or indirect connections, with each proposal submitted to the review committee, with the coordinator of a proposal or a member of the team of a proposal.

The list of the scientific evaluation committee members will be published at the end of the evaluation procedure.

### 4.1 Selection procedure

- First step: Preselection of proposals based on a **letter of intent** (cf. timeline, chapter 6 and submission procedures, chapter 7) by the members of the evaluation panel. The INCa will inform all coordinators whether or not their letter of intent has been preselected.
- Second step: Evaluation of the **full applications**. Only the proposals preselected during first step will be invited to submit a full proposal (cf. timeline, chapter 6 and submission procedures, chapter 7).

### 4.2 Evaluation process

The principal phases of the evaluation procedure are the following:

- First step: letters of intent selection

- **Eligibility criteria:** INCa confirms that the proposals submitted meet the eligibility criteria;
  - **Evaluation of the letters of intent:** evaluation panel evaluate the letters of intent (two reviewers assigned per letter of intent);
  - **Selection of the letters of intent:** evaluation panel discusses the quality of the proposals and ranks the letters of intent;
  - **Information of the coordinators.**
- Second step: evaluation of the full applications. Applicants whose letters of intent have been preselected are invited to submit their full proposal;
    - Full proposal evaluation :
      - External experts: external referees (international) will be asked to review and write an evaluation report on the full projects. Two external referees will be assigned per project;
      - Evaluation by the evaluation panel:
        - ⇒ The evaluation panel evaluates the projects (2 members/project), while taking into account the external evaluations;
        - ⇒ The evaluation panel discuss the quality of the projects;
        - ⇒ The evaluation panel proposes a list of projects for funding;
    - Results: decision and publication of the results by INCa.

Note: full projects must not undergo major changes from the letter of intent (PI or teams modifications) except if these changes are recommended by the scientific evaluation committee.

### **4.3 Admissibility and eligibility criteria**

#### **4.3.1 Admissibility**

- The application files must be submitted before the indicated deadline (cf. timeline, chapter 6 and submission procedures, chapter 7) and must respect the requested format.
- All the documents asked (including signatures) must be provided into the application files.

#### **4.3.2 Eligibility**

- The project must answer the objectives and the scope of this call for proposals;
- The project duration must be of between 36 or 48 months;
- A same project cannot be submitted simultaneously to several INCa calls for proposals ;
- A single letter of intent/finalised project cannot be re-submitted to INCa or to others funding agencies until the result of the pre-selection/selection of the same letter of intent/project has been notified by INCa to the coordinator;
- The project coordinator cannot be a member of the evaluation panel;
- The coordinator is not allowed to coordinate more than 3 projects funded by INCa simultaneously;
- The coordinator undertakes to commit at least 30% of his/her time to the project. More generally, any person participating in projects funded by INCa cannot be committed to more than 100% of his/her time in these different projects;
- The coordinator can submit only one project to this call for proposals;
- The projects must involve at least two teams belonging to different research units and/or institutions;
- The letter of intent and the full application must be clearly structured and prepared, and comply with the submission procedures described in Chapter 7. As the evaluation will be

international, the letter of intent and the project in English are mandatory, the French version is optional;

- The forms (letters of intent and full applications) must include all the necessary information for the overall evaluation of the quality of the project, including statistical analysis, logistical aspects when they are important for the proper completion of analysis and the accurate justification of the requested budget;
- Full projects must not undergo major changes from the letter of intent (PI or teams modifications) except if these changes are recommended by the scientific evaluation committee.

#### **4.4 Evaluation criteria**

The evaluation panel will review and assess the scientific quality, synergy of the partnership, the technical and financial feasibility, and the potential impact of the results.

##### **4.4.1 Letter of intent**

During the 1<sup>st</sup> step of the selection process, letters of intent are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- The relevance of the project regarding the call for proposals;
- The scientific quality of the proposal (relevance, originality and national/international positioning);
- Scientific impact of the project;
- Methodological quality and technological relevance;
- Quality and experience of the research teams;
- Feasibility of the project, appropriateness of the project schedule and the requested funding.

##### **4.4.2 Full application**

The evaluation criteria reviewed by the experts (external experts and evaluation committee members) are the following:

###### **Scientific quality of the project:**

- Excellence regarding the state of the science/the art;
- Positioning of the project at the national and international level;
- Relevance and originality of the project;
- Clarity of the objectives.

###### **Coordinator and participating teams:**

- Qualities and experience of the coordinator regarding the project objectives. Young coordinators are encouraged to take responsibility in the submitted project;
- Excellence of the associated teams participating in the project and their heads;
- Quality of the partnership: complimentary and/or multidisciplinary of the teams collaborating in the project.

###### **Methodology and feasibility:**

- Quality of the methodology and technological relevance;
- Technical resources: technological platforms, data processing centres, biological resource centres associated with clinical data, etc.;
- Compliance with ethical rules and regulations;

- Quality of the coordination between the partners (meetings plan, preparation of monitoring reports, communication, etc.);
- Appropriateness and justification of the time schedule proposed regarding the project objectives.

**Impact of the project:**

- Scientific, technical and medical impact;
- Potential impact of the project results on the scientific, industrial and company communities (intellectual property, economic and company potential, etc.).

**Financial feasibility:**

- Human resources allocated to the project;
- Appropriateness and justification of requested funding according to the proposed work plan;
- Relevance and justification of the co-funding (if relevant).

## 5 General provisions

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### 5.1 INCa funding

#### 5.1.1 Funding regulations

INCa funding will be awarded under the regulations on funding granted by INCa in force at the time of the grant allocation. <http://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Reglement-des-subventions>

Those participating in the project (coordinator, manager of participating teams and legal representative of the grantee) shall undertake to adhere to these regulations as follows:

- The project coordinator registers their commitment directly via the PROJECTS portal in the “commitments” section of the application (click-validated signature)<sup>2</sup>.
- The manager of each participating team should duly complete the “commitments” form available for download on the portal and sign it (handwritten). The project coordinator should then submit all the scanned forms in the “commitments” section of the application via the PROJECTS portal;
- The legal representative of the grantee, in the event of the project being selected, should complete and sign (handwritten) the “commitments” form available for download on the PROJECTS portal. The project coordinator should then submit this scanned form via the PROJECTS portal.

#### 5.1.2 Projects’ duration

In accordance with L1415-7 article of the public health code, for projects which can’t be completed in 60 month, in reason of their important complexity, the president of the Institute can allow a funding for eight years at the most (96 month).

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<sup>2</sup> Click-validated signature which, pursuant to the general terms of use of the PROJECTS Portal, has the same validity as a handwritten signature and is deemed a legal undertaking to adhere to regulations



### **5.1.3 Eligible expenditure**

The INCa grant may fund:

- Staff costs (permanent staff may be allocated to the budget, with the exception of state, hospital or territorial civil servants). Funding for postdoctoral fellows may be requested but PhD students funding is not eligible;
- Operating expenses and various consumables;
- Equipment expenses under €150,000 including taxes. The global budget dedicated to equipment expenses may not exceed 30% of the whole grant;
- Management costs (up to a maximum of 4% of the grant awarded by INCa).

The INCa grant must be used by the beneficiary organisation for the sole realisation of the project identified in the grant document.

### **5.1.4 Scientific and financial reports**

For each funded project, the coordinator is committed to provide scientific and financial reports according to the terms of the regulations on funding granted by INCa.

### **5.1.5 Cumulative funding**

A project submitted in the frame of several calls for proposals can receive only one funding (except in case of co-funding clearly stated in the application), regardless the funding agencies (except specific authorisations of these agencies).

In case of finding of cumulative funding, INCa could stop the funding and ask for reimbursement of the amount already paid.

## **5.2 Publication and communication**

Within the scope of the rollout of the national open-access science plan, the grantee and the project coordinator shall take care to:

- complete, via the PROJECTS portal, the “General abstract” and “Scientific abstract” sections of the application, in French and English. The abstracts (scientific and general) of the funded projects shall be published on the Institute’s website and, if applicable, those of its partners;
- prioritise publications in native open access journals or publications. Failing that, the Grantee and the teams involved in the project undertake to submit the scientific publications resulting from the funded research projects to an open-access archive.

All publications, irrespective of format (particularly articles, abstract), produced within the scope of the project must mention INCa’s financial support. The wording should contain the unique scientific project ID obtained from the PROJECTS portal.

## 6 Timetable of the call for proposals

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Launching date of the call for proposals:	October 2019	
Step 1: Letter of intent	Online submission deadline of the letters of intent : <a href="https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Appels-a-projets-en-cours/PLBIO-2020">https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Appels-a-projets-en-cours/PLBIO-2020</a>	November 4 <sup>th</sup> 2019
	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of the evaluation committee: selection of the letters of intent	February 2020
	Results sent to the coordinators	February 2020
Step 2: Full project	Deadline for online of the full project: <a href="https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Appels-a-projets-en-cours/PLBIO-2020">https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Appels-a-projets-en-cours/PLBIO-2020</a>	March 26 <sup>th</sup> 2020
	2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the evaluation committee	End of June 2020
	Results publication	July 2020

## 7 Submission procedure

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### 7.1 New submission procedure: PROJECTS portal

The French National Cancer Institute has set up a new portal for the management of calls for proposals. Projects shall now be submitted directly via the PROJECTS portal: <https://projets.e-cancer.fr/>

**Create/activate account:** to login, use your reference email as your login on the PROJECTS portal home page.

- If you have not yet registered, create your account and enter your contact details and work profile.
- If you are already registered (**based on data from your previous applications**), a message **will be displayed indicating that your email address already exists. In this case, simply click on "Forgot password?" and follow the instructions.**
- Finally, if you think that you are already registered and your email address is not recognised, contact us at the address "assistanceprojets@institutcancer.fr".

**Application file submission:** all application files must **be submitted solely under the coordinator's name and contact details**. Applications submitted under another name/email address shall be **inadmissible**.

## **7.2 Project selection in 2 steps:**

1. Letter of intent: the submission deadline is **4 November 2019 at 4 p.m.**
2. Preselected proposal: the submission deadline is **26 March 2020 at 4 p.m.**

### **7.2.1 Letter of intent**

- The coordinator logs onto his/her account in the PROJECTS portal;
- He/she enters the data requested online:  
all sections of the application are mandatory, including those of the coordinator's profile (identification, contact details, expertise, scientific affiliation and head organisation);
- He/she submits the document required for submission: project description/letter of intent form;
- He/she validates the file submitted: the final validation generates an email acknowledging receipt and confirming file submission.

**N.B.: once the file has been validated, you will no longer be able to return to the contents of the file submitted.**

### **7.2.2 Preselection proposal**

- The coordinator logs onto his/her account in the PROJECTS portal;
- He/she enters the data requested online (supplementary sections);
- He/she submits the documents required for submission:
  - project description in the "Project overview" section;
  - projected budget in the "financial appendix - projected budget" section;
  - CV of the coordinator and of the managers of each participating team, in free format and drafted in English (see "participating teams").
- Optional documents may be submitted:  
Supplementary attachments to the application may be added, in the "Project description" section, under "Supplementary attachments".  
N.B.: each document must contain the application number received upon submitting the letter of intent.(e.g.: "INCA19-001").
- He/she submits the signed documents – Participating team commitments:  
i.e. the compilation of all the scanned commitments of all the participating teams. The document must contain the application number received upon submitting the letter of intent.(e.g.: "INCA19-001").
- He/she validates the proposal submitted: the final validation generates an email acknowledging receipt and confirming file submission.

**N.B.: once the file has been validated, you will no longer be able to return to the contents of the file submitted.**

## 8 Contacts

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- For any scientific concern, please contact:

**Marion PIEDFER and Charlotte GUDEWICZ**, Scientific Officers. Research & Innovation Division – Biology, Transfer and Innovations department

[mpiedfer@institutcancer.fr](mailto:mpiedfer@institutcancer.fr)  
[cgudewicz@institutcancer.fr](mailto:cgudewicz@institutcancer.fr)

- For administrative concern, please contact:

[plbio2020@institutcancer.fr](mailto:plbio2020@institutcancer.fr)

- For technical issues : [assistanceprojets@institutcancer.fr](mailto:assistanceprojets@institutcancer.fr)