

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR TRANSFER FUNDING

Dear Colleagues, Scientists, and Innovators,

We are delighted to announce the next funding cohort at the Institute for Biomedical Translation (IBT) Lower Saxony for projects looking for a fast track in Hannover-Braunschweig-Göttingen.

We support innovation originating from academia. Our goal is to fund projects that develop new medicinal therapies and diagnostics, as well as novel technologies including devices or digital solutions that are important for healthcare. We are looking for:

- **Promising ideas** with potential for scaling and commercialisation
- **Innovative and research-based start-up projects** with validated proof-of-concept
- **Novel and valuable IP** with high potential for further development

Project funding up to 500.000 EUR or 1.500.000 EUR is available depending on the status, maturity and goals of the proposals, which will be reviewed as part of the selection process. You can find more information on the criteria in the annex of this call.

In the first phase of IBT funding, projects will be developed further in a scientific and market-oriented manner so that the business idea becomes a business plan, enabling the swift founding of a company. Thereafter, the focus will be on initiating business activity and acquiring additional external funding.

Deadlines and steps of the two-stage selection procedure:

Monday, 13 May 2024: Official publication of the call for proposals

Monday, 1 July 2024 (23:59): Submission of project outlines via the website www.ibt-ls.de

Monday, 29 July 2024: Evaluation of the outlines and selection of the finalists

Late August 2024 (date tbc): 2nd IBT Portfolio Conference – pitches and project selection

In the current call, only employees of the three IBT founding institutions (Hannover Medical School, Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Braunschweig, University Medical Center Göttingen) are eligible for participation. Three projects per institution will be selected for a pitch at the Portfolio Conference. We are planning to release a follow-up call in July after the submission deadline of this cohort, via which all projects based in Lower Saxony will be eligible for application.

The template for submitting project outlines and further information can be found on our website.

With kind regards and best wishes for your success,



Dr. Thomas Sommer

Managing Director

Institute for Biomedical Translation Lower Saxony

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ANNEX: HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

STRUCTURE OF THE APPLICATION

On our website, you'll find the template with which you shall submit your proposal (8 to 10 pages without annexes), covering the following aspects of your project:

- Brief description, outlining the current status and the novelty of the approach
- Blueprint of the asset/product
- Target product profile, distinction from competition
- Competitive situation and potential market(s)
- Detailed IP situation in light of the competitive landscape
- Development roadmap, including a timeline, milestones, and budgets per milestone
- Internal expertise (background of project leads, assays systems, disease models etc.)
- Potential cooperation partners (letters of intent, additional funds/know-how secured)
- Institutional synergies within Lower Saxony
- Digital access to relevant datasets supporting the proposal

FUNDING FOR DRUG DISCOVERY PROJECTS

The IBT will fund innovative new therapeutic concepts using small molecules, biologics (for example antibodies) or cell therapies for pharmaceutical intervention. **They all require a clear understanding of the underlying biology of a disease; molecular targets for intervention should be verified. New therapeutic approaches should have a scientific rationale, a defined medical need and being superior versus standard of care (SoC).**

Leaning on a calibration of maturity based on Technology Readiness Levels, there are four project levels (PL2-PL5¹) that the IBT considers for funding:

PL2 Application for screening and beyond

At this level, the project must have a clearly defined concept with a path forward and modality defined to address a specific molecular target. This includes having screening assays in place, such as primary, secondary, tertiary assays, selectivity assays, and disease-relevant animal models for further proof of mechanism (PoM) and proof of concept (PoC). Go/No-Go decision criteria should be defined and a blueprint for the respective compounds created.

PL3 Application for lead identification; should include pharmaco-kinetics, in vivo, early ADMET and subsequent tests, preliminary biomarker plan

At this level, the project has already completed screening and identified hit structures or molecules. Compound characterization and profiling assays are performed or ongoing to enable lead identification.

¹ Project level 1 (PL1), i.e. fundamental science and open exploration of ideas, is currently not eligible for funding from the IBT Lower Saxony. All projects on PL2-PL5 must have a clear target product profile with proven validity.

PL4 Application for further lead optimization and characterization; should include pharmaco-dynamics, ADMET safety tests, can the compound be produced for clinical studies, cost of goods

At this level lead identification is completed (ideally more than one lead molecule identified) and the project is in the process for compound optimization (lead optimization) to identify a pre-candidate.

PL5 Application for preclinical studies; GLP, GMP, including production and formulation for Phase 1 studies)

The identified preclinical candidate needs further characterization.

ALL OTHER HEALTHCARE-RELATED PROJECTS (technology/devices/digital)

The above outlined levels are valid only for drug discovery projects. However, the IBT may also support projects in which **novel technologies including devices or digital solutions that are important for healthcare** are pursued. These projects are likely in different development levels; below provide guidance on how to integrate them into the introduced project levels:

PL2 Identification of a medical need or vision and development of a solution strategy (device, technology or digital approach), understanding of the underlying concept, idea of a device/technology/digital product development, IP landscape and market/competitor and user demand analysis.

PL3 Preclinical device prototype/software/technology or a digital solution, animal testing of prototypes (if applicable), digital/technology test runs.

PL4 Refinement of prototype/software/technology with respect to market competition, potential revenues, feasibility, user demand, surveys of user satisfaction, strategy and partners for manufacturing the device.

DETERMINING YOUR FUNDING VOLUME

Project funding up to 500.000 EUR or 1.500.000 EUR is available in this call depending on project level and maturity. Early-stage ideas shall target the first funding tier, while projects in an advanced growth state may aim at more extensive support. The feasibility of the development plan and the correspondingly requested funding will be reviewed as part of the selection process; therefore, we strongly encourage all prospective applicants to determine the amount of requested funding in a diligent and prudent manner based on actual needs. We reserve the right to award funding deviating from the requested sums following the review and recommendations by the Portfolio Advisory Board.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please address questions regarding the call to Prof. Dr. Thomas Sommer, Managing Director of IBT Lower Saxony via telephone (+49 160 475 5631) or e-mail (sommer.thomas [at] mh-hannover.de).

For the sake of transparency, we will collect and publish all questions asked by prospective IBT projects on our website.

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