The International Bladder Cancer Network (IBCN) e.V.

IBCN Collaborative Seed Grant

1. Overview

The International Bladder Cancer Network (IBCN) Collaborative Seed Grant supports the initiation of new collaborative research projects between groups affiliated with the IBCN. The programme aims to bring together multidisciplinary and international teams to develop innovative joint research initiatives. Priority will be given to early-career investigators (within the first five years of their independent faculty position). The grant promotes international and multidisciplinary partnerships to strengthen scientific collaboration and expand the IBCN research network.

2. Objectives

a. Initiate new research collaborations between two or more groups affiliated with the IBCN.
b. Foster multidisciplinary and international partnerships in bladder cancer research.
c. Support the active involvement of junior faculty members and their career development.
d. Generate preliminary data, shared resources or project concepts that can serve as the basis for future collaborative studies and applications for larger collaborative external funding.
e. Strengthen the scientific network and long-term sustainability of the IBCN by encouraging international and multidisciplinary collaborations.

3. Eligibility Criteria

a. Applications must involve at least two IBCN-affiliated research groups collaborating on a joint bladder cancer research project.
    a. The lead researcher from each group must be an active IBCN member of more than one year duration.
    b. All co-applicants with a focus on bladder cancer research must become IBCN members if not already members.

b. Lead investigators at each institution must be faculty members at a university, health care institution or research institute. Trainees are only eligible as co-applicants.
c. Multi-institutional and/or international collaborations are required.
d. Priority will be given to projects in which the lead investigator from one institution is within 5 years of their first faculty appointment.
e. The project must be a new "stand alone" project without preceding shared publications or grants on the same project.
    i. Proposals for projects that have received funding from another source, including government or industry sponsors, will not be considered.
    ii. The project should not be a subproject within a larger established project.
    iii. The Grant is not meant to complete funding for larger projects.
f. Priority will be given to collaborations between investigators who have not previously collaborated.

4. Grant Duration & Funding

a. Project duration: Up to 12 months (a one-time extension, not exceeding 6 months may be considered upon request).
b. Funding support: €25,000 (see details below)
    a. Proposal budgets of more than €25,000 will not be considered unless the applicants provide evidence of available matching funds from their institution(s).
c. Indirect costs are not eligible under this grant. Institutions are required to waive overhead fees.

    Successful applicants must provide contact for financial administrators in their institutions; all funds will be paid to each of the investigators' institutions according to the submitted budget.

5. Application Process

Application Submission:
Applicants must submit an IBCN Collaborative Seed Grant application using the provided template, including the following sections:

1. **Cover page:** Title, Lead Applicants/Co-applicants (Names, affiliations, contact information), proposed start/end date, proposed total costs.
2. **Specific aims (Max - 1 page):** Provide an overview of the research question; include sufficient background to understand how research addresses a specific gap in bladder cancer biology or clinical practice. Include the hypothesis and specific aims/sub-aims.
3. **Research proposal (Max - 3 pages)** A brief research plan (Maximum 3 pages (excluding references); Arial or Calibri, minimum 11-point font) describing the rationale, methods and analysis, expected outcomes and alternative strategies,

4. **Innovation and Collaboration:** Describe the innovative nature of the proposal and the unique contributions specific to each collaborator.
5. **Future Plans:** Provide details regarding how the data/results generated as part of the proposed funding will contribute to future work and continued collaboration, including potential funding opportunities.
6. **Current status of collaboration:** A description (maximum 150 words) of whether the collaboration is new or established, how the proposed project will establish or strengthen the partnership, and its long-term goals. For established collaborations, describe why this funding is needed and how the proposal differs from or builds on prior work.
7. **Specific Roles and contribution:** A description of the specific roles and expected contributions of each collaborating group.
8. **Letter(s) of each Lead Applicant:** A support letter from each Lead Applicant confirming their commitment to the collaboration.
9. **Curriculum vitae:** A current CV of the Lead Applicant from each institution.
10. **Budget and justification:** A detailed budget outlining the expected use of funds. Seed funds may be used for research operating expenses (e.g., consumables, data generation, core facility fees, software, and project-related travel) but may not be used for salaries, stipends, or indirect costs. Funding decisions will be based on the proposed budget and available resources. Timeline for completion of the proposal within the budget period.
11. **Current and submitted grants:** A list of all current grants and submitted grant applications in the past 3 years with the title of the grant, granting agency and amount of the grant. Please provide the scientific abstract of any grant that may appear similar based on title alone.
12. **Publications:** Include a list of publications from each applicant (no more than 5 per applicant) that are relevant to their proposed contribution.

Review and Selection:

- All proposals will be treated as confidential and not shared outside the IBCN Board and proposal review committee.
- Applications will be evaluated by an IBCN review panel based on scientific merit, innovation, feasibility, collaborative potential, and expected impact for the investigators, the IBCN network, and the bladder cancer research field.
- Preference will be given to projects that establish novel collaborations, involve multi-institutional teams with early career investigators, and demonstrate potential for long-term sustainability and future funding opportunities.
- Proposals will be reviewed based on how clearly they demonstrate the unique contribution and added value of each participating group, including their distinct roles, expertise, and contribution to the overall objectives.

  The review panel will be selected by the General Secretary of the IBCN to avoid conflicts of interest with any investigators on grant applications. All proposals recommended for funding are subject to approval by the IBCN

Board. Any board member with a direct conflict of interest (including but not limited to being listed as a Co-applicant or having an application within the same cycle) will be recused and not present at the discussion of the applications.

Deadlines and Notification:

- Proposal will be reviewed tri-annually. (Deadlines - January 1, May 1, September 1).
- Applicant will be notified 8-10 weeks following deadline.

6. Post-Project Completion Requirements

- Submission of a brief report (1–2 pages) summarizing the project outcomes, progress achieved, and future plans for the collaboration must be submitted within six months of project completion.
- Presentation of the collaborative project and its outcomes at an IBCN annual meeting within 1 year of the proposal's completion date.
- Acknowledgment of IBCN support in all related knowledge dissemination activities, including conference presentations, community events, and research publications. The following is recommended: "This research was supported by the International Bladder Cancer Network (IBCN) Collaborative Research Grant"

7. Contact & Further Information

For inquiries or to submit an application, please contact: info@ibcnweb.com