

Evaluation Process & Criteria

Call for “HCEMM Research Group Leaders”

Summary

The Project Steering Committee of the Hungarian Centre of Excellence for Molecular Medicine (HCEMM), in accordance with the philosophy and good practice of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), is committed to independent and transparent evaluation of any proposal submitted to HCEMM to be performed by international experts.

As defined in the respective Guidelines of HCEMM as well as in the Specific Grant Agreement of the HCEMM project, the evaluation process takes place in two rounds:

- Round 1: External reviewers, based on certain criteria, evaluate the proposals and the PIs, and submit their recommendation to the HCEMM.
- Round 2: The Independent Evaluation Panel meets, interviews short-listed candidates, and provides a recommendation to the Director General and the Project Steering Committee of HCEMM.

The evaluation and selection process and criteria

- Selection and evaluation of research groups will be based on international standards, *i.e.* scientific excellence. Evaluation will be done by using panels with outstanding field-leader researchers exclusively from international institutions, while selection panels may be open also to outstanding field-leader researchers from Hungarian institutions beside members from international institutions.
- In addition to the criterion “scientific excellence”, several other aspects will influence the outcome of the evaluation strongly: (a) long-term potential of the proposed research and development to be truly translational and lead to biomedical applications; (b) potential for collaborative work with industrial partners; (c) compatibility with the existing research groups of HCEMM and potential for collaborative work and (d) potential to obtain additional third-party funding (academic and industrial).
- The above aspects need to be addressed clearly and with examples in the written documentation of the application.
- HCEMM employs a two round evaluation and selection system. EMBL will participate in the assembled selection panels. A two round system will be composed of a screening step and an interview. In the first phase, applicants will submit a research and work proposal. The evaluation will be performed by a panel of senior scientists of HCEMM, EMBL, external evaluators, members from the founding institutions, and the members of the Scientific Advisory Panel. The second (interview) round involving approximately three to five times the number of final awardees will be conducted by the panel. Gender balance will be advocated. The recruitment model for junior PIs will be to identify potentially strong ERC grant candidates, who – with the support offered by HCEMM and EMBL – will reach their tipping point of

excellence and successfully apply for ERC grants during their initial term. The selection and recruitment methodology for senior and junior PIs will be identical.

- A healthy mixture of senior and junior groups is expected to mutually enhance motivation, dynamism and competitiveness of co-incubated groups, and seniors may help junior fellows by providing guidance and advice. A constant ratio of senior to junior groups may not be necessary but we estimate that in the steady state and on the long run one third to two thirds ratio would be sensible. A junior group leader would have at least 2 but not more than 7 years of postdoctoral experience (exceptional candidates may enter HCEMM immediately after receiving their PhD degree). Senior group leader would have at least 10 but ideally not more than 30 years of postdoctoral experience. Selection of group leaders will be in line with gender equality and women will be particularly encouraged to apply.
- Highly excellent, internationally very competitive research groups are rigorously evaluated every 5 years in terms of their contribution to scientific excellence, translational research and society. These groups are welcomed to maintain at HCEMM until they meet the stringent criteria as assessed by the Independent Evaluation Panel. Nonetheless, it is anticipated in regard to the stringent evaluation process, that approximately 20% of the senior groups will not be able to continue based on the outcome of the evaluation at 5 years. For the junior groups HCEMM will endorse the principle of turn-over of research groups in line with the EMBL model. Research groups will receive funding for 5 years. At the end of the 5-year period the productivity and the overall performance of the group will be evaluated. If the evaluation is positive the group will get a 4-year extension contract. In both case scenarios should the evaluation not be favourable the group will be offered a transitional "phasing out" period of 1 year.