

# **CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026**

## **Cancer biology and basic sciences**

### **PLBIO-2026**

#### **SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

- 1.-** Letter of intent: **November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025 (4:00 pm)**
- 2.-** Full application: **March 26<sup>th</sup> 2026 (4:00 pm)**

#### **Online submission:**

<https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Appels-a-projets-en-cours/PLBIO2026>



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# 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 **basic 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 2025-2026”);
- Clinical trials (call for proposals “Programme for Hospital Clinical Cancer Research”, PHRC 2025-2026);
- Projects on human and social sciences, and epidemiology (call for proposals “Human and Social Sciences, Epidemiology and Public Health”, SHSESP 2026);
- Projects which are eligible for the calls for proposals launched by Inserm.

A same letter of intent/full application cannot be submitted simultaneously to several INCa calls for proposals;

A same letter of intent/full application cannot be submitted to other calls until the result of the non-selection of this letter of intent/full application has been notified by INCa to the coordinator.

**Recommendations:** This call for proposals is highly competitive; it is strongly recommended to principal investigators to respect the objectives of the call and to propose project that meet the following criteria:

- Projects with scientific relevance to cancer;
- Projects which are original in their study subject and approaches;
- Mechanistic studies to answer the scientific questions;
- Projects relying on a strong methodological strategy, including alternatives approaches and statistics/power calculation;
- Projects hypothesis-driven and relying on preliminary data.

### 3 Participation terms and conditions

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#### 3.1 Project duration

The project duration is 36 or 48 months.

#### 3.2 Project coordination

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

- The project coordinator is the scientific 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**.

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).

In addition, the consortium can include for-profit organisations, industrial partners and/or foreign teams as long as they secure their own funding for the project.

Each team pointed out a scientific 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 NSTC (National Science and Technology Council) of Taiwan, research teams from Taiwan are encouraged to collaborate with teams from France to participate in this call as long as they secure their own funding, which may be achieved by submitting the proposal to the NSTC of Taiwan following the relevant requirements. These projects will be evaluated both by INCa and NSTC.

### **3.4 Grantee**

Participating teams must appoint an institution that will receive and manage the grant ("grantee"). The grantee can be:

- A public law entity, having a public accountant;
- A private law entity or a public law entity not having a public accountant which, where applicable and insofar as a team participating in the performance of the project is attached to it, shall be responsible for transferring the portion of the grant awarded by INCa to the teams participating in the performance of the project.

The grantee is contractually responsible towards INCa for the completion of the project and the transmission of all scientific and financial reports required.

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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> 2015)

## 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 (click-validated signature)<sup>2</sup> to:

- Comply with the INCa code of ethics (<https://www.cancer.fr/l-institut-national-du-cancer/deontologie-et-transparence/textes-de-reference>)
- 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.

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. 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).

### 4.1 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). In case of discordant notations, a third reviewer is appointed;

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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

- **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 applications. 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. In case of discordant notations, a third reviewer is appointed;
      - ⇒ 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.

## 4.2 Admissibility and eligibility criteria

### 4.2.1 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 duly completed and uploaded to the application file via the PROJETS portal.

### 4.2.2 Eligibility

- The project must answer the objectives and the scope of this call for proposals;
- The project duration must be 36 or 48 months;
- A same project cannot be submitted simultaneously to several INCa calls for proposals;
- A single letter of intent/full application 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/full application 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. It is allowed to add some attachments, but they should only contain additional information (postprint or supporting letters). They should **not** contain elements critical for the evaluation of the project (for example: preliminary data, figures). As the evaluation will be international, the letter of intent and the project in English are mandatory, the French version is optional (except for the project's summary);
- 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, project's objectives) except if these changes are recommended by the scientific evaluation committee.

### 4.3 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.

#### 4.3.1 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.

### 4.3.2 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;
- Appropriateness and justification of the time schedule proposed regarding the project objectives.

#### **Impact of the project:**

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

#### **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).

#### **Project management:**

- Quality of the coordination between the partners;
- Reporting and communication.

## 5 General provisions

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### 5.1 INCa funding

INCa funding will be awarded under the regulations on funding granted by INCa in force at the time of the grant allocation: [grant regulation](#)

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>3</sup>.
- The scientific 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.

### 5.2 Eligible expenditure

Expenditure is eligible if it is necessary for project implementation. It must therefore be in line with the project's objectives and help to achieve them throughout the project.

The expenditure eligible for the grant is indicated in the Institute's Grant regulation No. 2025-01 (link to view [grant regulation](#)) in the following articles:

- **article 5.4.1 for personnel costs;**
- **article 5.4.2 for operating costs;**
- **article 5.4.3 for equipment expenses and investments;**

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<sup>3</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

- **article 5.4.4 for overhead costs.**

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

### 5.3 Projects' duration

By derogation from Article 4.1 of Regulation 2025-01, the eligibility period for expenditures shall be automatically extended by INCa for a duration of twelve (12) months beyond the project term specified in the application file. The submission of reports and the disbursement of funds shall be governed by the provisions of the Regulation, for the project term indicated in the application file, with the exception of the submission of the final report and the financial report, as well as the payment of the balance, which shall occur upon expiry of the additional twelve (12)-month expenditure period. The grant agreement shall expressly stipulate this twelve (12)-month extension (project term + twelve (12) additional months). Should the project be completed upon expiry of the project term specified in the application file, the final report, the financial report, and the payment of the balance may occur upon the effective completion of the project, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation, without the necessity of awaiting the expiry of the additional expenditure period.

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

### 5.4 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 ([grant regulation](#))

### 5.5 Cumulative funding

A project submitted in the frame of several calls for proposals can received 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.

## 5.6 Publication and communication

The procedures relating to the publication of the results of the project are defined in article 11.1 of regulation 2025-01 of the Institute and those relating to communication in article 11.2.

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

- provide abstracts (scientific and general) of the drafted research programme which will be published on the Institute's website;
- favour publications in open-access journals or publications. Failing that, the grantee institution and the teams participating in the project undertake to submit the scientific publications resulting from the funded research projects to an open-access archive;
- Enter and update a data management plan on the DMP OPIDoR portal: <https://dmp.opidor.fr/> at the same frequency as the transmission of activity reports, defined in the grant award document. The grant award document will state the schedule and methods for sending this data management plan. Specific information can be viewed at the following address: (<https://www.e-cancer.fr/Institut-national-du-cancer/Appels-a-projets/Reglement-des-subsventions/Rapports-et-plan-de-gestion-de-donnees>);
- mention the Institute's financial support in any publication, regardless of format (particularly articles, abstracts), produced in the context of the project. Such mentions must contain the unique scientific project ID obtained from the PROJECTS portal.

## 6 Timetable of the call for proposals

| Launching date of the call for proposals: | September 2025                                                                                                                  |                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Step 1: Letter of intent                  | Online submission deadline of the letters of intent:<br><a href="https://projets.e-cancer.fr/">https://projets.e-cancer.fr/</a> | <b>November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025</b><br><b>(4:00 pm)</b> |
|                                           | Results sent to the coordinators                                                                                                | <b>February 2026</b>                                    |
| Step 2: Full application                  | Deadline for online of the full application:                                                                                    | <b>March 26<sup>th</sup> 2026</b><br><b>(4:00 pm)</b>   |
|                                           | Results publication                                                                                                             | <b>July 2026</b>                                        |

## 7 Submission procedure

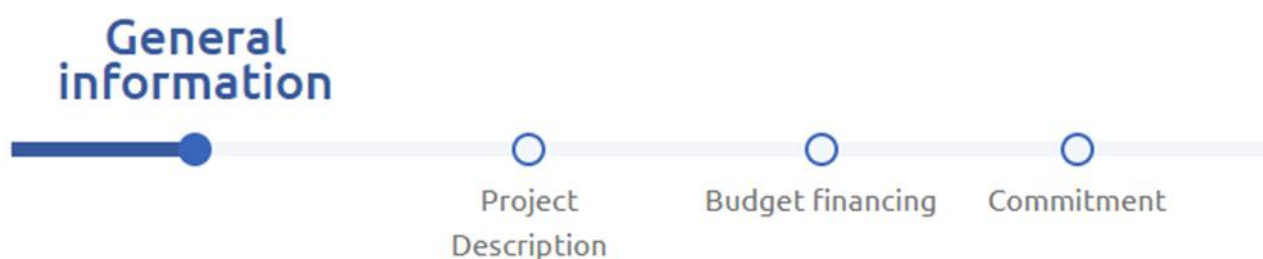
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### 7.1 Submission procedure: PROJECTS portal

Projects are submitted directly via the PROJECTS portal: <https://projets.e-cancer.fr/>

A guide for applicants is available to download on the PROJECTS portal:

[How to submit a file on the Projects portal?](#)



**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 **November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025 (4:00 pm)**
2. Full application: the submission deadline is **March 26<sup>th</sup> 2026 (4:00 pm)**

#### 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 (word or pdf format);
- He/she validates the file submitted: the final validation generates an email acknowledging receipt and confirming file submission.

### 7.2.2 Full application

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 (word or pdf format);
  - Projected budget in the "financial appendix - projected budget" section (excel format);
  - CV of the coordinator and of the managers of each participating team, in free format and drafted in English (word or pdf format).

Supplementary attachments to the application may be added, in the "Project description" section, under "Supplementary attachments". They should only contain additional information (postprint or supporting letters). They should not contain elements critical for the evaluation of the project (for example: preliminary data, figures).

**Each document must contain the application number received upon submitting the letter of intent.**

#### **Validation/submission:**

##### **➡ To submit your application:**

- Go to the "Submission" step, see guide for applicants (p15 - see 5.1 Projects portal submission procedure).
- Before the final validation, you must review data completion in each section by clicking on " **VERIFICATION AVANT SOUMISSION DEFINITIVE** ";

**➡ Clicking on "final submission"** submits the application definitively and generates an email acknowledging receipt and confirming file submission. Please check that you have received this email (check your spam folder, or, if applicable, your security system);

#### **Important:**

**No applications will be accepted after the deadline if the "final submission" button has not been pressed.**

## 8 Publication of results

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The results will be communicated to the project coordinators. The list of funded projects will be published on cancer.fr, the website of the French National Cancer Institute.

## 9 Contacts

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- For any scientific concern, please contact: **Marion PIEDFER** Scientific Officer. Research & Innovation Division – Biology, Transfer and Innovations department: [mpiedfer@institutcancer.fr](mailto:mpiedfer@institutcancer.fr)
- For administrative concern or technical issues, please contact: [assistanceprojets@institutcancer.fr](mailto:assistanceprojets@institutcancer.fr)