

**BITRECS: Biomedicine international training research programme for
excellent clinician-scientists**

2nd Call

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Note: Updated version with regard to the 1st call (Version 28-06-2018)

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A - WHY BITRECS

The Institut d'Investigacions Biomèdiques August Pi i Sunyer (August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute - IDIBAPS) is a centre for research of excellence that tackles high-prevalence, high-morbidity and high-mortality diseases. Founded in 1996, it is a public consortium whose members are the Catalan Government, the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona, the University of Barcelona's School of Medicine and the CSIC Biomedical Research Institute in Barcelona. This strategic composition is ideal for creating powerful synergies and ensuring that IDIBAPS research is effectively transferred to the patient and featured in the training of new health professionals.

IDIBAPS is pioneer in clinician-scientist promotion. Clinician-scientists have a true understanding of health problems directly from their clinical practice, dealing directly with patients and diseases. They are also the professionals prepared to perform genuine translational research that bridges the valley of death and transforms biomedical research discoveries into tangible clinical treatments and technologies. Unfortunately, in Europe and beyond, there is a current decrease in the number of these professionals. Their recruitment and retention is becoming more difficult, despite their value. With the purpose to fight against this trend, IDIBAPS has decided to launch **BITRECS "Biomedicine international training research programme for excellent clinician-scientists"**.

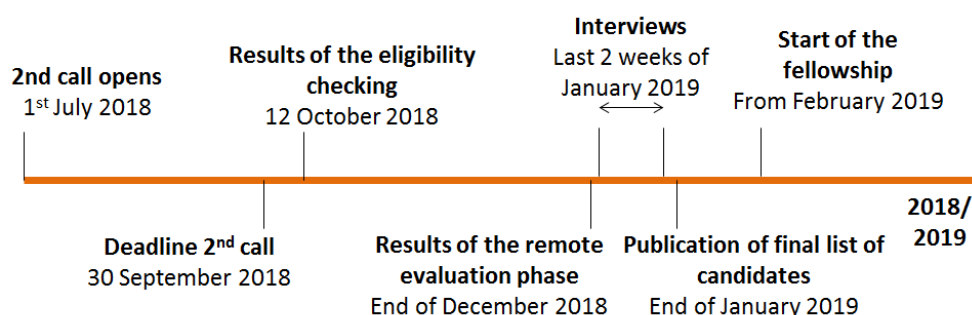
B - BITRECS SECOND CALL 2018

1. Call purpose

The present international and peer-reviewed call offers **10 positions for promising and motivated postdoctoral clinician-scientists**. BITRECS expects these postdoctoral fellows to implement a 36-month research project while they are trained to gain new skills and independence to **become clinician-scientist leaders in the future**.

2. Timeline

The schedule of the call includes a selection process organised into 3 phases (eligibility checking; remote evaluation phase; and, face-to-face interview):



The exact date of incorporation will be agreed with IDIBAPS once the fellowship is granted. The candidates will be invited to join BITRECS as soon as possible after the publication of the final resolution/evaluation results. The fellow can join BITRECS later if a personal reason justifies it. It will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.



3. Mobility schemes

Two options are now available for the researchers applying to the programme:

- 1) Outgoing scheme: 12-18 month outgoing phase in any country worldwide different from Spain and 18-24 month at IDIBAPS. If duly justified, it is also acceptable: 6 month phase at IDIBAPS, 12-18 month outgoing phase in any country worldwide different from Spain and 12-18 month phase at IDIBAPS.
- 2) Incoming scheme: 36 months at IDIBAPS.

The candidates must accomplish the mobility criteria in both options (*see section 5.1 Eligibility criteria*).

4. How to apply

Applications for the BITRECS programme have to be submitted through the **on-line application tool** available on the BITRECS website (*My application* at www.bitrecs.idibaps.org). Proposals must be written in English. The deadline for applications is **September, 30th 2018**.

4.1 Structure of the on-line application

The application consists of an **on-line form** with the following sections:

1. Personal information.
2. Mobility scheme
3. Optional secondment in the non-academic sector
4. Degree
5. Clinical residency training or equivalence
6. PhD or equivalence
7. Research experience
8. Motivation and future prospects
9. Attachments
10. 36-month research proposal
11. Last steps

All these sections include instructions to help the candidate go through the application. Also they have a **maximum number of characters considering also spaces** that have to be respected.

The documents to be **uploaded** as part of the application in the section “9. Attachments” are:

- Letters of reference (between 1 and 3)
- Letter of support/commitment from the outgoing host institution (if applies)
- Clinical residency training diploma or certificate (if applies)
- PhD diploma or certificate (if applies)
- Letter/s and/or certificate/s referring to the equivalences for the PhD or the clinical residency training.

At the time of the call closing date, the form has to be **submitted**. If the documents to be uploaded are missing, the candidate will be considered ineligible in a provisional way and will be given one week only to send the documents.

4.2 Recommendations before presenting the on-line application

Before applying to BITRECS, we invite all potential candidates to:



- Confirm their profile is the one expected for the programme (see section 1).
- Choose between one of the two options of mobility scheme available (see section 3)
- Choose one of the research lines available in the call ([BITRECS website](#))
- Check their eligibility to the BITRECS programme (see section 5.1).
- Read the evaluation criteria to evaluate their chance of success (see section 6).
- Sign up to the BITRECS [on-line application tool](#) to be able to access the application forms (see section 3.1).
- Read carefully in advance the application form (explanations, instructions and maximum number of characters) to prepare the candidature in the best way (see section 3.1).
- Compile all the documents that should be uploaded as a part of the application (see section 3.1).

4.3 Recommendations for the preparation of the contents for the on-line application

The programme is aligned to the **research freedom** principle. This means the fellow can choose freely the topic of the research proposal but fitting it into one of the BITRECS research lines available in the website for the call. The research acceptable for BITRECS can be basic, translational or clinical (this research can lead to have direct contact with patients) The candidates choosing the mobility outgoing scheme can also choose freely the outgoing institution.

For the preparation of the research proposal and selection of the IDIBAPS PI, the BITRECS programme recommends the candidates to:

- Read thoroughly the information of the selected research line and contact the IDIBAPS Principle Investigator (PIs) responsible for it whilst preparing the **36-month research proposal** (see [Research lines](#) on the BITRECS website). The research proposal has to be adequated for both the selected research line and the programme.
- In case you choose to perform an outgoing, consider that the research proposal has to include a work plan considering the international collaboration (outgoing and return phases). In this case the general structure expected for the project's work plan is 12-18 months in an outgoing institution and 18-24 months at IDIBAPS. However, if duly justified, it is also acceptable to propose up to 6 months at IDIBAPS, 12-18 months in an outgoing institution and the remaining 12-18 months at IDIBAPS again (*the mobility eligibility rule is different in each case, see section 4 on eligibility*). If you choose the incoming scheme, consider that the research proposal has to include a work plan all performed at IDIBAPS.
- Whether you choose the outgoing or the incoming mobility scheme, be aware of the possibility to include in the proposal a secondment, 1-2 months of stay in an institution of the non-academic sector at any of the phases, if this provides it with an added value.

For the selection of the outgoing institution and PI (if applies):

- The outgoing institution could be located in any country in the world except Spain.
- The outgoing institution is expected to commit with the BITRECS Programme. A letter of support/commitment of this organisation will have to be presented at application stage describing what it offers to the fellow and programme.
- The outgoing PI will have to co-supervise the fellow together with the IDIBAPS supervisor. The fellow should use the lab facilities led by the outgoing PI and be supported to perform the research project. He/she is also expected to provide the fellow with training and networking opportunities.



- BITRECS makes available to the candidates a list of Partner organisations (see [Partner organisations](#) on the BITRECS website) including possible host institutions to perform their outgoing phase. Those candidates interested in these institutions can contact them freely.

5. Eligibility

Candidates **must** meet the BITRECS eligibility criteria at the time of the **call deadline** (see *section 5.1*). The eligibility has to be proven and demonstrated. The documents to certify the accomplishment of the eligibility should be presented in English or attached to their translation in English.

The eligibility window can be extended if proven career breaks are reported (see *section 5.2*).

If one or more of the eligibility criteria are not fulfilled, the candidate will be declared ineligible and his/her proposal will be withdrawn from any further consideration.

5.1 Eligibility criteria

- **Mobility criteria:**
 - a) Outgoing scheme (12-18 month outgoing phase and 18-24 month back at IDIBAPS). Not having resided or carried out the main activity in the country where the initial outgoing phase takes place for more than 12 months in the last 3 years prior to the call deadline¹. The initial outgoing phase refers to the country in which the outgoing institution is located. However, exceptionally, it will be accepted to initiate the fellowship at IDIBAPS for up to 6 months. In that case, the mobility rule applies to both the country in which the outgoing institution is located and Spain.
 - b) Incoming scheme (36-month at IDIBAPS): Not having resided or carried out the main activity in Spain for more than 12 months in the last 3 years prior to the call deadline
- **Clinical criteria:** Having completed a clinical residency training or equivalence (*3 years of part-time clinical activity*) in the last 10 years prior to the call deadline.

This experience must be demonstrated through either:

- a) proof of the clinical residency training (reference: ending date of the clinical residency training); or,
- b) certificate/s proving at least 3 years of clinical practice activity issued by the institution/s where this activity was performed. This experience acquired in offices, facilities or labs located in either hospitals or healthcare centres should be equivalent to the expertise acquired in a clinical residency training. This means that during this/these experience/s the candidates must have issued documentation or have made decisions for the patient care, having the total responsibility or at least part of it, in any of the following activities: clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, care, prognosis and/or rehabilitation.

This programme is directed to physicians but also to other professional backgrounds such as pharmacists, biologists, psychologists, medical physicists and nursing staff. All these professionals are invited to apply for BITRECS.

¹ Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.



- **Research criteria:** Demonstrate a PhD or equivalence (*4 years of full-time equivalent research experience*) prior to the call deadline. This equivalence is only acceptable for candidates with a clinical residency training.

This experience must be demonstrated through either:

- a) PhD diploma or official certificate with date of thesis defence (reference: date of thesis defence); or,
- b) certificate/s proving at least 4 years of full-time equivalent research experience issued by the institution/s where this activity was performed equivalent to the experience acquired during the performance of a PhD. Only postgraduate research experience is relevant. It is expected for the candidate to have acquired at least:
 - Systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of research associated with this field.
 - Ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial programme of research with integrity.
 - Contribution to their field of study through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, innovation or application.
 - Critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
 - Capacity to explain the outcome of their research to the research community.
 - Ability to take ownership for and to manage own career prospecting setting realistic and achievable career goals, identifying and developing ways to improve employability.

It is also expected for these candidates to have scientific merits that will demonstrate their status as experienced researchers (researchers with a doctoral degree or having at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience). BITRECS is a postdoctoral programme and for this reason the early stage researchers (researchers in the first four years of their research careers and not yet having a doctoral degree) must avoid applying to the programme.

- **Publications criteria:** 1 original article as main author (first, senior or corresponding author) in journals with a JCR impact factor ranked in the first quartile (Q1) for a specific subject category. Only Web of Science [Journal Citation Reports \(JCR\)](#) impact factor rankings for the corresponding year of publication or 2017 (if the 2018 impact factor is not available yet) will be considered.

Please be aware that a good command of English is also required to apply to the programme.

5.2 Career break policy

The eligibility window can be extended in terms of clinical residency training/clinical activity for the relevant number of days up to 1 year in the following cases of leaves over 3 months: maternity or paternity leave (according to the Social Security General Regime regulations); illness or serious accident leading to medical leave; and, care of dependents according to Spanish Law 39/2006.

In case of any doubt concerning the eligibility criteria and prior to the submission of the application, please contact the BITRECS Programme Manager at bitreecs@idibaps.org.

6. Selection process and evaluation criteria

The evaluation process is open, transparent and merit-based and based on excellence only. After this recruitment, BITRECS will be able to invite the final selected candidates.



The selection process is organised into the 3 phases described as follows: eligibility checking (it determines whether a candidate fulfils the eligibility criteria); remote evaluation phase (it selects the best eligible candidates in terms of excellence); and, face-to-face interview (it judges the potential of each candidate to reach maturity to be future independent and outstanding European research leaders in the future).

Interviews will be face-to-face. IDIBAPS will be responsible for the organisation and costs of the attendance of the fellows to the interview. Alternative options will be proposed if administrative issues threaten to delay the whole selection process.

Evaluation criteria during the remote phase:

| Candidate | | Weight 60% |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Track record | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Publications, especially those as first or senior author ✓ Impact in the scientific field (citations, journal impact factor) | 60% |
| Other scientific merits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participation in funded research projects ✓ Patents (pending or granted) and commercialization status ✓ International exposure ✓ International conferences | 30% |
| Adequacy and motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adequacy of the candidate to the IDIBAPS research group ✓ Motivation to enrol the programme | 10% |

| Research proposal | | Weight 40% |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Excellence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quality and credibility of the hypotheses, specific aims, methods and data analysis ✓ Expected value of the predicted transfer of knowledge ✓ Innovation capacity of the proposal in terms of biomedical research as well as of transferability of results | 50% |
| Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quality and credibility of the research in terms of career enhancement ✓ Quality and credibility of the impacts to society ✓ Potential future benefits for the clinical practice | 30% |
| Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coherence and effectiveness of the tasks and activities of the work plan during the outgoing and return phase ✓ Appropriateness of the institutional environments to implement the project ✓ Appropriateness of the contingency measures ✓ Attractiveness of the proposed research topic and feasibility to implement it at IDIBAPS | 20% |

The research proposal will only be evaluated if they reach for the part of the candidate a minimum threshold of 60%.

Evaluation criteria during the face-to-face interview:

| Candidate | | Weight |
|------------------------------------|--|--------|
| Potential European research leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication skills ✓ Capacity to defend the research proposal and his/her candidacy ✓ Career prospects to advance along the career path ✓ Capacity to lead a research project: design, implementation and reporting ✓ Team management skills | 70% |
| Motivation and commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear goals are set and aligned with those of IDIBAPS ✓ Candidates show willingness and enthusiasm to enroll the programme | 30% |

The evaluators will grade all eligible candidatures according to the following scale:

0– The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information;

1– Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses;

2– Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses;

3– Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present;

4– Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present;

5– Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The minimum threshold to be reached in each of these sections is 3.

The final resolution will be published after the evaluation of the call and candidates will receive at the same time their Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). Within 15 days from the publication of the call's results, candidates may submit a request for redress by sending an email at bitrecs@idibaps.org if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated. The redress procedure will be strictly confidential. The redress will be answered by the party responsible for the object referred in the reject within one month from the reception.

C - CONDITIONS OF THE BITRECS FELLOWSHIP

1. Appointment conditions

- Each candidate will sign a 3-year full-time contract for research only (fixed-term) at IDIBAPS including 22 days of working holidays and 6 days off work for personnel matters per year.
- The fellows may take time off from the BITRECS program due to illness, pregnancy-related illness, and maternity/paternity leave, in line with statutory provisions. Extension of the contract can be accepted in some specific cases of leaves over 3 months. It will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- In the workplace social security cover (national insurance contribution and Spanish corresponding rights). Depending on the location of the outgoing phase (if applies) an additional insurance will be recommended to be contracted by the fellow.



- IDIBAPS covers the Spanish Social Security contributions, as well as, the **annual gross salary** per fellow that could be:
 - 50.800€ for the fellows choosing the incoming mobility scheme (36 months at IDIBAPS).
 - 53.200€ for the fellows selecting the outgoing mobility scheme (12-18 month outgoing phase and 18-24 month phase at IDIBAPS).
- The candidate will benefit from a yearly allowance of 7.200€ for attending scientific seminars/congresses, workshops and others as training and networking events (allowance managed by the BITRECS Programme manager). These activities to be sponsored, organised by IDIBAPS or other external bodies, must be appropriate for the programme and contribute to the career development of the fellow. .
- Support for the mobility of the fellows.
- During their outgoing phase (if applies), the fellow will become an integral part of the outgoing hosting institution and, consequently, IDIBAPS will negotiate the fellow's access to its services and facilities.

Once hired by IDIBAPS, the fellows will receive a copy of the **Welcome Pack** where they will find practical information on IDIBAPS policies and internal regulations, as well as the facilities and services it offers. We strongly recommend you to have a look at the last section called "useful tips" as it provides insights on accommodation and other tips that might be useful for your installation in Catalonia during the return phase. Additional support can be provided at bitrecs@idibaps.org.

2. *Training and career development opportunities*

- Supervision from the IDIBAPS PI responsible for the chosen research line and also the outgoing PI (if applies) in the daily activity to follow-up the progress.
- Mentoring from a senior clinician-scientist to provide advice about future prospects and career development opportunities, especially regarding the personnel career plan of the fellows.
- Training in science through different research seminar series, journal clubs or others at IDIBAPS and outgoing institution (if applies).
- Training in non-research oriented transferable skills through the participation in the [Stepping-stone IDIBAPS](#) and a specific training in business and entrepreneurship.
- Kick-off meeting and yearly assessment meetings will be face-to-face events organised by IDIBAPS in order to welcome the fellows and follow-up their research activity. Before these meetings, the fellows and their respective supervisors will have to submit yearly reports and prepare a short presentation.
- Specific support for exploitation and dissemination issues in order for the fellows to be further prepared to bring their research results to the clinical practice.
- Specialised advice for the dissemination activities to the fellows to encourage them to reach the society.
- Networking activities with other clinical scientist.

3. *Responsibilities for the fellow*

The fellows will comply with the requirements of IDIBAPS and the outgoing institution (if applies). Some of these specific responsibilities are:

- Fully comply with current legislation and regulations at any of the hosting institutions (IDIBAPS and outgoing institution, if applies).



- Respect the fundamental ethical principles, scientific practise and national, international and institutional regulations concerning ethical issues in research.
- Design at initial stage with the supervisors support the personnel career plan.
- Participate in all the training and career development opportunities offered by the BITRECS programme.
- Report the IDIBAPS Programme manager the research activity, if required.
- Report any aspect that may affect the correct implementation of the programme at any of the phases.
- Acknowledge BITRECS programme in any scientific or communications authored by them.

D - OTHER

1. Legal regime

All awardees will be subjected to the legal regime according to the law in force at the time of concluding the contract.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data (hereinafter the "Regulation"), any personal data provided by applicants will be processed by the Institut d'Investigacions Biomèdiques August Pi i Sunyer (hereinafter "IDIBAPS"), with Corporate ID No. Q5856414G, and registered address in Barcelona, Carrer Rosselló 149-153. You may contact the Data Protection Officer by sending an email to protecciodades.recerca@clinic.cat or by writing to the Legal Director at Carrer Rosselló 149-153, Barcelona. The purpose of processing such data is to manage our relationship with applicants, personal data will be held as long as required to do so. Applicants may exercise their rights under the Regulation (rights to access, request rectification or removal, restrict processing, oppose or withdraw consent) by contacting the following e-mail address: bitrecs@idibaps.org

2. Fellowship award

IDIBAPS reserves the right of not giving all the positions or declaring the call void.

The call's result will be published in the website of the programme including the names of the awarded BITRECS fellows and their resulting scores. If the candidates declare their disagreement with the publication of their names, IDIBAPS will publish their passport number or national identification number instead.

Detection of fellows' noncompliance of the eligibility criteria or other requirements, regardless of when this occurs, will result in automatic cancellation of the application or the fellowship. Should the research fellow any obligation included among the terms and conditions of the fellowship, IDIBAPS reserves the right to act as it deems appropriate, including requesting the return of the amounts received.

