Research Programme (PEPR)
« Food Systems, Microbiomes and Health (SAMS) »

Call for junior chairs

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The growing incidence of chronic diseases is a major public health problem. It is largely the result of an alteration in the relationship between humans and their microbes under the influence of various environmental factors, such as diet, lifestyle and exposure to pollutants and xenobiotics. Alterations to this relationship can also contribute to the failure of innovative treatments, even if causal links have not always been established. With the aim of reducing the impact (individual, societal, financial, hospital, etc.) of chronic non-communicable diseases and strengthening the projects that will be funded in response to the call for projects under the "SAMS" Research Programme (PEPR), the call for 4 interdisciplinary junior chairs has been defined.

The aim of this call for proposals is to develop research of excellence in the field of the microbiome in prevention and human health, and to enrich the research environment and infrastructures currently being built in this field in France.

JUNIOR CHAIRS

The junior chairs will enable young scientists to set up and lead a research team in a laboratory established in France, and to develop projects of excellence in microbiome and health.

Applicants' research expertise should **cover at least one of the research priorities/axes** of the "SAMS" Programme, and in particular those addressing the following issues:

- Developing cutting-edge research on the host-microbiome symbiosis;
- Identify the disruptive elements - internal to the microbiome, of environmental or dietary origin, or linked to the host itself - and explain the sequence of microbial, metabolic and immune events, etc. that cause disruption of the symbiosis and homeostasis;
- Identify biomarkers of risk, diagnosis and prognosis, as well as predictors of treatment response and toxicity, so that they can be included in the medical arsenal for personalised care;
- Developing new preventive and therapeutic strategies, as well as specific, controlled interventional studies, which identify and correct "defects" in the microbiome in order to improve prevention in the general population, patient management and optimise treatments;
- Developing data science relating to the study of human holobionts (host-microbiome) at the interface of biology and medicine, and mathematics (medical computing, statistics, modelling, artificial intelligence).

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Duration

The chairs will run for between 48 and 54 months.

Eligibility criteria

- Experience criteria: open to all young scientists, regardless of their current position or nationality, who have defended their doctorate or equivalent degree within 3 to 10 years of 30 June 2024.
- Applicants may not develop their project within a structure in which they have been working for more than 24 months. However, a change of unit/laboratory makes the applicant eligible. Candidates are not encouraged to return to the laboratory where they completed their doctorate.
- Candidates who hold a permanent or temporary position in a national research organisation or a French university at the time of submission are eligible.
- For maternity and paternity leave, the criterion of time taken since the award of the doctorate may be extended by the documented number of leaves taken for each child born before or after obtaining the doctorate, at the candidate's request.

Assessment criteria

- PEPR Chairs will be awarded on the basis of scientific excellence.
- Quality of the candidate: candidates must be able to demonstrate their professional experience and achievements as evidenced by significant publications, additional responsibilities within the laboratory, setting up and leading collaborative projects, teaching, participation on international boards and committees, invitations to international conferences, prizes, grants, patent applications and licences, the creation of start-ups and other relevant activities.
- Multidisciplinary expertise will be encouraged.

Funding

- €500k maximum (excluding management costs) over 48 to 54 months for each chair.
- The host laboratory must provide the selected candidate with sufficient dedicated office and laboratory space to accommodate an emerging team (approximately 50 m^2), as well as access to local technology platforms.

Selection procedure

First step: call for applications.

- Applications must be submitted in English via the Inserm EVA3 online platform (https://www.eva3.inserm.fr/login);
- Applicants will be assessed on their scientific excellence by a committee of specialist scientific experts;
- Only selected candidates will be able to apply for the second stage;
- Candidates selected in the first stage will be informed of the committee's decision by the PEPR management.

Second step: call for projects.

- Eligible applicants will be informed of the submission procedure and timetable organised by Inserm, following the decision of the eligibility committee;
- The second stage consists of submitting a project proposal in collaboration with a host laboratory based in France (written in English);

- The projects submitted will be assessed by an international jury.

Host laboratory:

- The research project must be carried out in a French host laboratory;
- The identification of a host laboratory is not compulsory at the first selection stage. A non-exhaustive list of possible host laboratories will be provided by the PEPR SAMS management;
- The host laboratory must be involved in the design of the research project and the applicant must ensure that the host laboratory has all the equipment required for the proposal, in order to guarantee the best possible conditions for success.

Provisional timetable

- First selection stage
  - 2nd quarter 2024: Opening of the call;
  - 3rd quarter 2024: Closure of the online submission of applications;
  - 4th quarter 2024: Publication of shortlisted candidates;
  - 4th quarter 2024: Discussions between shortlisted applicants and potential host laboratories to facilitate the development of applicants' projects.

- Second selection stage
  - 4th quarter 2024: Opening of the 2nd phase;
  - 1st quarter 2025: Deadline for online submission of applications;
  - 2nd quarter 2025: Publication of the winners.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR APPLICATION

1. Curriculum Vitae;
2. Doctorate diploma;
3. A brief description of the applicant's scientific career and main achievements (in English);
4. A letter of motivation outlining the candidate's interest in joining the French research environment (in English);
5. Two letters of recommendation.

CONTACT

PEPR management team: equipe@pepr-sams.fr
Technical support for the application submission platform: ***support.dsi@inserm.fr***