



Translational Research and Innovation Programme
TRIP-Clinics Initiative
“CaixaResearch Clinical Translation”/ Department of Health, Government of Catalonia

Call Guidelines

- **Context**

IRB Barcelona is pleased to launch the Translational Research and Innovation Programme (TRIP), funded with the support of “la Caixa” Foundation through the “CaixaResearch Clinical Translation” initiative and the Department of Health of the Government of Catalonia.

The programme is an unprecedented initiative that will foster synergistic interactions between IRB Barcelona and clinical research centres and hospitals in Catalonia, thereby boosting translational research and having a direct impact on public health and health-related industry.

Catalonia has an excellent hospital system, with strong top-down (from disease to mechanism) research programmes. At the same time, several research institutes in Barcelona (such as IRB Barcelona) have positioned themselves at the forefront of fundamental translational research (from mechanism to disease) on an international level. However, these two individually outstanding levels of research are linked only by sporadic and highly specific collaborations and thus fall short of generating the full synergistic potential that they hold.

Through TRIP, IRB Barcelona wishes to implement a transversal and multidisciplinary strategy to strengthen interactions between fundamental research scientists and medical groups working at reference clinical research centres and hospitals in Catalonia.

TRIP includes the TRIP-Clinics initiative.

- **Objectives of TRIP-Clinics**

The main objective of this initiative is to create **three joint research groups**, each one involving at least one team from IRB Barcelona and a team from a clinical research centre or hospital in Catalonia. The joint research groups will develop high-quality, medically relevant research spanning from early diagnosis to the development of novel therapies against prevalent diseases. The research projects are expected to tackle diseases associated with main biomedical challenges including ageing, cancer, and chronic inflammation.

Specifically, each TRIP-Clinics group will be co-led by a group leader at IRB Barcelona and a group leader from a clinical research centre or hospital in Catalonia. The project leader from the clinical research/hospital team should be a practising MD.

The selected joint group proposals are expected to represent a significant step forward for the research activities carried out by the participating teams, with a focus on the long-term sustainability of these groups through future initiatives.

The selected joint groups will have access to laboratory space, access to platforms and services, and seed funding. Taken together it is expected that TRIP-Clinics will lead to secure additional funds to fully deploy a highly ambitious and internationally competitive program.

▪ **Laboratory, access to platforms and services, and funding of the TRIP-Clinics initiative**

TRIP-Clinics groups will be allocated a fully equipped laboratory at IRB Barcelona and will be integrated into an outstanding biomedical research environment. Moreover, they will have access to the singular technologies provided by IRB Barcelona's Core Facilities, and the scientific platforms of the Barcelona Science Park (PCB) and the University of Barcelona.

Each group will receive seed funds €150,000 annually over 3 years to cover direct expenses, with the possibility to extend the support for another 2 years subject to positive evaluation of both the group and the TRIP Programme. Eligible expenses include personnel, consumable material and the use of scientific services, among others. The groups are expected to secure additional funding to increase their research capacities and to contribute to the success of TRIP-Clinics.

The allocation of seed funds to compensate the clinical research centre/hospital for the time dedicated to the research by the practising MD participating in this endeavour is an eligible cost. The physician will have a minimum time dedication of 20%.

▪ **Application Procedure**

A Selection Committee will be organised, comprising a Chair (a recognised clinical/basic research expert), internal members of IRB Barcelona (not eligible as applicants), and external members with extensive expertise in clinical research.

Summarised application/selection procedure:

- *Letter of Interest* phase

The Letter of Interest (LOI) phase will be opened and duly communicated to IRB Barcelona research groups and clinical research centres and hospitals in Catalonia.

The conditions and application procedure of the call will be available on IRB Barcelona's website. Each IRB Barcelona group leader participating in a proposal will submit a LOI and the required forms, which include the composition of the TRIP-Clinics group, and a summary of the research project and its translational objectives to irb.research.grants@irbbarcelona.org
A TRIP-Clinics call helpdesk will be ready to answer any questions raised by researchers.

A Selection Committee, with the support of administration staff at IRB Barcelona, will conduct a pre-selection process based on the quality of the proposal and research team, as well as translational potential.

The candidates whose proposals are pre-selected will be invited to write a full proposal, as described below.

- *Full Proposal*

The pre-selected applicants will be invited to submit full proposals, which will request a more detailed description of the research projects, including detailed objective, WPs and budget. They must also provide written approval of their proposal by the clinical research organisation involved (clinical research centre/hospital).

- *Interviews*

After submitting their full proposals, pre-selected applicants will be interviewed by the Selection Committee.

- *Resolution*

The Selection Committee will evaluate the proposals on the basis of the criteria established for the TRIP-Clinics call. The proposals will be ranked, and up to three with the highest ranking will be funded.

- *Agreements*

IRB Barcelona and the host institutions of the selected clinical researchers will negotiate and sign the required agreements to launch the TRIP-Clinics projects.

- **Project Launch**

The leaders of the selected clinical research groups will be appointed to participate in the project (in the context of the agreement signed with the hospital/clinical research centre) and will join the host group at IRB Barcelona at their assigned laboratories during 2022. The leader from the hospital/clinical research centre should be a practising MD with a minimum time dedication of 20%.

The joint research team will be considered an IRB Barcelona group and will therefore have access to the full portfolio of services and facilities provided by the Institute. In this regard, the joint research group will be allowed to participate in the seminars, meetings, retreats and other activities organised by IRB Barcelona.



- **Advertisement**

Support from “la Caixa” Foundation through the “CaixaResearch Clinical Translation” initiative and the Department of Health of the Government of Catalonia will be acknowledged in all the publications and documents related to the call. IRB Barcelona will collaborate in the diffusion of TRIP-Clinics in the media upon request by the funders.

- **Calendar**

The call will open on February 25th.

Letter of Interest submission deadline, April 20th.

Communication to the final pre-selected candidates and Full Proposal request (May 15th).

Deadline for full proposal submission (June 15th).

- **Justification and Evaluation**

The expenses incurred within IRB Barcelona during the execution of the project will be adjusted to established IRB Barcelona procedures and the restrictions of funding organisations.

Barcelona, 24/2/2022