Regulations

MOSTMICRO-ITQB Exploratory Projects

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FOREWORD

The aim of MOSTMICRO-ITQB is to support research on understanding biological processes at the molecular, structural, cellular or population levels, with a focus on microbes important for human health, biotechnology, and the environment.

Some MOSTMICRO-ITQB Laboratories may have scientific questions/ideas of high relevance and priority, but no funds to explore those to prepare for coming calls. Robust preliminary results in exploratory areas are often required to support external funding applications.

Therefore, it is important to stimulate exploratory projects, as this will support future research directions of the Research Unit.

An internal Call for Exploratory Projects will be launched. The regulations are set forth below.

ARTICLE 1 - SCOPE AND OBJECT

1. These Regulations outline access conditions and support rules for the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Exploratory Call for projects funded by MOSTMICRO-ITQB Programmatic Funding (reference UID/04612/2025).

ARTICLE 2 - PROJECTS TYPOLOGY

1. Exploratory projects that promote original and innovative ideas will be supported. These projects should generate preliminary data to underpin future funding applications and focus on biological processes at the molecular, structural, cellular, or population levels, particularly in microbes relevant to human health, biotechnology, and the environment.
2. Each project will be funded with 20000€ for one year.

ARTICLE 3 - BENEFICIARIES

1. Laboratories belonging to MOSTMICRO-ITQB at the Instituto de Tecnologia Química e Biológica António Xavier of the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, (ITQB NOVA) are the sole beneficiaries.
2. The potential involvement of other entities, or other ITQB Labs, as partners in the project is allowed, but it does not grant them the status of funding beneficiaries as they are not eligible to receive funds.

ARTILE 4 - CRITERIA FOR PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

1. The criteria for project eligibility are the following:
    i. Application proposals must be submitted by a PhD Holder belonging to a MOSTMICRO-ITQB Lab (ANNEX 1 contains the list of eligible MOSTMICRO-ITQB Labs). If this person is not the Lab Head, and the Lab Head is not part of the Research Team, a support letter from the Lab Head must accompany the submission;
    ii. Proposals must be novel and original;
    iii. Each Lab can only submit one application as lead Lab;
    iv. As collaborator Lab, there are no restrictions to the number of applications it can participate.;
    v. The person in charge of the project (project PI) shall be responsible for the application, project direction and for the fulfilment of the aims and rules underlying the granting of funds;
    vi. The application must include a detailed project description and a justified budget, with a cost structure aligned with the project's aims and objectives;
    vii. An explanation must be provided about the alignment of the proposed research with MOSTMICRO-ITQB goals, highlighting the added value for the unit;
    viii. The application must also include an explanation of how the proposed research will support future funding applications, as well as the identification of relevant funding calls to be targeted within the next two years;
    ix. The project must have a maximum duration of 12 months.

ARTICLE 5 - EXPENSES

1. For the project typology foreseen, the following expenses directly related to the project implementation are eligible:

- Expenses with human resources dedicated or related to the development of R&D activities related to the project implementation;
- Expenses with missions in the country and abroad directly attributable to the project;
- Acquisition of equipment;
- Subcontracts directly related with the project scientific tasks;
- Expenses related with national and international submission of patents and other forms of intellectual protection;
- Expenses with the demonstration, promotion, and disclosure of the project's outputs;
- Acquisition of other goods and services, including costs with consultants that do not establish subcontracts.

2. To determine the value of the reimbursable eligible expenses, Value Added Tax (VAT) is deducted whenever the ITQB-NOVA is liable for VAT and can exercise the right to such deduction.
3. Indirect costs are not eligible.

ARTICLE 6 - SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

1. Applications are submitted within the scope of the Internal Call for Exploratory Projects.
2. The application is submitted in English.
3. Applications must be submitted during the period of the call and following the conditions outlined in the call for applications notice.

ARTICLE 7 - VERIFICATION OF ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICATIONS

1. Verification of formal requirements of admissibility and eligibility of proposal is carried out by the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Executive Committee.

ARTICLE 8 – EVALUATION PANELS

1. Evaluation will be carried out by the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Scientific Advisory Board Members (SAB) who will remotely assess proposals.
2. It is the responsibility of the SAB Members to:
   a) Identify conflict of interest situations, if applicable;
   b) Apply the evaluation criteria set out in the Call for Applications notice and the guidelines for evaluation;
   c) Evaluate each project and write individual reports;
   d) Rank applications and make a decision about the 5 projects to be funded.

ARTICLE 9 – EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Applications are evaluated based on the proposal's merit, according to the criteria set out in the Call for Applications and the corresponding evaluation guidelines.
2. The five best-ranked proposals will be selected for funding.

ARTICLE 10 - NOTICE OF DECISION

1. The MOSTMICRO-ITQB Executive Committee will inform the applicants of the decision outcome of their proposal.
2. An individual evaluation report will be sent to all applicants by email.

ARTICLE 11 - APPEALS

1. The decision of the Evaluation Panel is final, and no appeals will be allowed.

ARTICLE 12 - PROJECT CHANGES

1. Any major changes to the proposed work plan must be justified and requested in writing to the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Executive Committee.
2. The change of project PI is not permitted; if the project PI leaves the ITQB NOVA or if the project PI can no longer implement the project due to some long-term impairment, the project will be closed, and the unused funds returned to the general MOSTMICRO-ITQB funds.

ARTICLE 13 - PAYMENTS

1. The full amount of the approved funding will be paid to the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Funding Line of the project PI within 10 working days from the acceptance of the approval decision by the project PI.

ARTICLE 14 - FINAL REPORT

1. For purposes of follow-up and final assessment, the project PI must submit a final report in English to the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Executive Committee describing the work carried out, outputs obtained and deviations from the proposed work program or approved budget. In addition, the report should explain how the project results supported or will support subsequent funding applications, and how the project contributed to fulfilling the goals of the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Research Unit.
2. Scientific publications and other project's outputs should be in compliance with the standards defined under the national open science strategy.
3. The final scientific report must be sent to the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Executive Committee, within 45 calendar days after the project's conclusion.
4. Failure to submit the final report will result in the exclusion of the project PI and the Lab from future MOSTMICRO-ITQB Exploratory Project calls.

ARTICLE 15 - DATE OF ENTRY IN FORCE

1. These Regulations apply from the date the call opens.

ANNEX 1 - ELIGIBLE MOSTMICRO-ITQB LABORATORIES AS IN 2026:

GROUP G1 - METALLOPROTEINS AND BIOENERGETICS

1 Ricardo Louro Lab – Inorganic Biochemistry and NMR
2 Smilja Todorovic Lab – Raman Spectroscopy of Metalloproteins

GROUP G2 - MOLECULAR MODELING, SYSTEMS & SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

3 António Baptista Lab – Molecular Simulation
4 Cláudio M. Soares Lab – Protein Modeling
5 Manuel Nuno Melo Lab – Multiscale Modeling
6 Isabel Rocha Lab – Systems and Synthetic Biology

GROUP G3 - PHARMACEUTICAL & SMALL BIOACTIVE MOLECULES

7 Ana Petronilho Lab – Bioorganometallic Chemistry
8 Rita Ventura Lab – Bioorganic Chemistry
9 Beatriz Royo Lab – Organometallic Catalysis
10 Ana Pina Lab – Bioinspired Peptide Systems
11 Pedro Mateus Lab – Bio-oriented Supramolecular Chemistry lab

GROUP G4 - STRUCTURE, FUNCTION & DYNAMICS OF BIOMOLECULES

12 Pedro Matias Lab – Industry and Medicine Applied Crystallography
13 Margarida Archer Lab – Membrane Protein Crystallography
14 Tiago N. Cordeiro Lab – Dynamic Structural Biology
15 Dmitry A. Semchonok Lab – Cryo-EM Integrative Structural Biology Laboratory

GROUP G5 - GENE EXPRESSION AND STRESS SURVIVAL

16 Cecília Arraiano Lab – Control of Gene Expression
17 Catarina Pimentel Lab – Yeast Molecular Biology
18 Pedro Domingos Lab – Cell Signaling in Drosophila
19 Lígia Saraiva Lab – Molecular Mechanisms of Pathogen Resistance

GROUP G6 - BACTERIAL CELL BIOLOGY AND PATHOGENESIS

20 Adriano O. Henriques Lab – Microbial Development
21 Mariana Gomes Pinho Lab – Bacterial Cell Biology
22 Pedro Matos Pereira Lab – Intracellular Microbial Infection Biology
23 Ricardo Henriques Lab – AI-driven Optical Biology

GRUPO G7 - MICROBIOLOGY OF HUMAN PATHOGENS

24 Hermínia de Lencastre Lab – Molecular Genetics
25 Maria Miragaia Lab – Bacterial Evolution and Molecular Epidemiology
26 Raquel Sá-Leão Lab – Molecular Microbiology of Human Pathogens
27 Ana Coelho Lab – Proteomics of Non-Model Organisms

GRUPO G8 - MICROBIAL METABOLISM & BIOCATALYSIS

28 Cristina Silva Pereira Lab – Applied and Environmental Mycology
29 Inês Cardoso Pereira Lab – Bacterial Energy Metabolism
30 Lígia O. Martins Lab – Microbial & Enzyme Technology
31 Felipe Conzuelo Lab – Bioelectrochemistry and Electrobiotechnology