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La science pour la santé
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Call for Applications 2024

International programme *Chair in Paediatric Oncology Research*

Deadline: 27th September 2024, 5pm

Online submission: <https://www.eva3.inserm.fr/>

Contact: cancerinserm.chairecanceropediatrie@inserm.fr

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Context and Objectives

Attention: This call for applications concerns cancers in children, adolescents, and young adults.

In France, approximately 1,850 children (0 to 15 years old) and 450 adolescents (15 to 17 years old) are diagnosed with cancer each year. Thanks to advances in fundamental research and the resulting medical progress, the 5-year survival rate, often synonymous with recovery, exceeds 80%. However, some cancers still have a very poor prognosis, and cancer remains the leading cause of disease-related death among children over the age of 1. Additionally, 2/3 of cured children or adolescents suffer from long-term effects related to the disease or its treatments. Among young adults (18-25 years old), the incidence of cancer is approximately 1,700 cases per year.

Research in paediatric oncology remains a significant challenge: "*Reducing cancer in children, adolescents, and young adults*" is thus a clearly identified action of the Ten-year Cancer Control Strategy 2021-2030 (Action IV-2). Furthermore, since 2019, an additional budget has been allocated annually to a research fund dedicated to paediatric cancers.

France has several teams specializing in paediatric oncology research, some of which have significant international visibility. Moreover, teams working on related themes appear capable of contributing to the paediatric oncology research effort. Despite this, the French research community in the field remains generally limited and fragmented.

As part of the Ten-year Cancer Control Strategy 2021-2030 and thanks to the research fund dedicated to paediatric cancers, Inserm is launching the 2024 international attractiveness programme "*Chair in Paediatric Oncology Research*" which will help sustainably expand and structure French paediatric oncology research. This programme is intended for the entire scientific and medical community (see eligibility conditions). In a "capacity building" approach, the goal is to attract new talents, French or foreign, by supporting the emergence of paediatric oncology research teams (3 in 2024) through:

- Funding a researcher's salary when the candidate does not have a permanent position (€85k/year over 5 years);
- Providing a substantial budget (€1M over 5 years) to enable the formation of a critical-sized team around the researcher.

To form their team, the Chair holder can:

- Recruit staff on fixed-term contracts;
- Welcome staff undertaking internal mobility;
- Establish collaborations involving staff already working in the host structure.

The Chair and the team formed around it will be affiliated with the laureate's host structure.

Eligibility

Candidates and Host Institutions

To effectively expand and renew the French pool of research teams in paediatric oncology, the Inserm programme *Chair in paediatric oncology research* has established deliberately broad eligibility criteria, enhancing its financial attractiveness:

- No minimum or maximum time limit since obtaining a PhD;
- No age requirement: the program is open to both junior and senior researchers;
- No nationality requirement: the program is open to researchers of any nationality;
- Relaxed residency requirement in France: the candidate may already be working in France at the time of application, but for a maximum of 36 months.
- No employment status requirement: the program is open to both tenured (including newly recruited) and non-tenured researchers;
- No institutional affiliation requirement: tenured researchers may come from any type of institution (university, research organization, CLCC, CHU, etc.);
- Possibility to combine the Chair with other funding, such as Atip/Avenir, CPJ/ANR, or ERC. This funding must have been obtained for the same project as the one selected by this call for applications¹.

Host institutions must commit to offering optimal working conditions to the Chair holders, including:

- Access to technological platforms,
- A dedicated workspace of at least 50 m²,
- A workspace adapted to the specific needs of the project.

Host institutions will be affiliated with one of the following types of French organizations:

- Public research organization (EPST, Epic, etc.);
- Higher education institution (universities, schools);
- Public utility research foundation²;
- French comprehensive cancer centers (FCCC).

The project must take place in a laboratory under the supervision of a French research organization and located in France.

Research Projects

The research projects of the candidates will:

- have paediatric cancers as their central theme;
- involve fundamental or translational research, excluding purely clinical research. Projects with short-term clinical applications (e.g., identification of (bio)markers, new therapeutic targets, etc.) will be accepted;
- encompass any discipline, including epidemiology and the social and human sciences;

¹ Indeed, the Chair holder commits to dedicating 100% of their research activity to the project for which they applied.

² A legal entity of private law, recognized for its public utility, whose purpose explicitly focuses on research activities and devotes at least 50% of its main activity to research.

- be designed to align with the technical environment of the host institution and bring significant added value to it;
- be planned for a duration of 60 months.

Evaluation

Inserm will form an ad hoc international evaluation committee composed of members recognized for their scientific or medical expertise in research, particularly in paediatric oncology. Eligible candidates will be interviewed by the international evaluation committee.

Candidates and Host Institutions

The international evaluation committee will particularly assess:

- The match between the candidate's profile (qualities and expertise) and the objectives of their project;
- The alignment of the candidate's profile and project with the host institution's ecosystem;
- The added value the candidate brings to the host institution;
- The provisions and conditions offered by the host institution;
- The adequacy of the candidate's scientific output (in volume and quality) with their career stage in research;
- For senior researchers, their ability to secure national or international funding and lead research teams.

Research Projects

The international evaluation committee will particularly assess:

- The scientific quality of the projects:
 - Excellence in relation to the state of science;
 - Clarity of objectives;
 - Innovative nature (strategy, concept, technology, etc.);
 - Relevance to current issues in paediatric oncology;
 - Potential development benefits for patients;
 - Positioning in the national and international context;
 - Prospects for national or international collaborations.
- The methodology and feasibility of the projects:
 - Methodological quality and relevance of the proposed technologies;
 - Adequacy and justification of the proposed timeline concerning the objectives.
- The financial feasibility of the projects:
 - Planned human resources for project execution;

- Credibility of the funding in relation to the objectives.

Calendar

Publication of the Call for Applications	June 2024
Opening of project submission site	July 1 st 2024, 10am
Deadline	27th September 2024, 5pm
Results of the Preselected Candidates by the Jury for Audition	End of November 2024
Audition of preselected candidates	December 2024
Publication of final results	January 2025
Beginning of the Chair position	Between April and November 2025

Application Procedures

The application process for the Inserm International Programme *Chair in Paediatric Oncology Research* consists of two steps:

- Registration on the Inserm EVA3 website³;
- Online submission of the application (no paper documents are required).

Application content

The application must include all elements necessary for the scientific, technical, and financial evaluation of the project. Given the international nature of the evaluation committee, the submitted documents must be written in English.

The candidate must complete the application file, which includes the following documents and submit in PDF format:

- Candidate's CV
- Title, summary, and detailed description of the project;
- Commitments from the candidate and the host institution.

Additionally, the candidate must provide:

- A financial annex detailing the project budget and its annual distribution (template available on EVA3, signed and stamped by the legal representative of the managing body of the host institution, in Excel and PDF formats);
- Two letters of recommendation (in PDF format).

And attach:

- Administrative authorizations for data usage, if applicable (in PDF format);
- The bank account details of the managing body of the host institution.

³ <https://www.eva3.inserm.fr>

Electronic Submission Procedure

The various steps include:

- Identification of the candidate (name, first name, and email address), enabling the reception of a user code and password granting access to a secure personal space on EVA3.
- Completion of the online administrative section.
- Upload of the required documents.

Eligible candidates will **receive an e-mail notifying the date for an audition** following their preselection by the international evaluation committee.

Publication of Results

The final results will be published on the Inserm EVA3 website and communicated in writing to the laureates.

A summary in French of each funded project will be published later: the laureates will be contacted to confirm the content or propose a publishable version.

Contacts

Candidates can contact:

- For scientific and technical aspects: cancerinserm.chairecanceropediatrie@inserm.fr
- For administrative and financial matters: cancerinserm.daf@inserm.fr
- For questions regarding electronic submission: eva@inserm.fr

A candidate guide is available on the EVA3 website.

Administrative and Financial Regulations

These regulations pertain to the **managing** bodies of host organizations responsible for managing grants provided by Inserm to support selected research projects under the Inserm International *Chair in Paediatric Oncology Research* call for applications. Inserm will finance these projects upon selection, based on the submitted applications and in accordance with the **eligibility** and evaluation criteria **cited above**.

Candidate

The application must include the documents mentioned in the "Application Procedures" section of the Call. Only applications meeting the following criteria will be evaluated:

- Received within the specified deadline;
- Complete with respect to the required documents;
- Composed entirely in English;
- Meeting all eligibility criteria.

The project coordination will be undertaken by the candidate. In addition to their scientific and technical role, they will be responsible for the overall project implementation, production of required documents during the project duration (interim and final scientific reports, interim and final financial justifications), conducting meetings, progress tracking, valorisation, and communication of results.

Managing Body

The host institution of the laureate will designate the managing body for the grant disbursed for project implementation.

Inserm will notify the designated managing body of its rights and obligations regarding project implementation through a convention or funding letter: the grant award document. If Inserm is the managing body of the grant, the document will take the form of a notification letter. The managing body must promptly disburse the funds to the team formed around the Chair.

The managing body will be contractually responsible for the proper execution of the granted aid, as well as the submission of scientific and financial reports produced by the Chair holder.

Project Duration

The Chair holder and the managing body will commit to ensuring that the project, including any modifications, is completed within the period notified in the grant award document, i.e., sixty (60) months. As the project duration determines the eligibility period for expenses, these must be incurred and paid before the project deadline.

An extension of the project implementation period may be granted exceptionally, subject to acceptance of a scientific argument, drafted and signed by the Chair holder, and financial justification. Extensions may not exceed 12 months and must be requested from Inserm at least 6 months before the project's end.

The project must begin **between April and November 2025**. However, for a foreign Chair holder, the project's dates and duration may be modified based on their residency permit agreement.

Grant Agreement

Mandatory Information in the Grant Agreement

The grant agreement will be prepared by Inserm based on the elements of the application file and the corresponding call for applications text.

It will necessarily contain the following information:

- Project title;
- Project duration;
- Grant Agreement duration;
- Copy of the managing body's bank account details;
- Grant amount and disbursement terms.
- The obligation to submit reports as stipulated by the regulations: the grant award document will specify the schedule and methods of submission.

- The following appendices:
 - Appendix 1: Summary of the project as written in the application file

- Appendix 2: Project budget;
- Appendix 3: Model for final financial justification.

Constituent Documents of the Grant Agreement

The documents constituting the grant award document prevail in the following order, particularly in cases of conflicting provisions:

- The grant award document and its appendices;
- The present regulations.

Special Provisions

Inserm and the managing organization may include specific obligations and/or exceptions to the regulations in the grant award document, justified either by the specificity of the call for applications or by an agreement between Inserm and one or more of its partners.

Modifications to the Grant Agreement

Inserm will draft and sign an amendment for any modifications to the provisions of the grant agreement, except for any accepted extensions, which will be notified by simple letter to the managing body of the grant.

Allocated Grant

VAT Liability

Due to the absence of consideration for the financial support provided by Inserm, and in accordance with the provisions of the tax instruction BOI-TVA-CHAMP-10-10-60-40 20120912 from the Directorate General of Public Finances, the grant allocated under this call for applications will not be subject to VAT.

Disbursement of the Grant

The disbursement of the grant for managing bodies other than Inserm will be 80% upon signing the grant award document and thirty (30) days from the project start date. The remaining 20% will be disbursed after validation of the required reports in proportion to the justified expenses.

When Inserm is the managing body, credits corresponding to the grant will be allocated annually.

If, by the date specified in the grant agreement for the submission of the interim scientific report, the project has not begun, Inserm will notify the managing body of its shortcomings by sending a registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt. This letter will instruct them to remedy the observed difficulties within two (2) months of receiving the letter.

If, beyond this deadline, the deficient managing body has not addressed its shortcomings, termination will be pronounced.

Eligible Expenses

The grant (up to €1.425 million) provided by Inserm will be used by the managing body solely for the implementation of the project identified in the grant agreement. At the conclusion of the research project, any unspent funds will be reimbursed to Inserm within a maximum period of thirty (30) days from the date of the final financial justification.

Personnel and Operational Costs

The allocation of personnel and operational expenses will depend on any co-financing obtained by the Chair holder.

Personnel expenses will cover, notably, the remuneration of the Chair holder when they do not hold a permanent position. Funding for non-permanent personnel will be eligible, excluding doctoral candidates. Post-doctoral fellows, technicians, or engineers recruited will be dedicated solely to project implementation. Recruitment of personnel for administrative functions will not be permitted.

Eligible operational expenses will include the following:

- Purchase of consumables related to program implementation: small equipment, laboratory supplies, tests, etc., excluding office supplies which are considered management expenses;
- Intellectual property costs for patents or licenses incurred during programme implementation;
- Publication costs of project-funded results, including any additional costs for open access publication;
- Travel or mission expenses for permanent or temporary staff assigned to the project: conferences, symposiums, etc;
- Organization expenses for meetings or seminars related to the project within the scope of its execution: room or equipment rental, excluding reception expenses considered management costs;
- Service contracts: the grant recipient may contract services from third parties external to the program;
- Expenses justified by an internal billing procedure: services subject to pricing and traceable in accounting, provided by an entity (department, service, etc.) of the grantee. This internal billing must be proportional to the actual use of services for project needs;
- Internship stipends.

Equipment

Equipment expenses cannot include office supplies or furniture. Computers necessary for the operation of experimental or computational instruments will not be considered office equipment. For such equipment, scientific justification will be required.

Additionally, providing computers to staff hired on fixed-term contracts for the project will be possible if included in the initial budget annex and limited to one computer per person hired for the project's entire duration.

Management Costs

Les Management costs will cover, within the strict framework of project execution:

- General administrative expenses related to project administrative management and monitoring, office supplies, stationery, etc;
- Reception expenses for meetings, conferences, and seminars.

The amount of management costs cannot exceed **8%** of the total eligible expenses actually paid.

VAT

For organizations that are not fully subject to VAT or are partially exempt, the unrecoverable portion of VAT incurred on eligible project expenses can be considered an eligible expense. This is contingent upon the presentation of a current attestation from the Directorate General of Public Finances, which validates the portion of VAT that cannot be reclaimed. It remains the responsibility of the managing organization to cover this non-recoverable VAT amount.

Fongibility

The grant provided by Inserm is interchangeable within the operational and personnel expense categories. However, the transfer of funds to personnel expenses can only be done with Inserm's approval and upon submission of a scientific rationale to cancer.daf@inserm.fr.

Scientific and Financial Reports

The final scientific and financial reports are essential for ensuring the smooth progress of the project and compliance with the managing body's commitments. Failure to produce these documents within the specified deadlines may result in the reimbursement of funds disbursed by Inserm. They will be simultaneously transmitted to Inserm by the managing body of the grant.

The Chair holder agrees to provide two scientific activity reports (interim and final). The interim report will be produced halfway through the project (30 months), and the final report no later than four (4) months after the project's completion. They will be sent to the address: cancerinserm.chairecanceropediatrie@inserm.fr.

The financial justification will be established according to the modalities defined in the grant agreement and the regulations. It will present the expenses incurred during the project's execution. The managing organization will submit this financial justification, signed by the authorized person to certify expenses within the organization, no later than four (4) months after the project's completion⁴.

Other commitments of the Chairholder and the managing body

The Chairholder must inform Inserm of any substantial modification to the research project compared to the content of the application file and the grant agreement, or any difficulties hindering the project's implementation.

The managing body must inform Inserm in case of a change of address or bank details.

Authorizing Officer - Assigned Accountant

The authorizing officer for grants and transfers of credits is the President-Director General of Inserm and, by delegation, the Director of Financial Affairs. The designated accountant for payments is the principal accounting officer of Inserm.

Technical and Financial Control

During the project's duration, Inserm reserves the right to organize a site visit, in consultation with the managing body and the Chair holder. The use of the grant under the grant agreement may be subject, during the project's duration and within five (5) years following its expiration, to control

⁴ Expenses related to the certification of expenses by an external auditor, other than the managing body, are considered eligible expenses.

or audit by Inserm, conducted by Inserm or by a firm mandated by it for this purpose, based on documents and/or on-site.

The managing body must be able to provide all administrative, accounting, and legal documents and justifications related to the use of the grant. It is reminded that, as public funds, these grants may be subject to control by various state supervisory bodies.

Publications-Communication:

Publications

Publications resulting from the research project must mention the financial support as follows: "*With financial support from Inserm, within the framework of the French 2021-2030 Ten-Year Cancer Control Strategy*". Any publication must be forwarded to Inserm for information, no later than five (5) days following its publication.

Dissemination of a Project Summary

The candidate authorizes the dissemination of the project summaries in English and French as included in the application file. The text will be sent by email, prior to any dissemination, for validation of its content. In the absence of a response within 45 days of this sending, validation will be deemed granted.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property rights to the work and results arising from the project are acquired by the project's managing body.

Confidentiality

Inserm undertakes to keep confidential the information obtained during the project's execution, particularly those contained in the scientific reports. Inserm expressly refrains from disclosing any information to any third party⁵, in any form whatsoever, without the written agreement of the Chair holder. However, Inserm will no longer be bound by secrecy for a particular item of information when it can prove that this item:

- is publicly available without a breach of the grant agreement or the regulations;
- is already known to Inserm on the date of the convention's signature;
- becomes freely available from another source with the right to dispose of it.

Protection of Personal Data:

Personal data collected in the application file will be computerized to allow for the processing of applications and the administrative and financial monitoring of the research project. In accordance with the amended "Information and Freedoms" law of January 6, 1978, and in 2018 and 2019, individuals whose data is collected have the right to access, rectify, and delete information concerning them. They may exercise these rights by contacting Inserm, Legal Affairs Department, 101 rue de Tolbiac, 75 654 Paris Cedex 13.

⁵ Except to the Steering Committee of the 2021-2030 Ten-Year Cancer Control Strategy.

Dispute Resolution:

For any dispute that arises between Inserm and the managing body regarding the interpretation or execution of the grant agreement, they undertake, prior to resorting to any judicial authority, to submit their dispute to conciliatory persons designated by each of them, unless they agree on the designation of a single conciliatory person.

The conciliatory persons will endeavour to resolve difficulties and to obtain an amicable solution accepted by the parties within sixty (60) days from the date of their designation.

If conciliation fails, the dispute regarding the implementation of the grant agreement is referred to the competent judge.

Effective Date of the Regulations

These regulations come into force upon their publication date. They apply to grants disbursed by Inserm for projects selected in the present call for international applications for the *Chair in Pediatric Oncology Research*, programmed by Inserm within the framework of the French 2021-2030 Cancer Control Strategy.