InnOValley Proof of Concept Fund (IOV PoC)

Advancing Life Sciences Oeiras Research towards the translational pathway

Third Edition, 2023 call

The InnOValley Proof of Concept Fund (IOV PoC) is co-funded by the Municipality of Oeiras, FCG-IGC and ITQB NOVA.

SCOPE

The goal of InnOValley PoC is to identify and fund projects in a translational stage that have shown promising and exciting results with innovation potential and need further validation/proof of concept in any of the scientific fields of IGC and ITQB NOVA. All proposals should have a clear translational focus and address an unmet need.

IOV PoC aims to help IGC and ITQB NOVA projects move forward in the translational pathway to stages where the data package is robust enough to fill for Intellectual Property (IP) Protection and/or be engaged in activities with industry and/or investors. The PoC is not intended to fund the creation of spin-off companies *per se*.

The scheme typically supports projects in line with the Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 2-4

The total budget for the 2023 call is €200k. Awards are typically in the range of €40-50k directly incurred costs only, for up to 12 months. Projects seeking lower amounts could be considered. Each Institution will be awarded in proportion to the number of applications, subject to the score cut-off, subject to the score cut-off defined by the Evaluation Panel. The InnOValley PoC is fully aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely SDGs 2, 3, 9, and 15.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

IOV PoC provides funding for projects that:

1. Propose new solutions to unmet needs in any of the scientific fields of IGC and ITQB NOVA: molecular, cellular, and populational biology, chemistry, biochemistry, plants, and bioinformatics;
2. Have already demonstrated successful results in the research environment and need further validation;
3. Have progressed beyond the stage where research funding opportunities are typically available, but capital from industry or an investment partner is unlikely to be secured at that stage.

4. Already have secured IP or have freedom to operate to secure new IP through the implementation of the IOV PoC

IOV PoC shall <u>NOT</u> provide funding for projects:

- That are basic research, to generate models, new ideas with no previous preliminary data, or assess the feasibility of a research project;
- If the majority of the preliminary results are not owned by ITQB or IGC

Note: If your project had prior funding by any other source, i.e. industry sponsorship, an investment partner, or research grant support please confirm with Innovation Unit that you are eligible.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicants can include one or more IGC or ITQB NOVA Principal Investigators or Post-Doc researchers.
2. All applicants must agree to and comply with the internal rules of their affiliated institute.
3. If a Post-Doctoral researcher serves as the lead applicant, it is mandatory for the respective PI to endorse this application.
4. There is no limit on the number of applications allowed per research group; however, only one project can be awarded to the same research group.
5. Co-investigators from other organizations can be added to the application under specific conditions:
    - Such co-investigators must already share ownership of prior results or agree to share or assign future rights to IGC or ITQB NOVA as applicable.
    - In these cases, a joint ownership or similar agreement must be in place, or minimum terms and conditions for joint ownership must be agreed upon in advance among institutions.
    - Co-investigators from other organizations can contribute to a maximum of 10% of the project, and their associated costs are not eligible for funding from the IOV PoC.
6. If an applicant leaves their institution, the award does not follow the applicant.

PROJECT SUBMISSION AND SELECTION

3rd edition launching	Deadline for applications	1st stage evaluation	2nd stage evaluation Interviews & consensus meeting	Awarding event	Start of projects
October 3rd, 2023	December 15th, 2023, 5 pm GMT	January-March 2024	April 16th, 2024	April 17th, 2024	May-July, 2023

PROJECT EVALUATION

1. Applications will undergo evaluation by an external international panel of experts.
2. The Innovation Unit, though involved, will not have voting rights in project decisions.
3. The selection process will be based on the following factors:
    - Unmet need: *Will the solution have a significant impact in fulfilling a market/social need?*
    - Competitive advantage: *What distinguishes this approach from that followed by others? What is the competitive advantage?*
    - Feasibility: *Does the proposed research appear achievable with a likelihood of success? Are the proposed resourcing, timeframe and budget realistic? Are the timeline and tasks realistic?*
    - Intellectual Property: *How novel is the intervention to be developed? Does it seem plausible that IP will be secured/reinforced by the end of the project?*

4. Projects will be ranked, and the top applications will advance to the second evaluation stage, involving interviews. During this stage, the panel will assess a brief presentation by the applicant and engage in a question-and-answer session.
5. The announcement of awarded projects is scheduled for an event on April 17th, 2024.

Critical Elements for Funding

In addition to eligibility and selection criteria, a detailed plan is crucial for securing funding. This plan should encompass:

- Clear steps and milestones.
- At least one mid-term milestone.
- Timelines.
- A budget that identifies Go/No Go decision points and outlines alternatives for development.

Funding will be provided in two tranches:

- The first tranche upon signing the declaration of acceptance of the award.
- The second tranche following the achievement of the proposed mid-term milestone.

Therefore, it is mandatory for each project to define at least one mid-term milestone, as specified in section 5.2 of the application form.

Intellectual Property (IP) Considerations

1. All IP related to the proposal must belong to IGC or ITQB NOVA, as applicable, and should be available for licensing (i.e., not encumbered by any prior obligations, such as existing licenses, sponsored research agreements, ongoing collaborations with industrial partners, licensing negotiations, or consulting agreements).
2. In the case of jointly owned IP, there must be a joint ownership or similar agreement in place, with IGC or ITQB NOVA (as applicable) taking a lead role in commercializing the technology.
3. Any new intellectual property developed as part of the funded PoC project must be assignable to IGC or ITQB (as applicable) unless matching funds from the other institution are in place.

Additional information

1. Compliance with project progress reporting, written reports, and/or oral presentations is a requirement for accepting the InnOValley PoC award. These reports will be shared with members of InnOValley and possibly panel members.
2. One page of supporting data as an appendix within your application is highly recommended. Make sure to reference these figures in the application text.
3. The award will not include overhead charges. When completing the budget table, focus on the "directly incurred" total costs and exclude overheads. It is advisable to include costs related to intellectual property (IP) protection.
4. There is no limit to the number of applications allowed per research group. However, only one project can be awarded to the same research group.
5. Only projects that surpass the cut-off score determined by the panel will receive funding.
6. If your project involves the use of biological materials, such as animal work, human data, human samples, or pluripotent cell lines, you must submit a PDF copy of valid ethical approval as part of your project submission. If you haven't obtained approval yet, you should:
   - Have an understanding of the rules and timelines for obtaining it.
   - Consider this process when defining the project's starting date, if awarded. Projects should not be delayed due to pending ethical approvals.

7. Please email the completed and signed application forms, <u>including the budget and Gantt chart,</u> <u>along with any optional one-page supporting data, as a single PDF file,</u> named and subjected as "*IOV PoC 2023 – LEAD APPLICANT NAME*" to the following email addresses:
    *   If applying from IGC, innovationunit@igc.gulbenkian.pt
    *   If applying from ITQB NOVA, innovationunit@itqb.unl.pt

Application Form 2023

InnOValley remit check pre-application
Have you contacted/meet the Innovation Unit to check that your project is within remit?   Yes ☐   No ☐

Section 1: Lead Applicant Investigator Details

1.1 Lab Heads or PhD Holders	
Name	
Post Held	FCG-IGC or ITQB-NOVA
Research Group	
Institution	*FCG-IGC or ITQB-NOVA*
Email and Telephone No.	
If the lead applicant is not a Lab Head, write the name and email address of the nominated PI	*If the lead applicant is a post-Doc, please nominate a PI who will be ultimately responsible for the award. The nominated PI will also be included in correspondence about this application. Please provide name and email address.*

1.2 External co-investigators (can only be tasked with up to 10% of the project activities)	
External is anyone that is not affiliated with ITQB NOVA nor IGC	
Name and post held	Institute/Organisation/Company

Section 2: Project Summary

2.1   Title (max 150 characters)
Please provide a title suitable for inclusion in open access fora (website, newsletter)

2.2   Non-Confidential Abstract (max 150 words) both in ENG and in PT
Please provide a non-confidential abstract suitable for inclusion in open access fora (website, newsletter, news)

2.3	Technical Summary (max 400 words)

Please provide a technical summary of your project

2.4 Project Duration and Cost	
Proposed start date (dd.mm.yyyy)	*Earliest May 1st, 2024, latest Aug 1st 2024*
Proposed duration of award	*minimum 6 months, up to 12 months*
Funding requested	*In the range of €40-50K directly incurred costs only. Lower amounts will be considered. Do not include Overhead costs*

Section 3: Need and Proposed Solution

3.1 What is the unmet need you are seeking to address? (max. 300 words)

What problem\pain\need are you addressing? For whom is it a problem? To what extent? How relevant is it?

3.2 What is your proposed solution to meeting this need? Describe the end technology/product/service you are seeking to contribute to develop (max. 300 words)

*What do you envision your end solution **will be**? How will a prospective user\client\partner value your solution?*

Section 4: Rationale and Evidence

4.1 What is the rationale and supporting evidence for why your proposed solution will meet the target need? (max. 500 words)

e.g. In the case of a therapeutic, is there robust target validation? How feasible is the development plan you are proposing? Focus on technical\functional advantages of the solution.

4.2 Please provide up to 5 references and indicate their relevance

Section 5: Deliverability

5.1	Describe the current status of the project. All supporting data and results <u>should be included</u> as an additional attachment to the application form (max. 300 words)

What work has already been completed and what are the key hurdles to progression? If adding supporting data, this is a good place to make reference to it

5.2	Outline the work plan, including tasks, milestones, and success criteria for this project. A Gantt chart summarising the key activities and timelines <u>should be included</u> as an additional data attachment. (max. 500 words)

Describe the work plan of the project, detailing what tasks will need to be performed, by whom in what timeframe. State the major milestones of the project. A minimum of 1 mid-term milestone is mandatory. If helpful, use the SMART framework to define success criteria for the project (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

5.3	Describe the resources required for the project. (max. 200 words) All project research staff must be identified in Section 9

Consumables, Services, Equipment, Staff, outsourcing

5.4	How has the project been funded to date and what funding is currently available? (max. 200 words)

Were the current findings funded by a company, a grant, an award?

5.5	What is your plan to enable the progression of the project <u>post-IOV PoC funding</u>? (max. 200 words)

Once the proof of concept is completed, how do you plan to acquire further funding?

Section 6: Experiments on animals, pluripotent cell lines, human data or samples

6.1	Does your project involve the use of animals, pluripotent cell lines, GMO, human data, or samples? If so, please specify why this is necessary, which species have been chosen, and why this is the most appropriate. (max. 150 words)

Section 7: Competitive Position and Intellectual Property (IP)

7.1	What other solutions exist that solve the same problem/need? What is their development status? (max. 300 words)

Describe other solutions that respond totally or partially to the same problem. To what extend do they solve or not the problem? Do you know if these solutions are protected by IP?

7.2	What is the competitive advantage of your proposed solution? (max. 300 words)

Why is your solution better than others? Why would the target users\clients choose your solution over others in the market?

7.3	What new IP is the project expected to generate? (max. 200 words)

Do you anticipate any patent with the development of the PoC?

Section 8: Additional Information

8.1 Approvals, agreements, and staff recruitment.
If you would require recruitment of any staff, please consider such process when defining the starting day of the project, if awarded. Bottom line, projects should not be delayed because of recruitment processes.
Does the project require ethical approval? Yes ☐ No ☐   If so, is this already in place? Yes ☐ No ☐ Does the project require agreements to be in place, for example, material transfer agreements etc.? Yes ☐ No ☐ Does the project require the recruitment of any staff? Yes ☐ No ☐
8.1a   If yes to any of the previous questions, please expand on the information provided in 8.1a by providing some context (max 200 words)

8.2 Industry Engagement.
Does the project have an industry partner? Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, will match funds be provided? Yes ☐ No ☐ In direct funds: Yes ☐ No ☐ In-kind contribution: Yes ☐ No ☐

8.2a	If there is an industry partner, please expand on the information provided in 8.2a by stating who the industry partner(s) is, the value of any matched funds or if an in-kind contribution is being provided what the nature of this is. (max 200 words).

8.3	Please indicate which Technology Readiness Level (TRL) most fits the stage of development for your project.
TRL 1 ☐ TRL 2 ☐ TRL 3 ☐ TRL 4 ☐ TRL 5 ☐ TRL 6 ☐ TRL 7 ☐ TRL 8 ☐ TRL 9 ☐	

Section 9: Budget, disclaimer and Signature Form

Details of support requested in Section 1.3 above:

- The Award is for Directly Incurred costs only – meaning excluding overheads. Budget categories to be funded include:

  Human Resources, consumables, facilities cost and contracted services (including consultancy for regulatory, freedom to operate, etc, which cannot be more than 40% of the award). The category *Other* (no more than 3% of the award) can be used to justify costs not fitting other categories. Dissemination, such as Publications or Conferences, is not an expected outcome of the Fund, therefore these costs are not eligible, unless if clearly justified why it would benefit the technological development or commercialization of the project. The InnOValley Innovation Unit has its own IP protection funds, independent from the PoC. Applications are not expected to have IP filling costs as part of the budget.

  Please submit the application and respective annexes, in one single PDF document.
  Please do not submit a scanned PDF.

Type	Description (please provide reasonable detail of cost components, including the <u>staff to be appointed</u>)	fEC (Full Economic Cost) (€)	Contribution from other sources, if any (€)

9.1 BUDGET: (Note: funding will be in the range of €40-50k directly incurred costs only – overheads excluded)

Type	Description (please provide reasonable detail of cost components, including the <u>staff to be appointed</u>)	fEC (Full Economic Cost) (€)	Contribution from other sources, if any (€)
Directly Incurred Costs			
Staff Costs		€	€
Equipment <u>≤20% total</u>		€	€
Consumables		€	€
Use of Facilities		€	€
External Services <u>≤40% total</u>		€	€
Other ≤3% total		€	€
TOTAL		€	€

9.2 DISCLAIMER

I am aware of and consent to the processing of my personal data for the purposes of management of applications and award of grants "InnOValley Proof of Concept Fund". Yes ☐

9.3 SIGNATURES

LEAD APPLICANT:

I declare that the information given on this form is complete and correct. Yes ☐

I declare that I agree and comply with the internal ITQB NOVA institutional rules: Yes ☐

Name (print):	Digital Signature:	Date:

(Required If the lead applicant not a Lab Head)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: I declare that I agree with this application. Yes ☐

I declare that the application and candidates comply with the internal ITQB NOVA institutional rules: Yes ☐

Name (print):	Digital Signature:	Date: