

Guidelines for iFIT Top-Notch Project Funding

Support for High-Priority Research Projects

We are pleased to announce the opening of the **iFIT Top-Notch Project Funding Programme** for 2026, designed to support iFIT members with outstanding project ideas that represent the highest scientific priority within the cluster. This funding scheme aims to accelerate groundbreaking research, foster high-impact collaborations, and advance the strategic objectives of iFIT.

The objective of this programme is to provide flexible support for ambitious, high-priority research projects, enabling members to generate results with strong scientific, translational, and cluster-wide impact.

➤ Eligibility and Application Structure

- The programme is open to all iFIT members with a project proposal that aligns with iFIT's strategic research priorities and demonstrates exceptional scientific potential.
- Applications may be submitted as:
 - Individual proposals, or
 - Collaborative proposals involving other iFIT members.
- All participating applicants must sign the submitted proposal.
- The application should be submitted online to the iFIT Office at ifitoffice@med.uni-tuebingen.de

➤ Funding Framework

- The programme provides flexible funding to support projects with high scientific priority and transformative potential.
- There is no fixed funding cap per call; requested budgets must be clearly justified and appropriate to project goals.
- Funding duration: up to 2 years.
- Funding may cover:
 - Personnel (research staff, postdocs, PhD students)

- Project-related consumables and instrumentation
- Technical resources and services essential for project execution
- Applicants must provide a clear, detailed, and convincing justification for all requested resources.

➤ **Proposal Requirements**

- Proposals must be submitted using the attached template.
- Maximum length: 10 pages (Excluding list of publications and references).
- Font: Arial, size 10.
- Proposals may address:
 - The scientific idea and research quality of the proposed work
 - Innovative potential and complexity of the approach
 - Strategic relevance to iFIT priorities
 - Translational potential and expected impact
 - Methodological rigor, feasibility, and interdisciplinarity
 - Contribution to collaboration and integration within iFIT
 - Expected outcomes regarding knowledge exchange, scientific visibility, and broader impact

➤ **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Research Quality – Impact
- Innovation – Complexity
- Strategic Alignment with Cluster Priorities
- Scientific Excellence
- Clear Translational Potential
- Fit with iFIT Research Pillars

- Strong Methodology and Feasibility
- Interdisciplinarity

➤ **Review Process:**

- Initial evaluation by the iFIT Executive Board
- Selected proposals forwarded to the Steering Committee
- Final assessment includes input from 3 members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)
- The process follows principles aligned with DFG evaluation standards.

➤ **Reporting and Participation Obligations**

All funded projects are required to:

- Report regularly on progress and results within iFIT seminars, meetings, or internal formats.
- Actively contribute to iFIT scientific, strategic, and structural activities, in particular those supporting collaboration and integration within the cluster
- A final report is to submitted within 2 months of the end of the project

We strongly encourage iFIT members with ambitious, high-priority projects to take advantage of this programme to drive scientific excellence, foster collaboration, and shape the future of iFIT.

iFIT Cluster of Excellence, Universitätsklinikum Tübingen

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