

Guidelines for iFIT iFIT FlexNew Funding

Start-up Funding for New iFIT Members

We are pleased to announce the opening of the **iFIT FlexNew Member Start-up Funding Programme for 2026**, designed to support newly recruited colleagues in Tübingen in establishing their research activities within iFIT and enabling their early and active integration into the cluster.

The objective of this programme is to provide flexible start-up support that allows new iFIT members to develop innovative research ideas, build collaborations, and generate a strong basis for future external funding applications aligned with iFIT's strategic priorities.

➤ **Eligibility and Application Structure**

- The programme is open to newly recruited iFIT members (e.g. newly appointed group leaders, junior PIs, or senior researchers) who have recently joined Tübingen and iFIT.
- Applicants must be iFIT members at the time of submission.
- 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 start-up funding to support early research activities and integration into iFIT.
- There is no fixed funding cap per call; however, the requested budget must be well justified and appropriate to the proposed objectives.
- The funding period is limited to a maximum of 2 years.
- Funding may be requested for:
 - Personnel (e.g. research staff, student assistants)

- Direct project-related costs
- Instrumentation or technical resources
- Applicants must provide a clear, reasonable, and convincing justification for all requested budget items.

➤ **Proposal Requirements**

- Proposals must be submitted using the attached template.
- Maximum length: 10 pages (Excluding list of publications and references).
- Font: Arial, size 10.
- The proposal may address the following aspects:
 - The scientific idea and research quality of the proposed work
 - The innovative potential of the approach
 - The relevance of the project for future external grant applications
 - How the funding will support capacity building and skills development
 - The contribution of the project to collaboration and integration within iFIT
 - Expected outcomes regarding knowledge exchange, impact, and external visibility

➤ **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Research Quality
- Innovation
- Relevance for future external grant applications
- Contribution to Capacity Building and Skills Development
- Strategic Alignment with Cluster Priorities
- Contribution to Cluster Collaboration and Integration
- Knowledge Exchange, Impact, and External Visibility

All proposals will first be reviewed by the **iFIT Executive Board**. Selected applications will then be forwarded to the **Steering Committee** for final decision. The review process will follow the **DFG Guidelines**.

➤ **Reporting and Participation Obligations**

All funded projects are required to:

- Report regularly on progress and outcomes 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 newly recruited iFIT members to take advantage of this opportunity to establish their research, build strong collaborations, and actively shape the future of iFIT.

Please refer to the attached proposal template for detailed instructions.

iFIT Cluster of Excellence, Universitätsklinikum Tübingen

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