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GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

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1. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The LEAD programme will recruit 16 international postdoctoral fellows to the Biotech Research and Innovation Centre (BRIC), University of Copenhagen (UCPH). The scheme is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no 945322. This is the last call with 5 open positions. The evaluation is based on merit-based and transparent selection, using pre-defined selection criteria and scoring scale described in detail below.

1.1 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility requirements consist of precise and objective criteria:

- 1) International mobility: Applicants can have any nationality but must undertake transnational mobility according to the MSCA rules (must not have resided or carried out their main activity in Denmark for more than 12 months in the three years prior to the call deadline). Also, applicants employed at UCPH for more than three months before the application deadline will be considered ineligible.
- 2) Education and research experience: Applicants must hold a PhD degree, followed by up to eight years of experience from for example academia, clinic, industry, or biotech. Exceptions to the eight years-experience criteria are made for applicants with prolonged career breaks due to documented parental leave, illness or mandatory military/civil service (documentation required as part of the application).

1.2 Evaluation criteria

The criteria used for evaluation of the candidates will be divided into three categories, including a number of sub-categories as outlined below.

Category 1: Education and scientific track record

- a. Outcome of PhD degree and following research;
 - Publications with/without PhD supervisor (contribution to and impact of publications in a wider sense; impact on knowledge or research methods, clinical' practices, commercialisation etc.)
 - Fellowships and awards
 - Scientific communication (oral and poster)
 - Collaborations and network
 - Technologies
 - Exploitation/commercialization
- b. Relevance of PhD degree and/or additional research training to drive the proposed research project the applicant wishes to undertake at BRIC (Applicants can switch to another area of research for the LEAD program, if they show a sufficient understanding and background to address the proposed research question).

Category 2: Research leadership potential

- a. Early research leadership competences obtained during previous work;
 - project management
 - collaborations and coordination of shared projects
 - grant writing
 - teaching and supervision
 - technology transfer
 - outreach and popular communication
- b. Ability to reflect and form scientific ideas;
 - previous project development
 - originality of LEAD research synopsis
 - ability to critically approach research
- c. Scientific communication skills;
 - Ability to communicate research hypotheses and results
 - Ability to engage in scientific discussions

- d. Interpersonal skills: personal communication and engagement, sense of situation, respecting diversity

Category 3: Motivation

- a. The applicant's general motivation regarding their career perspective(s)
- b. Specific motivation for applying to this program
- c. Specific motivation for joining proposed groups at BRIC (complementing profiles, transfer of knowledge, unique angle to research, 'finding my niche')

1.3 Scoring

Each criteria category will be scored from 1-5 for each step of the selection (SRP evaluation and SC interviews). To go from one step to the next step a quality cut-off score of ≥ 3 is required.

5: Excellent. The applicant meets all the selection criteria in the category with high quality and any shortcomings are minor.

4: Very good. The applicant meets most of the selection criteria in the category with high quality and a few shortcomings.

3: Good. The applicant meets most of the selection criteria in the category with a good quality, but improvements could be expected.

2: Fair. The applicant meets most of the selection criteria in the category with a fair quality, but there are several shortcomings.

1: Poor. The applicant meets the selection criteria in the category inadequately and there are significant shortcomings.

1.4 Composition of evaluation panels and committees

Scientific review panel (SRP)

Ad hoc scientific review panels consisting of international independent scientific reviewers covering the scientific scope within LEAD will be assembled for each call. They will evaluate the submitted application material and score the candidates based on the evaluation criteria.

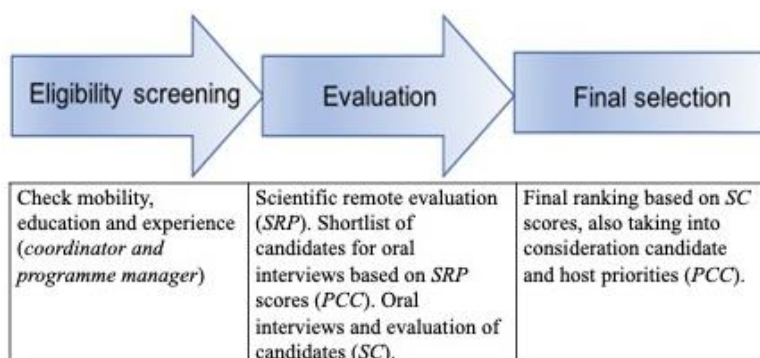
The Selection Committee (SC) consist of independent international experts (from academia and the private life science sector). Also, BRIC group leaders will participate to ensure compliance with local training and organisational talent focus. There will be two external experts in each panel (one from academia, one from industry) and one BRIC group leader (nonrecruiting – i.e. cannot interview with candidates who indicated her/his group as host). One of the external experts will chair the panel and lead the interviews. The SC panels will evaluate and score candidates according to the predefined criteria.

The Programme Coordination Committee (PCC) is a standing committee with the following members: the LEAD programme coordinator (Katrine Sonne-Hansen), the programme manager, and three BRIC group leaders representing both basic research, translational research and innovation at BRIC and having strong experience with researcher training (BRIC director Anders Lund, head of BRIC's postdoc program Luis Arnes and innovation ambassador Janine Erler). Members of PCC will handle the eligibility check and handle the scoring performed by the SRP and SC.

Conflicts of interest: To avoid conflicts of interest in the selection process, applicant evaluation and scoring is led by independent external experts in the SRP and SC. Internal SC members are only assisting the external members, contributing knowledge of the research and environment at BRIC, and are not allowed to interview with potential candidates to their group. All experts in the SRP and SC will be asked to disclose any situation that could compromise their ability to evaluate any applicant impartially before the evaluation starts. The PCC will handle any case of interest conflict, by nominating another evaluator of the applicant.

1.5 Selection process

The selection workflow starting upon call closure consists of three phases (eligibility screening, evaluation, and final selection)



Content of selection workflow and responsibilities (italics). After the eligibility screening, candidates will go through evaluation consisting of 1) remote scientific evaluation based on their application and 2) oral interviews of up to 2x8 shortlisted candidates. In each phase, the predefined selection criteria and scoring of 1-5 will be used. Only applicants receiving a score above the quality cut-off (≥ 3) will be considered qualified. SRP: Scientific Review Panel, SC: Selection Committee, PCC: Programme

Coordination Committee.

Rectification/redress: For questions on eligibility applicants will be in direct email contact with the programme manager. In relation to assessment, UCPH has a consultation procedure where all applicants for positions are heard in relation to their assessment and has an opportunity to make rectifications. Any rectifications will be handled by the PCC.

2. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND HOW TO APPLY ONLINE

Applicants are strongly recommended **to reach out to explore an initial mutual interest with potential host group leaders before applying**, to ensure that the research interest and knowledge of the applicant can complement that of a potential host, and to secure transfer of knowledge between fellow and host, which is a cornerstone for MSCA postdoc fellowships.

You must use the required templates where indicated (Declaration of eligibility, List of referees, CV and list of publications and research synopsis). A complete set of application material submitted in due time is required for the application to be processed. MANDATORY TEMPLATES CAN BE FOUND ON www.lead.ku.dk

APPLICATION CAN ONLY HAPPEN ONLINE VIA THE LINK ON THE LEAD HOMEPAGE.

2.1 Application material

The documents needed for the application are:

- Online application form including personal details
- Degree diplomas (Bachelors, Master, PhD)
- A signed declaration of eligibility (documenting mobility and experience since PhD) (**Mandatory template**)
- List of two-three referees, whereof one should preferably be the PhD supervisor or another senior scientist that the applicant has worked closely with (reference letters will be directly obtained by BRIC) (**Mandatory template**)
- Curriculum Vitae (max 4 pages, **Mandatory template**) including;
 - scientific bio sketch incl. research focus and short and long-term career perspectives
 - education and research experience
 - fellowships and awards
 - scientific communication
 - major collaborations and international experience
 - teaching and supervision
 - institution responsibilities and project management (if applicable)
 - other relevant activities
 - List of publications (not included in the page limit)
- Motivation (cover) letter (max 2 pages, **Mandatory template**) outlining;
 - the applicant's career perspective(s) (in academia, industry, biotech, hospital)
 - specific motivation for applying to this programme
 - motivation for one to three laboratories the applicant would like to join at BRIC
- Documentation of career breaks, if any

Applicants who pass the eligibility check and the remote scientific evaluation and are invited for interviews with the selection committee, will be asked to submit a research synopsis before the interviews, as part of the material reviewed by the committee. The synopsis should describe the vision for the scientific challenge to be pursued during the fellowship and outline briefly:

- the research in a nutshell
- originality and novelty aspect of the research
- research approach/methodology
- transfer of knowledge and impact on the host lab/institution
- potential of the candidate
- impact on your progression towards research independence

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

3.1 Host institution

Biotech Research and Innovation Centre ([click here to visit BRIC's homepage](#)) is a centre of Excellence initiated in 2003 by the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. BRIC has approximately 250 employees and students, working in 22 independent research groups. The centre had in 2020 a total budget of 30,500,000 EUR, hereof 75-80% obtained through external competitive funding. BRIC is part of UCPH, a leading European university (5th in 2021 of European universities according to Leiden Ranking) and belong to the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences with 1770 researchers, 1600 PhD students and 7700 students. BRIC's overall strategic mission is to perform cutting-edge disease-oriented biomedical research within cancer, metabolic and neurological diseases. The centre is internationally recognised as a leading player in a variety of disciplines including epigenetics, chromatin biology, RNA biology, stem cell research, cancer biology, invasion and metastases, neuro-degenerative diseases and bioinformatics. Besides performing excellent research, our aims are to offer outstanding research training and translate research findings into societal value.

3.2 Partner Organisations

12 partner organisations (POs) from academia, non-profit organisations and the private sector are involved in all phases of LEAD, from development and design of the programme, selection of candidates, training and career development activities, to programme implementation, governance and call and project result dissemination.

3.3 Programme vision and content

The LEAD programme will support the individual fellow in her/his transition to become a research leader, in or outside of academia. Our **VISION** is **to empower diverse research talent to become the next generation of creative, collaborative, responsible and inclusive research leaders.**

The LEAD programme is aligned with the European Charter and Code and the Marie S. Curie principles of interdisciplinarity, internationality and intersectoral exposure and contains:

- Transnational mobility
- Transparent merit-based selection processes
- Employment aligned with the European Charter and Code
- Original fellow-driven interdisciplinary research projects
- International and intersectoral career mentoring and peer-mentoring
- International collaborations
- Leadership and transferable skills training (both academia and industry-relevant competences)
- Strategic career development

3.4 Supervision and mentoring

Considering the experience-level of the enrolled LEAD researchers, the supervision from the host group leaders will take a **coaching approach**. The host group leader will nurture and challenge the fellow to create her/his own research niche, and empower creativity and critical thinking in research. The supervisor will further practise hands-on training of the LEAD fellows in research leader skills, by engaging them actively in her/his leadership responsibilities as hiring, grant writing, reviewing, lab management, supervision of students, budgeting, and collaborations. The supervision/coaching from the host supervisor will be supplemented with **international/intersectoral career mentoring** from an academic or industrial research leader, depending on the individual fellow's career goals.

4. COMPETENCES AND TRAINING PLAN

The training, supervision and career guidance in LEAD aim to **support development of excellent competences for leading research as well as transferable skills.**

4.1 Competences

LEAD will on several levels enhance the fellows' potential allowing them to reach the next step in their career. The programme is developed with academic and industrial partners, to ensure that the training is relevant for positions in both academia and industry, thereby widening the career prospects of the fellows. Specifically, the programme will lead to competence-building in six main areas as outlined in the figure, which will increase their set of skills, both research-related and transferable ones, positively impacting their career prospects.



Research proficiency: Scientific knowledge and methodologies. Advanced techniques. Creativity and critical thinking. Scientific dissemination.

Research governance: Research conduct, ethics and integrity. RDM/DMP. GDPR. FAIR principles. Gender and sex in research. Organizational skills.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: Identifying and protecting inventions, commercial project pitching, IPR in collaborations.

Leadership: project management, supervision, mentoring, communication, negotiation. leading creative processes, strategic thinking, equity and diversity in research.

Collaboration and engagement: Teamwork, peer-mentoring, partnership brokering, trust-building, cultural understanding (across borders & sectors), public responsibility and engagement.

Personal competences: Prioritization, self-management and reflection, career strategies, responsibility, life balance.

Figure. LEAD fellow competences. Blue: Competences related directly to research, research performance and research exploitation. Green: Competences, including leadership and collaboration, transferrable across employment sectors.

4.2 Training and development activities

The programme consists of both mandatory elements that are seen as corner stones in LEAD and optional elements, *depending on the individual fellow's earlier experiences and career goals.*

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Research skills			
Independent research project – training through research M			
Individual plan for theoretical and technical training M			
Research leadership			
• Scientific communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conference participation with presentation (oral/poster) M ○ Publishing strategies (seminars with editors (E)) O 			
• Management and leadership (course (E)) M			
• Collaborations/partnership brokering (negotiation course O (E) and hands on experience building collaborations in own research M)			
• Supervision/teaching (course O , involvement in teaching at pre-graduate level O and hands-on supervision of master student M)			
• Grant writing: Obtaining starting grants (course and hands on training based on own project and profile) M			
• Seminar series: From postdoc to PI (academic track (E)), industrial leadership and career ways in industry (industry track (PO)) O			
Research governance			
• Good Scientific conduct, ethics, research integrity, RDM/DMP, FAIR principles, GDPR (course, online module and hands on training) M			
• Gender and sex in research (seminar at BRIC) O			

• Open access publishing M			
Transferable skills			
• Creativity and critical thinking M			
○ Course in creativity (3 modules) (PO)			
○ Critical thinking practise in interdisciplinary LEAD peer-groups			
• Innovation training			
○ From drug target to lead-compound, biomarker development, general IP aspects and entrepreneurship (BRIC course) O			
○ Exploitation aspects of own project and project pitching (PO) M			
○ BRIC innovation day (fellows as organisers) M			
○ Intersectoral technical training/secondments if project relevant (PO) O			
• Public engagement and communication			
○ Media training and public communication (BRIC course) O			
○ Hands-on outreach activities (BRIC's outreach program) M			
Career development activities			
• Development of individual career development plans (CDP) and yearly monitoring and status reports M			
• Preparing for job applications (competence mapping, writing a research plan, CV writing, chalk-talk and interview training (PO)) M			
• Peer-mentoring groups (Peer-groups with 4 LEAD fellows in each, based on lean-in circle principles) M			
• International and/or intersectoral mentor (career goal dependent (E , PO)) M			

Table Training and career activities in LEAD and timing during fellows' 3-year training phase. **M**: Mandatory for LEAD fellows. **O**: optional depending on each fellow's earlier experiences and relevance for their project development and career progression. Activities organised by partner organisations are indicated with **PO** in the table and activities organised by external experts is indicated with **E**. Remaining activities are offered by BRIC or UCPH.

4.3 Mentoring arrangements

Career mentoring will be implemented for all LEAD fellows in the last half of their fellowship. Mentoring is offered by LEAD partners and mentors can also be identified among BRIC's existing alumni network, depending on the interest and career goals of the fellow.

Peer-mentoring will be organised at cohort level and fellows will be meeting at least every 3-months throughout their fellowship. The ambition is to establish an interdisciplinary fellow network for scientific discussions and to empower the fellows to take responsibility for their professional and personal development through discussions with a trusted group of peers.

4.4 Progress monitoring and career development plans

At the onset of the fellowship each fellow will in collaboration with her/his supervisor develop an individual **Career Development Plan** (CDP). The CDP shall contain a detailed research project description and a development plan outlining previous training/experiences, describing the courses and activities planned to secure progression of the research project and fellow career development. The CDP will be monitored yearly by the fellow, supervisor and PCC. For this, the fellow will produce a **progress report**, outlining the project and career progression, divergences from the original plan and risk mitigation activities.

5. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND TECHNOLOGIES

5.1 Research opportunities

BRIC's independent research groups work with programmes relevant for understanding basic biological processes, cancer, inflammation and neurological disorders, and have established themselves as internationally leading in the areas of epigenetics, transcriptional control, cell signalling, stem cell biology, cancer development, metastasis and neuroimmunology. The centre has an open and informal research environment, where research is openly and widely discussed, methodological and technical knowledge shared, and formal peer-feedback is organised also outside the individual research groups. The activities include weekly centre seminars where young researchers from all groups present their research and receive organised feedback from peers outside own group, monthly presentations from BRIC group leaders with overview of the group's research vision and portfolio, internal grant reviews, and weekly scientific seminars with external speakers invited by rotation of the centre's research groups.

The LEAD fellows will work with their original research projects, within one of the recruiting research groups. The basis for the project should be carefully developed combining the fellow's previous research competences and expertise, with that of the host group. The fellow will thus use the first month to develop his/her original project together with the host group leader. The project needs to be interdisciplinary, and the research questions should be original and have the potential to advance the implicated research fields.

5.2 Institutional administrative support

BRIC has a well-developed administration, supporting the centre's researchers. The support is located in conjunction with BRIC's research laboratories and offices. The support includes the service listed below. As part of UCPH and the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, BRIC is further supported by central departments taking care of HR, IT and financial management of externally funded projects. In addition, UCPH has a dedicated EU office, a Technology Transfer Office and an International Staff Mobility Office who will all support the programme.

- **Laboratory service:** Work safety, equipment repair, dishwashing, purchase of lab reagents etc.
- **Front office/secretary support:** Introduction for new employees to BRIC/UCPH/Denmark, daily HR matters, office supplies, organisation of seminars, conference support etc.
- **Financial support:** Overview of grant portfolio and budgets, budgeting support for grant applications etc.
- **Grant support:** Information on grant opportunities, feedback on applications, communication with funding bodies, career guidance for young researcher related to grant strategy etc.
- **Postdoc Career Programme** ([click here to check the postdoc career program webpage](#)): Organization of workshops, seminars, career events, etc.
- **Communication and outreach support:** Support focussing on science communication and organisation of outreach activities to the broad public in collaboration with BRIC's researchers, especially MSCA fellows (Individual fellowships, ITN and COFUND).
- **Scientific project management:** Support to researchers coordinating larger projects and programmes from the strategic research support office.

5.3 Core facilities

BRIC occupies 9000 square meters of modern laboratories and offices in the Copenhagen Biocentre, which is located within UCPH's natural and medical science campus. BRIC offers state-of-the-art facilities, including eight well-organised core facilities (high-throughput screening, flow cytometry, NGS sequencing, light microscopy, in vivo imaging, histology, single-cell sequencing and bioinformatics). The core facilities, including expert training, are open to all BRIC researchers and students. Also, all larger equipment at BRIC is common and available to all students and staff (online booking system). Further, BRIC's researchers have access to several core facilities at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, where we primarily use the animal facility (Dept. of experimental medicine) and the Core Facility for Transgenic mice.

6. EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

6.1 Institutional administrative support

The recruitment terms and employment conditions of the fellows will comply with national legislation and be aligned with the EU Charter and Code. Each fellow will be offered a **36 months contract with UCPH as a postdoctoral researcher**, with BRIC specified as the daily workplace.

The employment and working conditions will be equal to those of all other researchers employed at BRIC and UCPH. The terms of employment, salary and pension are in accordance with agreements between the Ministry of Finance and The Danish Confederation of Professional Associations on Academics in the State and include:

- Scale regulated salary and pension (plus tax reductions for international researchers in DK)
- Regulated work week of 37 hours/week
- Full social benefits including health care
- Right to salary during holidays (six weeks of holidays per year on top of national holidays)
- Right to salary during own illness and child's first two sick days
- Right to parental leave (up to 32 weeks paid leave) and two childcare days/child/year until age 7

6.2 Working conditions

The overall working conditions at UCPH is set out in a 'Personnel Policy', presented in a Personnel Policy Handbook and centred around a set of basic principles ensuring an **open, collaborative, secure, including and developing work environment with equality for all staff**. The LEAD fellows will:

- Have flexible work hours and be encouraged to attain work-life balance
- Participate in university and centre-wide satisfaction and well-being assessments
- Have annual Performance and Development Reviews with the host supervisor
- Be able to run and vote for university elections and BRIC Liaison Committee
- Be hosted in a healthy physical work environment (mandatory training at BRIC in occupational health and safety issues and handling of potential hazardous reagents, governmental-regulated laboratory facilities and work procedures, non-smoking and alcohol policy, controlled indoor climate)
- Be hosted in a healthy psychosocial work environment (freedom of speech, no-tolerance of harassment and bullying, coaching on stress-handling and in case of long-term illness)

6.3 Salary, pension and taxation

The fellows will receive a competitive scale regulated salary reflecting the candidate experience-level with a minimum of 36,291.44 Danish kroner per month (approximately 4,871 EUR) if you have a master's degree equivalent to a Danish master's degree. If you do not have such a degree, you will be placed on the minimum level on the common academic pay scale as a bachelor and you will receive a compensation supplement corresponding to the difference between the bachelor's and master's degrees. Supplements may also be given based on professional qualifications or specific duties.

As an academic staff member at the UCPH you are covered by a mandatory pension scheme. The UCPH will therefore pay 17.1% pension in addition to the above salary. As an international researcher, you can choose between three different pension schemes: Ordinary pension contribution scheme, §53a pension scheme or Pension exemption. You can find more information about the different pension schemes on the following webpage: <https://ism.ku.dk/salary-tax-pension/pension/>

Post docs that are recruited outside of Denmark, may choose to be taxed according to the reduced tax scheme for researchers (the researcher scheme). This means that the tax rate is 32.84% for up to 7 years (gross tax rate of 27% plus labour market contributions). If you apply for this scheme, you will not be entitled to tax deductions or allowances of any kind. To be eligible for the researcher taxation scheme, you must (among others) not have been tax liable to Denmark in the previous 10 years. You can read more about taxation in Denmark on the following webpage: <https://ism.ku.dk/salary-tax-pension/tax/>.