



Innovative Medicines Initiative

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PRESS RELEASE

IMI LAUNCHES €242.7 MILLION 8TH CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The new Call addresses **three key issues in health research**:

- **Antimicrobial resistance**
- A new approach to the **classification of diseases** to take into account their true **underlying causes**
- Researchers' urgent need for a European **induced pluripotent stem cell bank**

BRUSSELS, 17 December 2012 – Today, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is launching its 8th Call for proposals. With a total budget of €242.7 million (€143.3 million cash from IMI, plus a €99.4 million in-kind contribution from participating EFPIA companies), the projects resulting from this Call will tackle some of the biggest challenges in health research.

Michel Goldman, IMI Executive Director commented: *'These new projects demonstrate that public-private partnerships are essential for taking on the biggest issues in medical research, such as the scourge of antibiotic resistance, and the definition of diseases based on their underlying biology.'*

Antimicrobial resistance

The 8th Call for proposals adds two more topics to IMI's antimicrobial resistance programme (NewDrugs4BadBugs, ND4BB), which forms part of the European Commission's antimicrobial resistance Action Plan. The first new topic focuses on innovative trial design and clinical drug development, by supporting the development of another innovative drug targeting *Staphylococcus aureus*, the leading cause of antibiotic-resistant healthcare-associated infections worldwide. As such it complements one of the ND4BB topics launched in May.

The second antimicrobial resistance topic focuses on the development of new drugs to treat Gram-negative bacteria, such as *Escherichia coli*. The project offers a unique opportunity for universities and small companies to access the expertise and resources available under a newly-created drug discovery platform to advance their candidate drug molecules. Drug resistant Gram-negative bacteria are responsible for two thirds of the 25 000 deaths resulting from antimicrobial resistance reported in Europe annually. With cases on the rise, new antibiotics are urgently needed to treat these infections.

A new approach to defining diseases

Two 8th Call topics aim to pave the way for a major rethink in the way diseases are classified (also known as disease taxonomy). Today, diseases are defined largely on the basis of symptoms and their location in the body. There is growing evidence that while two patients may have the same diagnosis, the genetic/molecular causes of their symptoms may be very different. This means that a treatment that works in one patient may prove ineffective in another. There is now broad recognition that the way diseases are classified needs to change, and the immense scale of the challenge means that only a large public-private partnership could take this on.

The two topics launched under the 8th Call will embark on a new approach to disease classification, focusing initially on two disease areas where the problems of patient classification are well known: immunoinflammatory disorders (e.g. systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and rheumatoid arthritis) and neurodegenerative diseases (particularly Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease). The projects will deliver data, tools and recommendations that can be used by the biomedical community to develop new treatments and diagnostic tests.

Creating a European induced pluripotent stem cell bank

Induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells (i.e. stem cells taken from an adult that have been 'reprogrammed' so that they can produce any kind of cell in the body) have immense potential for drug research and development. Researchers are generating large numbers of iPS cell lines, but their quality varies greatly and they do not always come with sufficient data on the donor for researchers to use them well.

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Furthermore, access to cell lines is often highly restricted. This topic would see the creation of a European iPS cell bank that would provide researchers with access to quality-assured, well characterised iPS cell lines on a not-for-profit basis.

- The deadline for submitting applications to be part of these ambitious new projects is 19 March 2013.
- For **more information** on IMI's 8th Call for proposals, including details of the topics as well as budgets and key documents for applicants, visit <http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/8th-call-2012>

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About IMI

IMI is the world's largest public-private partnership in health. IMI is improving the environment for pharmaceutical innovation in Europe by engaging and supporting networks of industrial and academic experts in collaborative research projects. The European Union contributes €1 billion to the IMI research programme, which is matched by in kind contributions worth at least another €1 billion from the member companies of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

The Innovative Medicines Initiative is currently funding 37 projects, many of which are already producing impressive results. The projects all address major bottlenecks which will accelerate the development of safer and more effective treatments for patients.

More info on IMI: www.imi.europa.eu

