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IBEC Thematic Networks

Intramural collaboration program 2027

Following the success of the first IBEC Thematic Network Programme call 2024, and in order to foster new intramural collaborations, IBEC is launching its second call. The goal is to identify key areas in which there is potential for collaboration within IBEC groups, and to build a forum for discussing ideas and collaborative projects.

Each network will include funding to organize:

- Up to 4 workshops (half- or full day) held at IBEC. Each workshop should include talks/contributions from IBEC group members, plus an invited talk by an external researcher.
- A final day-long retreat, which may be held in the vicinity of Barcelona. During this retreat, the network should identify and select a collaborative project between the participating groups.
- Costs for inviting both national and international researchers (up to 1 intercontinental speaker per network).
- Funding for a small collaborative project, emerging from the participating groups.

Network rules

- Thematic networks from the first call are eligible to apply. They may present a new proposal or a continuation of the previous network. Re-applications will not have priority over new proposed networks.
- Each network should be composed of at least 5 IBEC groups.
- Each network will have an executive board, composed of one representative from each group. One of the representatives will act as network coordinator. A program manager responsible for the logistics will need to be appointed (*see Additional Considerations section*).
- Network representatives can be senior researchers and/or post-docs, who will need the approval of their PI to participate in the call. PI, PhD students and visiting researchers are not eligible in this second call, although they may collaborate with the network.

  In the event a network representative leaves IBEC while the network is ongoing, a replacement from the same research group must be selected within a month to assume the representative role and ensure the group's participation in the network.

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- Each senior researcher or post-doc can apply to be representative to only one thematic network. However, there is no limit to the number of applications that each IBEC research group can participate in.
- The exact number and format of workshops, and of the final retreat, can be decided by the network representatives. It must fall within the maximum budget and the network objectives.
- Talks by invited speakers must be open to everyone (not just network members) and announced in the IBEC website as an IBEC seminar. Ideally, visits of international researchers should also include visits to the network labs, and as much interaction as possible.
- The networks will have a budget to fund a small collaborative project, among all the ideas that may have appeared during the network workshops or during the final retreat. This should be a specific project to fund a specific concrete "proof-of-principle" idea, with a maximum length of six months and involving 2-3 people from the network groups, which could be different from network representatives. Additionally, if needed and justified, a maximum of one (1) researcher from a group not participating in the network will be allowed. The budget for this project will be part of the overall budget of the network.

Funds

- In this second call, IBEC will fund up to 3 networks.
- The maximum funding for each network will be of **25.000 euros**.
- The decision on how to allocate the funding is up to the network members. However, recommended budget allocations are as follows:
    - 10.000€ for seminar organization (covering speaker travel and accommodation, catering, and meeting rooms).
    - 5.000€ for retreat organization (covering venue rental and meals).
    - 10.000€ for small collaborative projects.
- Eligible expenses:
    - Cost for hiring PCB rooms for the workshops and a venue for the final retreat.
    - Catering service: the cost is limited to the duration of the workshop and to the Severo Ochoa regulations. Duration is calculated by hours of content (without considering breaks, registration, etc.):
        - +2.5 hours of content: it will be possible to hire a coffee break service at a maximum cost of 6 € / person (VAT included).
        - +5 hours of content: it will be possible to hire a coffee break at a maximum cost of 6 € / person and a catering service at a maximum cost of 18,70 € / person (both VAT included).

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    - Meals of a maximum of 2 network representatives with the external speakers (not IBEC) after the workshop. Meals will be allowed only if they are not covered by the catering service and if they are part of the scientific agenda of the workshop. IBEC will not reimburse any meal expenses that it deems as disproportionate (over 30 €/person) or ineligible due to their nature (e.g. alcohol).
    - Transportation: for speaker's journeys from/to the airport or train station, or journeys to the retreat, we recommend considering the use of public transport (metro, train, or bus) as the first and preferred option. All expenses reimbursement must be done through OKTicket.
    - Personnel cost (new contract)
    - Consumables, scientific services or renting of equipment for the collaborative project.
- Non-eligible expenses:
    - Network representatives meeting meals.
    - Equipment.
    - Mobility of network members.
    - Alcoholic drinks.
    - Expenses that are disproportionate or ineligible due to their nature according to the Severo Ochoa Programme rules.
- **Important**: funding allocated to each thematic network must be used exclusively for activities that are necessary and duly justified for the achievement of the network's objectives. Any funds that remain unspent at the end of the network period, or that are not required for the approved activities, will be returned to the Severo Ochoa programme budget for reallocation according to institutional priorities.

Application procedure

Each network will submit a short application for funding (**Application template**), detailing:

- Specific name and topic of the network. Networks should focus on a specific topic of interest to several IBEC groups.
- Reason for choosing the topic, and how this topic is represented among the different IBEC groups participating.
- Proposed list of invited speakers, and how their visits will be organized.
- Proposed calendar and format of workshops, and of the final retreat.
- Proposed procedure to allocate the funding for the collaborative project. This should properly take into account potential conflicts of interest.

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Evaluation procedure

All applications will be evaluated by an external scientific panel selected by IBEC according to the following criteria:

- Potential of topic to science in general and to IBEC (33%).
- Potential to lead to interesting collaborations (33%). This includes collaborations within IBEC and with potential invited groups.
- Adequacy of network organization and proposed plan (33%). This includes adequately considering gender balance (at least 40% women speakers – both internal (IBEC) and external), and also the consideration of basic and applied/clinical aspects when selecting invited speakers.
- Adequacy of the network budget. The proposed budget will be assessed in terms of its adequacy, justification, alignment with the proposed activities, and eligibility according to the Severo Ochoa rules (*the eligibility will be evaluated by the Strategic Initiatives department*).

Additional Considerations

- Participants must designate a program manager responsible for managing venue reservations, speaker travel arrangements, and any other logistical tasks related to the initiative. The Strategy and Communications units may provide support upon request. However, Thematic Networks are expected to be self-managed by network representatives. Therefore, the organisers of the workshop will be responsible for setting up and clearing up the Baobab room (when used) and the coffee machine area.
- The Thematic Networks programme is funded by the project Severo Ochoa CEX2023-001282-S. **It is mandatory to include the reference** "*This thematic network has been financed by the project Severo Ochoa CEX2023-001282-S*" **in all publicity and invoices related to the network**.
- Expenses derived from a workshop must be duly justified including the final programme of the workshop (or retreat) and the list of attendees, including name and surname, institution and signature.

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Deadlines

Submission period for proposals	2/11/2026 to 15/01/2027
Evaluation of proposals by external scientific panel	February-March 2027
Announcement of selected networks	15/03/2027
Thematic networks period (workshops and final retreat)	1/4/2027 to 30/09/2028
Presentation of network results and selected projects at IBEC symposium	Oct 2028
Selected project execution	1/11/2028 to 31/3/2029

Application Form

The applications must be submitted using this template to StrategicInitiatives@ibecbarcelona.eu by **January 15th 2027**.

We have generated a shared spreadsheet where anyone can add ideas for networks, and where anyone can also sign up to show interest: Spreadsheet (Thematic Networks 2027.xlsx). To get access, please use your IBEC email account. If you have any problems, contact with Strategic Initiatives.

Contact

For any questions regarding the thematic networks call please contact StrategicInitiatives@ibecbarcelona.eu.

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