

Guidelines & regulations on PrIOMiC mobility grants

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1. Background on PrIOMiC

In 2019, CRIG established an International Thematic Network (ITN) on 'Precision oncology, Immuno-Oncology and Modeling in Cancer', called 'PrIOMiC'. The network is funded by Ghent University (during the first phase 2019-2024, and the second and last phase 2025-2029).

The aim of the PrIOMiC network is to expand and strengthen CRIG's international collaborative network with experts from renowned cancer research institutes, with the objective of strengthening Ghent University's and CRIG's own capacity. Through this network, we aim to promote excellent research and education, as well as to generate societal impact. On the long term, this ITN network enables CRIG teams to further extend their international network and build long-term partnerships.

The budget provided by UGent and required co-funding by CRIG and the ITN partners is used to support and promote the network. Funding was mainly allocated for the organization of symposia and invited speaker seminars, project management and mobility grants (explained further in these guidelines).

For all information on PrIOMiC:

<https://www.crig.ugent.be/en/priomc-crig-ugent-international-thematic-network>

2. PrIOMiC mobility grants

2.1. Aim and scope

By installing mobility grants, the PrIOMiC network aims to stimulate international collaboration, and to support innovative projects that focus on precision oncology, immuno-oncology and/or cancer modeling. The major aim is to support research stays, although educational visits (e.g. to learn best practices) in the scope of the PrIOMiC topics are also possible. The focus of the mobility grants is not to financially support attendance to conferences.

The purpose of the mobility grants is to create leverage by striving for long-term partnerships and to maximize output on the project (for example, but not limited to: joint publications, joint project applications, novel collaborations, implementation of novel technologies or research/educational tools in Ghent, valorization, concrete benefit for the patient, ...). Therefore, innovative and creative projects with high potential for future output are encouraged.

2.2. Eligible applicants

2.2.A. Outgoing mobility

Outgoing mobility grants cover visits from UGent researchers to international partner labs/institutes. Priority applies to visits to the labs/institutions of the international PrIOMiC partners (see <https://www.crig.ugent.be/en/priomic-crig-ugent-international-thematic-network> for an overview), but can go broader than these labs/institutions, and can even further strengthen collaborations with both PrIOMiC partners and new partners.

2.2.A.1. Applicants for outgoing mobility must meet following criteria

- Affiliated with CRIG as CRIG group leader or CRIG member (*)
- Employment (at least 50%) at UGent, UZ Gent or VIB-UGent

2.2.A.2. Each application must be supported by the principal investigator of the research team of the applicant.

2.2.A.3. Each application must also be supported by the international partner lab/institution that is willing to welcome the applicant in the context of a mobility grant.

(*) Researchers can submit a request to become CRIG group leader or CRIG member at any time. The criteria for CRIG membership can be found below:

Criteria 'CRIG Group Leaders':

Researchers or clinicians with (minimum 50%) employment at UGent, UZ Gent, or VIB-UGent, with focus on cancer research, and that meet ALL of the following criteria:

+ PhD degree holder for at least 3 years

+ senior author on at least 1 A1-publication with focus on cancer research, during the last 5 years OR inventor on at least 1 patent application that is relevant in the field of oncology

+ promoter or co-promoter of at least 1 doctoral thesis with focus on cancer research (ongoing or finished, during the last 5 years)

+ promoter or co-promoter of at least 1 funded research project with focus on cancer (ongoing or finished, during the last 5 years). Included are research projects (not mandates) funded by internal

sources (such as GOA or BOF funding by UGent) or external sources (such as 'Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek', 'Stichting tegen Kanker', 'Kom op tegen Kanker', 'Agentschap Ondernemen O&O projecten', etc.)

+ (willing to) contribute to CRIG by means of providing expertise, technology, platforms, material and/or other resources that can benefit cancer research and the other 'CRIG Members' or 'CRIG Group Leaders'

Criteria 'CRIG Members':

Researchers or clinicians with (full-time or partial) employment at UGent, UZ Gent or VIB-UGent, and that meet the following criteria:

+ focus on cancer research OR focus on research that is of use for, can contribute to, or can be integrated in (multidisciplinary) cancer research (in a broad sense)

+ (willing to) contribute to CRIG by means of providing expertise, technology, platforms, material and/or other resources that can benefit cancer research and the other 'CRIG Members' or 'CRIG Group Leaders'

2.2.B. Incoming mobility

Incoming mobility grants cover visits from the international PrIOMiC partners - or their direct team members - to CRIG labs. Incoming mobility grants are exclusive for researchers that are directly linked to the international PrIOMiC partners. Priority goes to researchers that can also bring expertise to Ghent.

2.2.B.1. The applicants must be directly linked as researcher of the team of an international PrIOMiC partner.

2.2.B.2. Each application must be supported by the principal investigator of the research team of the applicant.

2.2.B.3. Each application must also be supported by the UGent (CRIG) partner lab that is willing to welcome the applicant in the context of a mobility grant.

2.3. Call for mobility grant applications

2.3.1 There is an open, continuous call for mobility grant applications: interested researchers can apply at any time. The (local) PrIOMiC committee will evaluate each application *ad hoc* within 2 weeks.

2.3.2 The number of applications that will be granted over a certain period is not fixed and will depend on the number of applications, the general quality of the applications, the scope of the applications (should fit with the themes of the PrIOMiC network, link with the PrIOMiC partners), the expected outcome, the possible benefits for the PrIOMiC network (e.g. novel expertise that is expected to be implemented at CRIG/UGent and/or partner institutions), and the financial plan.

2.4 Budget

2.4.1 Maximum budget that can be applied for in each (outgoing) mobility grant:

- 2000 EUR for a visit to a lab/institution in Europe
- 3000 EUR for a visit to a lab/institution outside Europe
- In exceptional cases, if well motivated, the PrIOMiC committee may consider to allow exceptions to the amounts indicated above.

2.4.2 The budget can only be used to cover following mobility grant related expenses:

- Transport (whereby institutional regulations apply; for example, Ghent University regulations regarding booking of flights for Ghent University personnel,...)
- Accommodation (budget friendly accommodation should be aimed for)
- Meals are not covered

2.4.3 Budget regulations

- In the project proposal, applicants have to include a description of the required (estimated) budget for the mobility grant (prices should include all relevant taxes).
- If the jury believes that more budget was requested than actually required for the mobility grant, it can be decided to reduce the requested budget accordingly.
- If possible, we advise the applicant to cover the costs first (e.g. via a cost center of the lab, or using personal budget), and ask for refund by the PrIOMiC cost center later. If not possible, the PrIOMiC cost center can cover the expenses for transport and accommodation directly (in the latter case, this has to be clearly communicated on beforehand, so that practical regulations can be discussed)
- PrIOMiC will only (re)fund costs that have been effectively made in the context of an approved mobility grant (so the refunded costs can be lower than the budget that was requested and approved), with the original bills/tickets.

2.4.4 The applicant has to consider other funding sources for mobility

- **If the applicant meets the criteria to apply for mobility grants elsewhere - including at FWO Vlaanderen, or a UGent faculty mobility fund - the candidate needs to apply there to cover mobility (and provide proof).** If the candidate has not applied elsewhere, this should be motivated.
- The PrIOMiC network will evaluate and decide on each mobility grant application, regardless of the possibility that mobility grant applications elsewhere are pending.
 - (a) In case funding from other sources is obtained for an application that was also granted by PrIOMiC, refunding to PrIOMiC will apply
 - (b) In case funding from other sources is not obtained for an application that was granted by PrIOMiC, PrIOMiC will cover the full budget that was approved by the PrIOMiC network
- If more budget is required for the stay (e.g. prolonged stays): co-funding/combination of a PrIOMiC mobility grant and an external grant is an option. Also other sources of funding (e.g. bench fee of the applicant, or research project budget from the lab of the applicant) can be used to combine with a PrIOMiC mobility grant.

2.5 Application procedure

2.5.1 Submission of a mobility grant application

The applicant has to use the standard application form that is provided. All information should be provided in English. Project proposals should be submitted by email to CRIG@UGent.be

- Part I: General information
- Part II: Describe the purpose of the stay – what will exactly be done? (max 0.5 page)
- Part III: Why will your research benefit from the stay? What are the expected outcomes? What are the expected benefits for your team, for CRIG and the PrIOMiC network, and for the team/institute that you are visiting? (max 0.5 page)
- Part IV: Describe how your application fits within the PrIOMiC context. Is there a link with one or more PrIOMiC partners? (max 0.5 page)
- Part V: Budget. What budget is requested? Estimate the expected costs of your stay (include all cost items) and the expected duration of your stay. Describe any other parallel applications for mobility grants that have been or will be submitted elsewhere (if not applicable, describe why no parallel applications were submitted). If applicable: describe any additional funding (from the foreign host lab, your own lab, ...) that will be used for your stay. (max 0.5 page)
- Part VI: Date, signature by the applicant, and (short) invitation letter (or e-mail as attachment) by the principal investigator of the institution/team/lab that will host the applicant and supports the application.

2.5.2 Review

Mobility grant applications will be reviewed *ad hoc* by the (local) PrIOMiC committee and a decision will generally be provided within 2 weeks. Criteria that will be evaluated include the general quality of the application, the scope of the application (should fit with the themes of the PrIOMiC network, a link with the PrIOMiC partners), the expected outcome, the possible benefits for the PrIOMiC network (e.g. novel expertise that is expected to be implemented at CRIG/UGent and/or partner institutions), and the financial plan.

2.6 Reporting

At the latest 2 months after the visit, the granted researcher must to submit a report:

- Description of the results (max. 1 page) with clear indication if the stay was not/partially/completely successful and what advancement was achieved.
- Future perspectives - planned follow-up of the project, novel/strengthened collaborations, eventual plans for joined applications for funding, ... (max 0.5 page)
- Detailed overview and motivation of the expenses
- If applicable: a co-financing statement from the international partner lab/institution that hosted the researcher. This should include all estimated costs, co-funding and/or contribution that was invested by the host lab in the context of the research stay. This could include (not limitative): use of instruments/platforms, consumables, educational benefits (e.g. courses that were attended, ...), support by experts, feedback with tips and tricks for future recipients of this grant, ...