

Application guidelines

Table of Contents

1. About	3
2. Eligibility	3
Eligibility extensions criteria	5
3. Application process	5
Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools	6
3.1. Timeline 2026	6
3.2. Application forms	6
3.2.1. ONLINE FORM	6
Reference letters	7
3.2.2. OFFLINE FORM	7
Curriculum vitae	8
Publications	8
Your three best publications	9
Research plan	9
Networking	10
4. Selection procedure	10
4.1. Pre-selection	10
4.2. External evaluation by an EMBO Member	10
4.3. Panel interview	11
4.4. Final selection	11
5. Selection criteria	12

Gerlind Wallon, Programme Head
gerlind.wallon@embo.org

Leonor Ruivo, Senior Programme Officer
leonor.ruivo@embo.org

Tiffany Myers, Programme Assistant
tiffany.myers@embo.org

Application deadline: Annually on 1 May, 14:00 CEST

EMBC/EMBO Partners: Chile, India, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan

EMBO subject areas: Cell Cycle, Cell & Tissue Architecture, Cellular Metabolism, Chromatin & Transcription, Development, Differentiation & Death, Evolution & Ecology, Genome Stability & Dynamics, Genomic & Computational Biology, Immunology, Membranes & Transport, Microbiology, Virology & Pathogens, Molecular Medicine, Neuroscience, Plant Biology, Proteins & Biochemistry, RNA, Signal Transduction, Structural Biology & Biophysics, Systems Biology

Contact: global@embo.org

EMBO Global Investigator Network Committee 2026:

Laura Cancedda (IT)
Angela Falciatore (FR)
Alwin Köhler (AT)
Taija Mäkinen (FI)
Ilaria Malanchi (UK) (Chair)
Ruth Massey (IE)
Christoph Müller (DE)
Wim Vermeulen (NL)
Hedda Wardemann (DE)

1. About

The EMBO Global Investigator Network supports outstanding and creative group leaders producing innovative, impactful research in the Life Sciences and who, at the time of application, are within their first six years of setting up their research groups in Chile, India, Japan, Singapore, or Taiwan.

Global Investigators receive financial support for four years for training and networking activities, providing them and their research group with opportunities to form collaborations with scientists in their region and in Europe. They become part of an international network of more than 800 current and former EMBO Young Investigators, Global Investigators, and Installation Grantees. After these four years, they remain associated with the network and have access to some of its benefits.

Programme members are selected based on the originality of their research topic and/or methodological approaches and whose work will lead to major contributions in their field.

Applications to the EMBO Global Investigator Network are accepted annually via an online system. **Please check the eligibility criteria and carefully read the guidelines below before starting your application.**

Should you have any questions regarding your application, please contact the EMBO Global Activities office (global@embo.org).

2. Eligibility

Eligibility is limited to applicants who meet the following criteria:

- Have begun their independent group leader position between 1 January 2020 and 1 January 2025, ensuring at least one year and no more than six years of independence at the time of application.
 - There is no age limit for applicants to the EMBO Global Investigator Network.
 - [Extensions to the eligibility](#) period may apply in cases of exceptional circumstances or for applicants with children.
- Conduct life sciences research in Chile, India, Japan, Singapore, or Taiwan (see EMBO subject areas on [page 2](#)). International experience and networks are considered a plus.
 - Note on applicants based in Japan - current PIs or Co-PIs (as of 9 February 2026) of the following programmes of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) are eligible to apply: [ASPIRE](#), [FOREST](#) (創発的研究支援事業), [ERATO](#) (current Research Directors or Group Leaders), [CREST](#), [PRESTO](#) (さきがけ), [ACT-X](#).
- Have an excellent track record.
- Have secured sufficient funding to run their research group.

- Have published at least one senior-author research article in an international peer-reviewed journal based on independent work carried out in their research group. Review articles will not be considered.
- Have not been interviewed by the selection committee more than twice in previous application rounds.
- Be available to attend an online interview on 24 or 25 November 2026.

Please note:

- EMBO defines an independent researcher as someone who:
 - Conceives original research questions and leads research projects, providing guidance and intellectual direction;
 - Is able to apply for grants in their own name and report directly to funding agencies;
 - Submits manuscripts as the senior author ('corresponding author' is not considered equivalent to 'senior author');
 - Supervises graduate students and/or postdocs in their own research group.
- Senior-author research papers that are “in submission” by the application deadline will be accepted as fulfilling the eligibility criterion. However, by the date of the interview, applicants must have at least one senior-author research article with “accepted” status in an international peer-reviewed journal.
 - A senior author is a researcher who played a critical leadership role in the research project. Senior authorship signifies leadership and ultimate accountability for the research, reflecting a pivotal role in guiding and supporting the scientific work. This author is typically the group leader who conceptualized the original research idea; contributed towards securing funding for the project; supervised the research team; provided critical guidance and intellectual direction; and ensured the scientific and ethical standards of the work.
- Senior-author preprints accompanied by public, in-depth peer reviews may be accepted, provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - The preprint is posted on a recognised community preprint server (e.g. arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, Zenodo).
 - The peer reviews are publicly available online.
 - The peer reviews were obtained from an independent preprint peer-review service (e.g. Peer Community In, eLife, Review Commons).
 - The peer reviews provide an in-depth expert assessment of the scientific rigour, validity of the research, and its contribution to the field.
- Applicants to the EMBO Young Investigator Programme (YIP) may also apply to the EMBO Global Investigator Network in the same year, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. A separate application is required. Applying to both programmes in parallel does not affect an applicant's chances in either programme, as the selection committees and EMBO offices are independent. If an applicant is invited to interviews for both programmes, they are required to attend the Global Investigator Network interview only if they are not selected for the EMBO Young Investigator Programme (YIP).

Please note that applicants who are selected as EMBO Young Investigators are not eligible to apply to the Global Investigator Network in the future. However, EMBO Global Investigators may still apply to the YIP, provided they meet the YIP eligibility criteria.

Eligibility extensions criteria

The six-year independence eligibility window may be extended for applicants whose research careers have been affected by significant personal circumstances during the relevant period.

- For applicants who have given birth, the eligibility limit is automatically extended by one year per child.
- For applicants who did not give birth but took parental leave, the eligibility limit may be extended by:
 - the actual time taken off, or
 - three months per child, if during the parental leave period the applicant's partner worked at least 80% FTE (full-time equivalent),whichever is longer.
- For applicants who took extended sick leave (beyond the standard sick leave duration established by the host institute), the eligibility limit may be extended by the actual time taken off.
- For applicants who were required to undertake extended military service (beyond the standard time of service), the eligibility limit may be extended by the actual time taken.
- Special provisions may be made for clinical scientists.
- Other circumstances, such as substantial caring responsibilities for dependants, are considered exceptional and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- No extensions will be granted for voluntary career breaks.
- EMBO reserves the right to request appropriate documentation to verify the circumstances described above.

Please contact the EMBO Global Activities office (global@embo.org) for eligibility advice before applying if:

- You are unsure whether you meet the criteria for an independent group leader;
- Your transition to an independent group leader did not involve a formal change in job title;
- You require an extension of the eligibility period due to extraordinary personal circumstances.

3. Application process

Applications to the EMBO Global Investigator Network are accepted annually via an online system accessible via the “Apply” button on the [programme webpage](#).

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

EMBO acknowledges the value of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, as well as human feedback, in the preparation of funding applications. Applicants are fully and solely responsible for the originality and accuracy of their applications. EMBO will continue following the developments in generative AI and adapt this policy as required.

3.1. Timeline 2026

Deadline for applications	1 May, 14:00 CEST
Pre-selected applicants invited to interviews	By 15 July
Online panel interviews	24 & 25 November
Results announced to applicants	By 15 December

3.2. Application forms

Applicants are required to submit a **full application**, which consists of:

- An online form;
- An offline form (protected Microsoft Word document) to be filled out and uploaded as a PDF file via the EMBO online application system;
- 3 reference letters (uploaded by the referees).

3.2.1. ONLINE FORM

The online form is accessible via the “Apply” button on the [programme webpage](#).

In the online form, you will be asked to provide:

- Personal details
- Your ORCID
If you do not have one, please register at <https://orcid.org/register> and link your publications to ORCID
- Details of three referees
- A short description of your host institute
- Basic CV data
- A short summary of your ongoing research (100-400 words). This summary is important in the pre-selection phase and in identifying potential reviewers for your application.

- A list of your research group members and indicate their start and expected end dates. For group members with permanent or open-ended contracts, please specify a date far into the future.
- A list of all your current and former grants (**in euros**). Indicate “pending” for grants that have been applied for but not yet approved. For each grant, please specify the amount of funding allocated exclusively to your research group and the total grant amount, in euros, separated by “ / ” (e.g. 60,000 / 180,000). Apply the same format to grants for which you are a co-PI and where part of the funding is allocated to your research group.
- A PDF version of the completed offline form, adhering to the formatting guidelines.

Further instructions for completing the online form can be found on the online application system. Once you are satisfied that your application is final, please mark the ‘Form complete’ checkbox in the final section of the form and press the ‘Submit’ button.

Reference letters

References from three scientists with whom you have/had a professional relationship (preferably former supervisors) are part of the application documents and **must also be completed by the deadline**. They can be listed and “activated” *before* the rest of the application is completed. Once referees are activated, the system will automatically send them an email with a link to submit their letter of reference online. The application form will remain open to allow further editing.

We strongly recommend that you complete your referee contact details and activate them at least four weeks before the deadline to allow referees enough time to submit their letters.

Reference letters must be submitted via the online system, accessible via the link each referee will receive via email. Referees shall follow the steps explained in the form and paste their letter text in the provided field. Letters sent to EMBO by email as PDF or Word files will not be accepted.

It is your responsibility to check that the referees have received the request and completed the form. Please ask your referees to check they spam inbox.

The reference status is listed on the home page of the EMBO application system. If a referee has not received the reference request, please contact the EMBO Global Activities office (global@embo.org) so that a reminder can be sent.

Applications that do not have all three reference letters are considered incomplete and will not be sent to the selection committee for review.

3.2.2. OFFLINE FORM

Please download the offline form from the Downloads section of our [website](#) and fill it out following the instructions below:

- The form must be completed in *Helvetica or Arial font, size 10*.
- Margins and overall structure shall *not* be altered.
- Highlighting, adding table borders, and any other formatting is *not* acceptable.
- The form must be saved in PDF format for upload via the online system.

Curriculum vitae

- Provide your professional experience and education in *reverse chronological order*, i.e. with the most recent information first.
- Please include the start date of your independent laboratory. For re-applicants: please ensure that the date is congruent with the previous application.
- For each position, include the month and year for the start/end dates. These should correspond to the dates entered in 'Scientific CV & Current Position' section on the online form.
- In general, the selection committee values mobility but recognises that there may be specific reasons why an applicant has remained at / returned to a former supervisor's institute. If applicable, please explain in brief.
- The 'Other relevant information' section should include only pertinent CV information (gaps in your CV, involvement in scientific community work; recent awards) and cannot exceed five lines. Do not attach any extra documentation.

Publications

- Publications should be listed in a compact and consistent format, such as the one used in The EMBO Journal.
- Emphasise your name in bold and, where appropriate, italicise members of your own independent research group.

Example:

Thiru A, Nietlispach D, Mott HR, Okuwaki M, Lyon D, Nielsen PR, Hirshberg M, Verreault A, Murzina NV, Laue ED. Structural basis of HP1/PXVXL motif peptide interactions and HP1 localisation to heterochromatin. *EMBO J.* (2004) 23: 489-499

- If needed, use the following symbols to indicate authorship status:
 - * - corresponding author
 - # - co-first/co-last author
 - § - senior author, if not listed as last author
- Please note that 'corresponding author' is not considered equivalent to 'senior author' (see the notes in the [eligibility criteria](#) section).
- EMBO is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and does not use journal-based metrics such as impact factor during the assessment process. Do not include these metrics in your publications list.
- List your published or in-press primary research articles under each category shown as a heading in the offline form:

'Manuscripts in submission' section:

- List manuscripts submitted to peer-reviewed journals or to preprint services that offer peer review.
- Indicate whether the work arises from your independent research group or from previous work.
- If you are not the corresponding or senior author, specify your contribution to each publication (see the notes in the [Eligibility criteria](#) section).

‘Publications arising from...’ sections:

- List a selection of your best five, and no more than five, articles per section:
 - From your independent laboratory
 - From postdoctoral work
 - From PhD work

‘Other publications’ section:

- List up to five reviews, commentary or opinion pieces, book chapters, etc.
- If a publication from your independent group, or a manuscript in submission, is co-authored by your former supervisor, briefly explain your role and your former supervisor’s role and contribution to the study.
- Underline your three best publications (see below).

Your three best publications

Provide details of your three best publications. For each publication, include a short summary and explain why you selected it, addressing the following points:

- A summary of the main findings;
- the significance of the study; and
- your contribution to each publication

(max. 1000 characters including spaces).

Research plan

Describe the research topics and future directions of your research group in no more than three pages (excluding the bibliography). Include the following information:

- Background and state-of-the-art, and how your research goes beyond current knowledge.
- Research question(s)/objectives and the knowledge gap your research aims to fill. The research objectives should be clearly defined and not overly broad. Applications that describe excessively broad topics are generally not selected.
- Experimental plan to address the research question(s). Be specific, clear, and concise.
- Preliminary work and key achievements generated by you and/or your research group.
- Novelty and feasibility of the proposed research, including why the scientific question is relevant and unique, and any potential limitations.
- Future directions, including planned work, the approaches you intend to follow, and the potential impact of the research.

Where appropriate, your proposal may include images to ensure the selection committee has sufficient information and data to assess the quality of your project(s) and research vision. Figures are included in the page count. Figures can be added by copy-paste or by dragging a JPG or PNG file into the text if the “insert” menu is not available.

Please note that the scientific expertise of the committee evaluating your application is diverse, and your proposal should therefore be written in a way that is accessible to a broad scientific audience.

Do not copy and paste the research summary provided in the online application form or the abstract of one of your publications.

Networking

The EMBO Global Investigator Network provides programme members with a grant to support training and networking activities, fostering opportunities to establish new collaborations with scientists in their region and in Europe.

In this section, describe how participation in the programme would benefit you, your career, and your research group members.

4. Selection procedure

All incoming applications are screened by the EMBO Global Activities office to ensure that they are complete and the eligibility requirements are met. Applicants will receive a confirmation email within 3–5 working days of submission. Applicants who are considered ineligible will be given 3 business days to appeal or provide more information about their application.

4.1. Pre-selection

Eligible applications undergo a research integrity check and are sent to the selection committee for screening. Each application is independently evaluated by four committee members based on the [selection criteria](#). The EMBO Global Investigator Network Committee Guidelines and details on the pre-selection procedure are available on the [programme website](#).

The committee pre-selects approximately 20 applicants, who are invited to present their research in an online interview. All applicants are informed of the outcome of their application by email.

4.2. External evaluation by an EMBO Member

Each pre-selected application is sent for confidential review to an EMBO Member with expertise in the applicant's research area, providing an additional independent assessment for the selection committee. Applicants are given the opportunity in advance to exclude specific EMBO Members from acting as reviewers in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The EMBO Member submits a written review to the EMBO Office. This assessment focuses on the applicant's standing in the field and the feasibility of the proposed research. The reports are shared with the selection committee members and are taken into account during the evaluation process.

4.3. Panel interview

Pre-selected applicants are interviewed individually by the EMBO Global Investigator Network Committee in a panel interview format. The interviews are conducted in a hybrid format: committee members are present on site, while candidates participate remotely via Zoom.

Interviews are conducted in parallel by two sub-panels, each consisting of five members of the selection committee (a list of current committee members can be found on [page 2](#) of this guide).

Pre-selected applicants are required to prepare a 10-minute presentation summarising their current projects and future research directions. Detailed instructions and tips on preparing the presentation will be provided by the EMBO Global Activities Office approximately two months before the interview.

The presentation is followed by a 10-minute discussion with the committee.

Candidates are required to submit a backup video recording of their presentation in advance. In the event of technical difficulties during the interview, the recording will be shared with the interview panel, and candidates may be asked to dial in by phone to complete the question-and-answer session.

4.4. Final selection

A final decision is made after the interviews by the full selection committee. Each year, up to 10 EMBO Global Investigators are selected.

All candidates are notified of the outcome of their application by email within one week of the interview.

In case of rejection, interviewed candidates receive feedback from the committee on their written application and interview performance.

Please do not contact committee members directly, as this may lead to your application being excluded from the review process. Any requests should be addressed to the EMBO Global Activities Office (global@embo.org).

5. Selection criteria

EMBO seeks outstanding and highly competitive independent researchers who have recently established their research groups in Chile, India, Japan, Singapore, or Taiwan and who actively contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

While a geographically balanced cohort of network members is desirable, selection is primarily based on the strength, originality, and competitiveness of the applicant and their research. The selection committee looks for researchers with well-defined, high-quality research projects and an innovative, forward-looking vision with the potential to lead to significant breakthroughs in their field.

The following aspects of each application are evaluated in all phases of the selection process:

TRACK RECORD

Criteria for evaluating the track record:

- Scientific achievements and professional development to date: Are these achievements an indication that the applicant is an outstanding scientist?
- Scientific breadth and depth: Does the candidate have a thorough understanding of their field and the implications of their research beyond; Has the applicant shown the ability to tackle new and important problems?
- International experience and networks are considered an asset: Has the candidate carried out research abroad or, alternatively, established diverse collaborations?

RESEARCH

Criteria for evaluating the research:

- Hypothesis-driven project plan: Does the proposed research stand on a solid, hypothesis-driven plan while remaining ambitious in the field?
- Ambition: Is the proposed research original and likely to lead to novel contributions in the field?
- Potential for leadership: Does the applicant have the potential to become a future leader in their field, being recognized for their scientific contributions?

GROUP AND RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Criteria for evaluating the group and research environment:

- Group size and funding sources: Are the number and the expertise of research group members and the available funds sufficient to undertake the described research?
- Host institute: Is the research environment supportive of the candidate's research, e.g. equipment, funding, relevant colleagues, etc?

INDEPENDENCE

Criteria for evaluating the candidate's independence:

- Operational independence:
 - Is the candidate financially independent, able to apply for grants in their own name, and report directly to funding agencies?
 - Is the candidate able to submit manuscripts as senior author (“corresponding author” is not necessarily considered equivalent to “senior author”).
 - Is the candidate responsible for supervising graduate students and/or postdocs in their own research group?
- Intellectual independence:
 - Is the candidate conceiving and independently pursuing their own research ideas?
 - Does a former supervisor and/or institute/department head still influence the candidate's current research?

INTERVIEW

Criteria for evaluating the candidate's response to questions:

- Maturity:
 - Does the candidate have a solid understanding of the background, being able to place their work within a broader context?
 - Does the candidate address the questions appropriately, showing strategic thinking?
- Clarity of communication:
 - Does the candidate present their research project in a clear and logical manner?
 - Does the candidate communicate clearly how their discoveries will shed light on other important questions in biology?