

Committee guidelines

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Installation Grant application deadlines 2025:

Applications for an Installation Grant: 15 April 2025, 12:00 CEST

Referee submission of reference letters: 15 April 2025, 12:00 CEST

Interview in a hybrid format: the committee is on-site in Heidelberg, Germany and interviewees are presenting online. Date: 28-29 October 2025

Strategic Installation Grant (SDIG) 2025 participating EMBC Member states: Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal and Türkiye

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: yip@embo.org

EMBO IG Committee 2025:

Andrew Carter (UK, chair)

Pedro Beltrao (CH)

Melanie Blokesch (CH)

Karin de Visser (NL)

Matteo Iannaccone (IT)

Andreas Ladurner (DE)

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Miguel Torres (ES)

Dolf Weijers (NL)

1. EMBO Installation Grants (IG)

The EMBO Installation Grants were launched in 2006 as a special project of EMBC by a subset of its member states. These grants help scientists relocate to participating member states, set up their labs and establish a reputation in the European scientific community. The scheme is funded entirely by the participating EMBC Member States, and successful applicants receive an annual award of 50,000 euros for three to five years. Based on an applicant's third-year report, an extension of up to two years can be granted. Selection and management of these grants are carried out under the umbrella of the EMBO Young Investigator Network.

In 2025, applications will be accepted from applicants setting up labs in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal and Türkiye. Installation Grantees are eligible for all the benefits of the Young Investigator Programme, except for the EMBO YIP lecture.

The EMBO Installation Grants scheme offers:

- An annual meeting and a biennial training week.
- Lab management training: Fee waived for programme members attending EMBO Lab Leadership courses.
- Funds to support networking among EMBO Young Investigators and other scientists.
- EMBO mentorship: An EMBO Member chosen by the Young Investigator serves as their mentor. EMBO provides funds towards an annual visit.
- PhD course for the students of the EMBO Young Investigators.
- Access to the EMBL core facilities.
- A financial award of 15,000 euros during the second year.
- Possibility to apply for small grants of up to 10,000 euros.
- Childcare support funds.

2. The EMBO Installation Grants Committee

2.0. Terms of reference

EMBO committees act in an advisory role to the EMBO Council. The authority to recommend candidates for funding to the Strategic Installation Grant (SDIG) Board has been delegated by the EMBO Council to the EMBO Installation Grants Committee.

The EMBO Installation Grants Committee is comprised of EMBO Members with different areas of scientific expertise. Committee members normally serve a four-year term. The Installation Grants Committee suggests replacements for outgoing committee members. The suggested names are submitted to the EMBO Council for appointment. New committee members are invited by the EMBO YIN Office.

The committee selects a chair (normally a current member of the committee with some experience on the committee) and the proposed name is brought to EMBO Council for appointment. The chair serves a term of three years in addition to the number of years they have already served on the committee. When a chair finishes their term, the committee members will be asked by written procedure to propose a new chairperson. Only proposals received in writing prior to the committee meeting can be voted upon.

The Installation Grants Committee meets once per year to interview and rank the top candidates and make the final recommendation to the SDIG Board. All proposals are confidential until approved by the SDIG Board and announced publicly.

The Installation Grants Committee also reviews the third-year reports required to continue the grant to five years and makes recommendations to the SDIG Board.

All travel and accommodation expenses incurred by committee members attending committee meetings are covered by EMBO.

2.1. Tasks of the EMBO Installation Grants Committee

The EMBO Installation Grants Committee carries out the selection of the Installation Grantees.

Annually, EMBO receives around 60 applications for the EMBO Installation Grants. Each committee member is tasked with reviewing 14 to 15 Installation Grants applications. Approximately 20 selected candidates will receive invitations to an interview, with each committee member serving as the primary reviewer for 2-3 interviewees. Final decisions regarding applicant ranking are reached during discussions at the conclusion of the interview day.

Following the interviews, the committee submits a ranking of Installation Grant applicants to the EMBO SDIG Board. The SDIG Board determines the number of scientists to be awarded grants based on the available budget. Additionally, the committee provides recommendations regarding the continuation or termination of existing Installation Grants after reviewing their third-year reports.

Furthermore, the committee receives an annual report, both written and oral, summarizing the programme's activities.

2.2. EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy

Committee members are required to disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest before participating in the evaluation process. Please take note of the [EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy](#) in [Annex I](#). The following situations are examples of high-level conflicts of interest that would exclude* Installation Grants Committee members from the review process:

Situation	Level of conflict	Consequence
Being an advisor of the applicant for this application	High	Excluded from review process*
Being an active collaborator with the applicant or having collaborated during the previous five years	High	Excluded from review process*
Being a partner of the applicant	High	Excluded from review process*
Having a PhD or postdoctoral/training relationship with the applicant now or during the previous five years	High	Excluded from review process*
Working in same institution/university	High	Excluded from review process*
Having a financial interest in the application	High	Excluded from review process*

**Cannot be assigned as a reviewer/primary interviewer of the proposal; cannot participate in the discussions related to that specific application, i.e. needs to leave the room while the discussion takes place and cannot be present during the interview. For any questions about a potential conflict of interest, please contact the EMBO YIN Office (yip@embo.org).*

2.3. Code of Conduct

Committee members are expected to comply with the [EMBO Code of Conduct](#) provided in [Annex II](#) before, during, and after the selection meeting.

2.3.1. Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality is expected regarding all applications. Information received during the review process and the committee meeting should not be relayed to third parties. Please see [Annex II, Code of Conduct for EMBO Committees](#), for further details.

2.3.2. Data protection

Committee members are expected to destroy any data provided to them for the purpose of a selection (application and nomination files, including references, etc.) within six months after the conclusion of the respective selection procedure. Please see [Annex II. Code of Conduct for EMBO Committees](#), for further details.

2.3.3. Artificial Intelligence

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. The EMBO Installation Grants selection procedure

3.0. Overview

Application and selection to the EMBO Installation Grant scheme is a two-step process.

In the first step, applicants submit a short application consisting of their CV, a list of publications, a short summary of their research vision, a budget summary of the planned project and three letters of reference. Using the eligibility criteria in 3.1.1., all applications are screened by the EMBO YIN Office to check for conflicts of interest, and to ensure that eligibility requirements are met. The committee preselects the top 20 eligible candidates.

In the second step, the selected candidates are invited to attend an online interview with the committee. The full application is also sent to an EMBO Member who is an expert in the research area of the applicant for peer review, to provide an additional view to the committee.

KEY DATES 2025 (Bold text indicates a deadline for committee members)

15 April	Deadline for IG application submission
30 April	IG application files are sent to the committee for pre-screening
30 May	Deadline for votes from the committee
Early October	Receipt of complete interview files by committee members
28 November (late afternoon)	Committee meeting (in-person)
29 November	IG interviews

3.0.1. Eligibility Criteria checked by the EMBO Office

- Applicants must be negotiating a full-time group leader position at an institute/university in Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, Montenegro or Türkiye by the date of application (no earlier than 15.04.2023 for the call 2025)
- Or have established a laboratory in one of these countries in the last two years.
- Applicants must be able to attend an online interview on 29 October 2025.
- Applicants must be doing research in any of the [EMBO subject areas](#).
- In the four years prior to their application (since 2021 for the call 2025), applicants should have spent at least two consecutive years outside the country in which they are planning to establish their laboratory.
- Applicants should have received their PhD less than nine years prior to the year of application (i.e. in 2016 for the call 2025).
- For female candidates with children, the eligibility limits are automatically extended by one year per child of any age. The actual time taken as maternity leave (at any point during the career) should only be notified to the office if it is more than one year per child.
- For male applicants with children, the eligibility limits can be extended by the actual time taken off as paternity leave or – if their partner is working at least 80% FTE (full-time equivalent) – 3 months per child, whichever is longer.
- Illness and extended military service are considered exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Special provisions may also be made for clinical scientists. If you feel your circumstances warrant an extension of the eligibility periods, please contact the EMBO Young Investigator Programme Office (yip@embo.org) for advice before applying.
- Candidates can apply multiple times, but only once more after having been interviewed (ie. Candidates can only attend two interviews).

3.0.2. Application forms

Application for an Installation Grant consists of two separate applications; one submitted by the researcher, and another submitted by the receiving institute. The application files are electronically available in PDF format.

The researcher's application includes:

- **Summary form** with:
 - A short summary of the research plan
 - A short version of the CV
 - Details of three scientists providing letters of reference
 - Details of funding available to the laboratory.
- **Application form** with
 - A short description of previous research carried out by the candidate
 - A CV and a list of publications
 - Details of the applicant's two best papers.
- A short description of the host institute's facilities relevant to the candidate's research.
- A breakdown of how the potential budget will be used.
- A three-page description of the research project.
- Three letters of reference.

The **institute's application form** includes a description of:

- The offer that is being made to the applicant signed by the Head of Department (i.e. staff, laboratory space, etc.)
- The institute's infrastructure
- Available equipment
- Relevant colleagues (to show that other scientists at the institute work in areas relevant to the applicant's research)
- The duties of the applicant

3.1. First step of the evaluation procedure: Pre-screening

Candidates applying for the EMBO Installation Grants are first pre-screened by the committee to identify the strongest applications, which allows more time to identify the top scientists to be invited for an interview. The aim of the pre-screen procedure is to select about 20 candidates who should be interviewed.

Committee members are sent the list of applicants and are asked to declare any perceived or real conflicts of interest regarding any of the candidates (see Annex I, [EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy](#), for further details).

Each member of the pre-screen committee receives about 15 applications. Each application is scored by three committee members.

The pre-screen committee consists of current committee members. The 2025 pre-screen committee members are Pedro Beltrao, Melanie Blokesch, Andrew Carter, Karin de Visser, Matteo Iannaccone, Andreas Ladurner, Giampietro Schiavo, Katja Sträßer, Miguel Torres, and Dolf Weijers.

3.1.1. Evaluation criteria for the pre-screening

The following aspects of each application should be evaluated:

TRACK RECORD

Criteria for evaluating the track record:

- Outstanding quality: Are the publications to date an indication that this is an outstanding scientist?
- Scientific breadth: Has the applicant shown a willingness to change research areas or the ability to tackle new and important problems?

RESEARCH

Criteria for evaluating the research:

- Ambition: Is the proposed research ambitious and likely to lead to novel contributions in the field?

3.1.2. Scoring system

Applications should be graded using the evaluation criteria as follows:

- A: Outstanding. A highly mature scientist; clear signs of original thinking and vision; clear evidence for leadership within their specific field; a demonstrable leader in their specific and related fields, without no doubt should be invited to the interview;
- B: Very good. Shows evidence for emerging maturity and leadership; shows some evidence for original thinking, a potential candidate for an interview;
- C: Average. Shows insufficient scientific maturity, vision and original thinking not well developed not a strong enough for an interview;
- D: Non-competitive. Lack of scientific maturity, lack of vision and original thinking, weak candidate.

Scores are expected to be returned to the EMBO YIN Office by 30 May 2025.

Based on the pre-screen scores, and in consultation with the committee chair, the EMBO YIN Office draws up a list of the approximately 20 candidates who will be invited to the interview.

Applicants are informed of the results of the pre-screen by mid-June.

3.2. Second step of the evaluation procedure: External assessment and interviews by the IG Committee

3.2.1. External assessment

The full applications of the pre-selected candidates are sent to an EMBO Member with expertise in the applicant's area of research to provide a written confidential assessment. This assessment focuses on the candidates' **standing in the field and the feasibility of their proposed work**. Both EMBO Members and external reviewers are asked to declare any conflict of interest. Candidates can exclude up to three specific EMBO Members from the process.

3.2.2. Assignment to committee members

The committee is divided into two sub-committees. Each sub-committee interviews around 10 candidates. Ahead of the meeting, the EMBO YIN Office sends each sub-committee a list of candidates to interview. Conflicts of interest regarding particular candidates should be declared prior to the final assignments (see Annex I, [EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy](#), for further details). Committee members receive the full applications with the reviewer's reports. Each committee member is assigned as a primary interviewer to two or three applicants and should score the applications assigned to them (the scores are not communicated with the EMBO YIN Office). As primary interviewers, they will lead the discussion with and on the candidate, i.e., starting and moderating the questions, making sure that questions regarding the independence of the candidate, and other issues, are satisfactorily explored during the interview.

3.2.3. Committee meeting and IG interviews

The IG committee meeting takes place on the afternoon before the day of the interviews (28 October 2025).

The full day of 29 October is dedicated to the interviews of the applicants to the EMBO Installation Grants. The interviews are taking place in a hybrid format, with the committee members present on-site, and candidates present remotely.

Interviews are held by two sub-committees in parallel. Each candidate has a 30-minute time slot: 10 minutes to present their work followed by 10 minutes for questions. The remaining 10 minutes are reserved for the committee to discuss the application and provide a preliminary ranking in comparison to other candidates interviewed that day.

3.2.4. Evaluation criteria

The following aspects of each application should be evaluated:

TRACK RECORD

Criteria for evaluating the track record

- Scientific achievements and professional development to date: Are they an indication that this is an outstanding scientist?
- Scientific breadth: Has the applicant shown a willingness to change research area or the ability to tackle new and important problems?

RESEARCH

Criteria for evaluating the research

- Ambition: Is the proposed research ambitious and likely to lead to novel contributions in the field?

GROUP AND RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Criteria for evaluating the group and host research environment

- Group size and funding sources: Are the number and the expertise of laboratory members and the available funds sufficient to undertake the described research?
- Host institute: Is the research environment conducive to competitive research?

INDEPENDENCE

Criteria for evaluating the candidate's independence

Operational independence:

- Is the candidate financially independent? Is the candidate able to apply for grants in their own name and report directly to funding agencies?
- Is the candidate able to submit manuscripts as the last author ("corresponding author" is not necessarily considered equivalent to "last author")?
- Is the candidate responsible for supervising graduate students and/or postdocs in their own lab?

Intellectual independence:

- What is the influence of former supervisors and institute/department heads on the candidate's current research?

OFFER BY THE HOST INSTITUTE

Committee members should bear in mind that the application of the host institute also is important: The host institute must offer good support and provide an environment where the candidate can thrive. There have been cases where candidates have not been awarded because the offer from the host institute was perceived as not adequate.

Criteria for evaluating the host institute's offer

- Does the host institute provide a good environment for the applicant, e.g.:
 - sufficient lab space,
 - basic lab equipment,
 - access to central facilities,
 - availability of funding for students/technicians/postdoctoral researchers,
 - colleagues relevant to the applicant's area of research, etc.
- What are the teaching requirements and other responsibilities of the applicant? Is the time that can be dedicated to research sufficient to carry out the proposed project?

Committee members should also bear in mind that EMBO is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), and as such does not use publication metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor

during the assessment process (see <https://sfdora.org> for further details). Applicants are asked NOT to include publication-based metrics in their publication list.

3.2.5. Final decision

At the end of the day, the committee convenes to compare and discuss all the rankings, both within each country and for the overall ranking. Following the ranking decision, an additional 1.5 hours is allocated for providing feedback to all candidates. This feedback, along with anonymized external reviewers' reports, is sent to the candidates by the EMBO YIN Office, as well as to the SDIG Board Members.

The final ranking is then forwarded to the Strategic Development Installation Grants (SDIG) Board by the EMBO YIN Office. Comprised of delegates from EMBC Member States participating in the Installation Grant scheme, the Board meets at the end of November, prior to the EMBC meeting. Their objective is to determine the number of candidates eligible for a grant based on the available budget in each participating member state. Subsequently, the Board informs EMBO of the number of candidates who will receive a grant to relocate to their respective countries. Although the Board cannot alter the ranking provided by the committee, it retains the authority to decide on the allocation of funding to any number of candidates recommended for support.

4. Evaluation of Installation Grant extensions

Installation Grants are awarded for a period of five years, subject to a positive review in the third year. In the spring of the third year, grantees are asked to submit **a short scientific report** and to ask their **institute to comment on their progress**.

Each report is assigned to a committee member based on their area of expertise, who then evaluates the grantee's progress. These individual assessments are subsequently circulated to the entire committee along with the report provided by the grantee and their institute. At the committee meeting, the members deliberate on the progress of the grantees and make a recommendation regarding their continuation for an additional two years.

The committee's recommendation of either "recommended for further funding" or "not recommended for further funding" is conveyed to the Strategic Development Installation Grants Board and is binding. Grantees who receive a positive evaluation will receive funding for another two years.

5. Annex I: EMBO Conflict of Interest Policy

EMBO is supported by several expert committees in the evaluation of applications or nominations submitted to any of its programmes and activities. The task of the evaluator is to ensure the confidential, fair and equitable peer review of the submissions. In this capacity, the evaluator shall work independently and not represent any organization. The evaluator commits themselves to strict confidentiality and impartiality for this task and shall not discuss the proposal with anyone not directly involved with the peer review of the candidate/proposal.

Persons who are involved in the evaluation of applications or nominations submitted to any of the EMBO programmes and activities shall declare to the EMBO Office any conflict of interest in relation to any candidate or proposal prior to their involvement in an evaluation. Persons with a conflict of interest will be exempt from the review, evaluation and decision-making process for the evaluation in question.

Conflicts of interest include:

- Having a personal relationship with the candidate or proposer, or, in the case of a fellowship applicant, with the future supervisor/host.
- Having supervised the candidate for a PhD degree or as a postdoctoral researcher.
- Having a significant academic relationship with the candidate, or in the case of a fellowship applicant, with the future supervisor/host; this includes having jointly published a research paper in the last five years.
- Being a member of the candidate's department or institution.
- Having a current or planned close scientific cooperation.
- Having commercial/financial interests in relation to the candidate/proposal.
- Having been involved in the preparation of the proposal.
- Benefitting directly or indirectly from the acceptance or rejection of the proposal/candidate (i.e. direct competition).
- Being in any other situation that could cast doubt on the evaluator's ability to evaluate the proposal impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party.

6. Annex II: Code of Conduct for EMBO Committees

EMBO is committed to ethical and responsible decision-making, responsible conduct of research and the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). These principles inform the work of our committees. The guidelines below have been prepared to foster good practice and provide guidance to committee members in exercising their duties.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- **Accountability.** As a committee member, you are required to participate in committee activities in a lawful, ethical and justifiable manner
- **Confidentiality.** All committee-related information and documentation is strictly confidential unless otherwise declared. Confidentiality extends beyond the meeting. As a committee member, please do not speak on behalf of EMBO or the committee about the details or the outcome of selection processes, or comment personally on any decisions made. In particular, please do not divulge any such information to applicants, proposers, or other interested parties.
- **Impartiality and Conflicts of Interest (COI).** As a committee member, you must act in an impartial manner and declare any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest as soon as you become aware of them. Please refer to the EMBO COI policy, which is provided to you with the committee guidelines. The committee guidelines also give examples of COI that may occur specifically with respect to the work of your committee.
- **Data protection.** As a committee member, you will be privy to personal information about candidates and nominees. Please be aware of the sensitive character of the data you receive and ensure that you protect them appropriately. You must destroy any personal data provided to you for the purpose of a selection (application and nomination files, including references etc.) within six months after the conclusion of the respective selection procedure.
- **Decision making.** The EMBO Council has delegated decision-making authority to some committees to make decisions on applications or proposals. Any strategic decisions and substantial rule changes remain the prerogative only of the EMBO Council.

PREPARATION

- **Familiarise yourself with your committee's terms of reference.** Committee terms of reference are described in the committee guidelines. If you have any questions about these, please contact the committee chair or the responsible officer at EMBO.
- **Read the documentation and prepare for decisions** (agenda, minutes from the previous meeting, applications etc.) prior to the meeting. Please reserve sufficient time e.g. to score candidates or nominees. If it is your first time on the committee this may take longer than you think. Please ask current or former committee members for advice if in doubt.
- **Submit documentation to the EMBO Office in time.** Any preparatory documentation (e.g. candidate scores) must reach EMBO in time for the office to assemble the necessary tables for discussion and decision at the committee meeting.

DURING THE MEETING

- **Attendance.** Committee members should ensure their presence at meetings and attend for the entire duration of the meeting. If it is absolutely necessary to leave early or arrive late please advise the committee chair and the EMBO office, so that agenda items that need your particular input can be moved if possible.
- **No social media posts from the committee meeting.** Please do not divulge information from the meeting, even if it appears innocuous or non-confidential. It is fine to write that you will be attending or did attend, but not about what is being discussed; this is strictly confidential committee business. The EMBO administration may make recordings for the purpose of documentation (e.g. minutes), with the explicit consent of all attendees.
- **Concentrate on the task at hand.** Please do not engage in unrelated work or electronic communication during the meeting and turn off your mobile phone.
- Breaks during which you can make phone calls and check emails will be scheduled.
- Be brief and to the point.
- **Express your opinion.** You have been recruited to the committee for your expertise and competence. Your opinion is valued, and, in accordance with good scientific practice, should be reasoned.
- **Vote based on your expertise and conclusions.** You are recruited as an individual, not as a representative of a certain group. You may of course bring to the committee the interests or views that you perceive as being held by your community (based on gender, research field, nationality, etc.), but your decisions should be based on the conclusions you have drawn from the information you have been presented with. Please do not take advantage of your membership in the committee for the benefit of a particular group.
- **Consider other committee members' views but challenge the consensus if necessary.** If you feel that the consensus is based on incomplete or biased views or information, please voice your reservations. Keep in mind that the consensus reached should be in the best interest of the life science community.
- **Respect the selection guidelines and criteria.** Make decisions based on the criteria you are supposed to evaluate and adhere to the principles outlined in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), chief among them making assessments based on scientific content rather than publication metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor (JIF). To learn more, visit the [DORA website](#).

- **Recognize (unconscious) biases.** We all have them and need to make a conscious effort to overcome them. As a committee member, please be aware that unconscious biases may affect decision-making (including your own) and please work to avoid them.

AFTER THE MEETING

- **Feel free to suggest improvements** to the way the committee meeting is being run or conducted. Address either the chair or the officer or both if appropriate with your suggestions and comments. Your suggestions may become an agenda item if raised in time prior to the meeting.