CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: EMBO LEADERSHIP COURSES FOR EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS AND GROUP LEADERS AT IBB PAS

Project Title: "The 3xW framework: Exchange, Cooperation, and Joint Research Tasks for enhancing the potential of early-career plant biologists – Strategic Partnership Programme"
Agreement Number: BPI/PST/2024/1/00086/KW/00001
Financed by: Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA)

§ 1 Introductory Information

1. This call defines the rules for recruitment and financial support for the **EMBO Lab Leadership for Postdocs /EMBO Lab Leadership for Group Leaders** under the Project: "The 3xW framework: Exchange, Cooperation, and Joint Research Tasks for enhancing the potential of early-career plant biologists – Strategic Partnership Programme" (hereinafter referred to as the Project).
2. The Project is implemented by the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBB PAS) based on Agreement No. BPI/PST/2024/1/00086/KW/00001 concluded with the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA).
3. The programme is financed by NAWA.

§ 2 Supported Activities and Implementation Period

1. The Project is implemented from September 1, 2025, to November 30, 2027. All mobility activities must be completed by November 30, 2027.
2. Supported activities include up to **8 individual** grants for participation in EMBO Lab Leadership for Postdocs /Group Leaders
3. It is the participant's sole responsibility to obtain formal confirmation of participation/acceptance directly from the course organiser.

§ 3 Eligibility Criteria (Formal Requirements – Pass/Fail)

Applications will proceed to the merit evaluation stage only upon fulfilling all of the following formal eligibility criteria (evaluated on a 0/1 Pass/Fail basis):

- **Employment Status:** Active employment at IBB PAS under an employment contract in a research position (*stanowisko naukowe*).

- **Academic Age (Early-Career Status):** No more than 12 years have elapsed since the award of the PhD degree (excluding documented career breaks, e.g., parental or health leaves).
- **Leader Status (PI):** The applicant currently serves as a Principal Investigator (PI) / Research Group Leader OR is in the process of establishing a new research group (with documented prospects of its formal establishment within a maximum of 12 months from the application date).
- **Institutional Knowledge Dissemination Commitment:** Signing a formal declaration agreeing to conduct a full-scope seminar or workshop on research management and leadership for IBB PAS scientific staff and PhD students - group of minimum 5 persons (within 3 months of completing the EMBO course).
- **Continuity of Status:** Participants must maintain their employment status at IBB PAS throughout the application, mobility, and reporting periods.

§ 4 Recruitment Procedure and Reserve List

1. Recruitment is conducted through an open, continuous call, with monthly evaluation cycles until all available course grants are allocated.
2. Applications must be submitted electronically in English using the official Application Form (Appendix No. 1) via the dedicated online link [electronic application form] no later than **31 January 2027**.
3. The Recruitment Committee convenes on the first Monday of each month to evaluate submitted applications. In justified cases, the Committee may meet more frequently to ensure Project continuity.
4. Based on the evaluation scores, the Committee establishes a Main Ranking List and a Reserve List.
5. Selected candidates must submit the necessary personal data to conclude the Grant Agreement using the Participant Data Form (Appendix No. 4) sent as an encrypted file to: 3xw@ibb.waw.pl and sign the agreement prior to receiving payment for the course.
6. **14-Day Acceptance Rule:** Candidates selected for funding must present final, official confirmation of acceptance from the EMBO course organiser within 14 calendar days of receiving recruitment results (and no later than 14 days before the course start date). Failure to provide this confirmation within the 14-day timeframe will result in the forfeiture of the grant allocation, which will then be awarded to the next highest-ranked candidate on the Reserve List.
7. Candidates have the right to appeal a negative recruitment decision to the IBB PAS Director for Scientific Affairs within 7 calendar days of receiving the results. The Director's decision is final.

§ 5 Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Applications passing formal verification are evaluated by the Recruitment Committee on a 100-point scale based on the following merit criteria:

Evaluation Criterion	Sub-criteria / Key Aspects	Max Points
1. Team Development & Mentoring	**Team Building and Dynamics:** Achievements of existing PIs in building/expanding groups OR maturity, feasibility, and recruitment plans for new groups (within 12 months).	25 pts
	Supervision and Mentoring: Number of supervised PhD students/early-career researchers and active support in preparing grant applications (e.g., PRELUDIUM, fellowships).	25 pts
2. International Cooperation & Institutional Visibility	**International Dimension of Research:** Participation in or management of international research projects (e.g., Horizon Europe, MSCA, EMBO, JPND, bilateral grants including bilateral NCN grants).	10 pts
	Internationalisation & IBB Promotion: Collaboration with foreign partners (joint high-impact publications, exchanges) and promoting IBB PAS (invited lectures, network membership).	15 pts
3. Alignment with Management Challenges	**Career Stage & Need Justification:** Identification of current leadership/management challenges and justification of why the EMBO course is essential at this specific career stage.	25 pts

Evaluation Criterion	Sub-criteria / Key Aspects	Max Points
TOTAL MAXIMUM SCORE		**100 pts**

Qualification Threshold and Tie-Breaking Rules

- **Minimum Threshold:** Only applications scoring at least **60 points** out of 100 are eligible for funding.
- **Tie-Breaking Rule:** In the event of equal total scores among applicants, priority will be given to the candidate with the higher score in Criterion 1 (*Team Development and Mentoring*). If scores remain equal, the score in Criterion 3 (*Alignment with Management Challenges*) shall decide, followed by the chronological order of application submission.

§ 6 Financial Rules and Funding Agreement

1. Financial support requires the execution of a Grant Agreement (template in Appendix No. 2) and submission of the Participant Data Form (Appendix No. 4).
2. Financial support comprises:
    - A fixed lump sum for travel and subsistence costs calculated in accordance with the rates specified in Appendix No. 3.
    - Direct coverage/reimbursement of the EMBO course registration fee by IBB PAS based on an invoice issued to IBB PAS, up to the limit defined in the call announcement.
3. The participant is entitled solely to the fixed lump-sum amount; costs exceeding this amount shall not be reimbursed by IBB PAS nor constitute grounds for increasing co-financing.
4. **Payment Schedule:**
    - **First instalment (80% of lump sum):** Paid as an advance upon signing the Grant Agreement and fulfilling initial formal obligations.
    - **Second instalment (20% of lump sum):** Paid after final settlement and formal approval of the Mobility Report.
5. All lump sum payments shall be executed in PLN.

§ 7 Obligations, Settlement, and Dissemination

1. Within 14 calendar days of completing the mobility, the participant is required to submit:

    - A Mobility Report (template in Appendix No. 5).
    - An evaluation questionnaire.
    - Certificate of course completion.
2. Within 3 months of course completion, the participant must fulfil the obligation made under § 3 by conducting a dedicated leadership workshop or seminar for IBB PAS research staff and PhD students.
3. The Mobility Report is subject to formal and merit evaluation by the Project Manager or designated experts.
4. The Project Manager reserves the right to request amendments or supplements to the report.
5. Failure to submit required revisions within the specified timeframe, failure to conduct the mandatory dissemination seminar, or non-compliance with these Regulations may result in rejection of the report and impose a mandatory obligation on the participant to reimburse all or part of the funds received.

§ 8 Final Provisions

1. Any matters not regulated herein shall be decided by the Project Academic Coordinator.
2. Documents may be submitted in paper form with original signatures or in electronic form. Electronic documents must be signed with a qualified electronic signature or a legally recognised electronic signature (e.g., DocuSign, Adobe Sign, or Polish Trusted Profile/ePUAP) and sent to 3xw@ibb.waw.pl.
3. These Regulations enter into force on the date of signature by the Project Director.

List of Appendices

- **Appendix No. 1** – Application Form Template
- **Appendix No. 2** – Participant Grant Agreement Template
- **Appendix No. 3** – Lump Sum Rates for Travel and Subsistence Costs
- **Appendix No. 4** – Participant Data Form
- **Appendix No. 5** – Mobility Report Template