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## ECCO Pioneer Award Fact Sheet

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The European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO) offers Research Awards to encourage and support innovative basic and/or clinical scientific research in the area of Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD) across Europe.

ECCO Pioneer Awards aim to enhance visionary, interdisciplinary scientific research in IBD.

One ECCO Pioneer Award may be awarded in 2023.

In order to be eligible:

1. The applicant(s) must submit a new and original research project that has not yet been launched using the [ECCO Fellowships and Grants Online Submission Pages](#). Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.
2. Applicants can submit an application as:
  - A multi-centric project group or
  - A single centre (including single PI applications)
3. For multi-centre applications, the following criteria must be met:

The project group must consist of

  - a principal investigator per institute who is responsible for the implementation of this project on behalf of their participating institutions
  - a project coordinator (this may or may not be one of the principal investigators), who has been identified by the participating institutions for coordinating the overall project.
4. Successful institutions are excluded from applying in the upcoming two application rounds (24 months).
5. All project group applicants (i.e. project coordinator and principal investigators of all participating institutions) need to be ECCO Members at the time of application.
6. ECCO Pioneer Award applicants must be from an ECCO Member Country. For multi-centric project groups, the majority of the ECCO Pioneer Award applicants must be from an ECCO Country Member; all applications that include non-European participating institutions must justify the selection of these institutions in the letter of intent. The project coordinator, however, must reside in an ECCO Member Country.
7. It is essential to illustrate the overall impact of the project for the IBD Community.
8. Project coordinators and co-investigators are only allowed to apply for one funding scheme with one proposal at a given time. In addition, we only allow for one ECCO Pioneer Award proposal per department at a given time.

Terms of submission:

1. A total of **EUR 300,000** will be awarded per ECCO Pioneer Award. The ECCO Pioneer Award Prize is intended for research costs incurred, most notably salary support; equipment; research consumables. It is not intended for institutional overheads. When only two institutes are participating, the proportion of the cost distribution between institutions may not exceed 60:40.

If the ECCO Pioneer Award candidates succeed in receiving additional funding for the project, this is likely to be regarded as an "add-on" and not a conflict with ECCO, although ECCO will expect to be informed through the project coordinator.

2. The duration of the Award is 24 months.
3. Members of ECCO Governing Board and SciCom are excluded from applying.
4. The review process will be carried out in two stages.
  - In the first phase, applicants must submit a "letter of intent" (max. 5 pages) using the [ECCO Fellowships and Grants Online Submission Pages](#). Please note that only applications using the ECCO Letter of Intent form will be accepted.

The "letter of intent" should contain the following information:

- Project title
- Project outline and intent
- Research objectives
- The connection to and impact on the IBD Community
- The innovative quality
- Budget (incl. budget split per category and further explanations, e.g. salary, equipment, consumables, travel and meeting costs, other expenses; institutional overheads are not accepted). When only two institutes are participating, the proportion of the cost distribution should be disclosed and may not exceed 60:40.
- Endorsement signatures of all participating institutes
- In the second phase, the applicants with the highest ranked applications will be invited to submit a full proposal using the [ECCO Fellowships and Grants Online Submission Pages](#). The proposal should contain the following information:
  - Project title
  - Name, and address of the participating institution(s)
  - Name, address, and ECCO Member ID of the project coordinator
  - Name, address, and ECCO Member ID of the principal investigators (for multi-centric applications)
  - Summary of the proposal
  - Introduction
  - Objectives
    - Overall aim of the research project
    - Award objectives; achievable within the 24-month timeframe and with the funds and support provided by ECCO
  - Methodology and Working plan → including timeline
  - Chronogram → mandatory milestones and specific deliverables of the project
  - Significance (→ pioneer quality) and impact

- Background of the research group
- Budget (a transparent budget split per category and subdivided into participating institutes)

As well as the following documents:

- CVs of the applicant(s) (including those of the project coordinator(s) and principal investigators for multi-centric applications)
  - Letters of commitment from all participating institutions
  - IRB (clinical/experimental) approval of the project.
1. The annual deadline for submission for ECCO Pioneer Award applications is **August 1** (1<sup>st</sup> round), and **September 23** (2<sup>nd</sup> round).
  2. Applications are scored by IBD Specialists according to six criteria (see review process below). The Scientific Committee of ECCO (SciCom) reviews applications in autumn, and applicants are notified of the results in **October**.
  3. Successful applicants receive the ECCO Pioneer Award certificate at the Annual Congress of ECCO and are expected to be present to receive it.
  4. Payment of the prize money is contingent upon the Pioneer Award Agreement signed between ECCO and the participating institution(s). The prize will be split into one pre-financing payment of EUR 150,000 and one interim payment of EUR 150,000.
  5. Three reports are to be submitted to the ECCO Office for publication in ECCO News:
    - A 500-word synopsis of the project to be submitted within the first half of the project term.
    - An interim report of the project progress to be submitted within 12 months of project start date.
    - A final report to be submitted within 24 months of the project start date (Note: upon submission of a written request, no-cost-extensions of the deadline can be granted). For report templates, please contact the ECCO Office at [ecco@ecco-ibd.eu](mailto:ecco@ecco-ibd.eu).
  6. The project coordinator and Lead Institution are expected to submit the results of the project in the form of an abstract at the annual Congress of ECCO following the completion of the award objectives.
  7. ECCO Pioneer Award holders are required to inform SciCom, via the ECCO Office ([ecco@ecco-ibd.eu](mailto:ecco@ecco-ibd.eu)), of any publications resulting from the project funded.
  8. When presenting or publishing any results of the project, ECCO is to be acknowledged on all printed matter as contributing to the funding. If this is not withheld, ECCO reserves the right to not review further applications of the ECCO Pioneer Award holder. Please contact the ECCO Office to request the ECCO logo for slide presentations.
  9. ECCO encourages Awardees to submit the project outcome to JCC for publication.

#### Review Process:

1. All applications are reviewed and scored by ECCO Committees Members and external IBD Specialists, based on the following criteria:
  - Originality and innovative nature of the proposal
  - Methodology

- Feasibility of the research project and budget
  - International scientific level of the research team/ CVs
  - Importance of the project in the field of IBD
  - Long-term impact of the project (interdisciplinary aspects, exchange, critical-mass, and degree of mobilization)
2. The ECCO Scientific Committee makes the final selection and seeks approval from the ECCO Governing Board.

#### Scoring System:

The following procedure for the scoring system for Pioneer Awards will apply:

1. *Review by ECCO's Scientific Committee & external reviewers:* Each Pioneer Award application will be reviewed by two members of ECCO's Scientific Committee and minimum two external reviewers. They will score and comment on the applications assigned to them according to the seven evaluation criteria.
2. *Ranking:* Applications are ranked according to their average scores.
3. *Final approval:* by the Governing Board of ECCO
4. *Acceptance/rejection letters:* ECCO Office will inform all applicants of the outcome of their applications.

#### Reviewers:

Grants Reviewers are invited according to their area of expertise and are selected from the following:

- ECCO Officers
- Former ECCO Congress speakers
- Acknowledged experts
- Successful ECCO Grant candidates