

EUSKAMPUS ONKO-ON MISSION

Action research aimed at developing a large-scale service in the Basque Country for cancer patients based on the integration of physical exercise, nutrition and psychological support

**2023 Call**

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this call for “expressions of interest” is to launch an “Euskampus Mission”, ONKO-ON Mission, which has a dual purpose:

- To generate scientific evidence that proves the positive impact (enhancement of conventional treatments, improved quality of life, reduced comorbidity and increased survival) in cancer patients through multiple intervention protocols that include and integrate physical activity, nutrition and psychological support;
- To design, develop and deploy a comprehensive service (or service models) to support cancer patients, empowering them as active agents in their treatment process and progress, and which is sustainable, equal and scalable within a value-based healthcare context. This service (or service models) may be delivered by a public, private or public-private entity.

In this way, a cooperative action-research process is proposed to improve the knowledge base available to address a major social challenge through the development of rigorous and structured interventions based on scientific evidence and with a high economic and social impact.

The initial budget that Euskampus Fundazioa will allocate to this mission for 2023-2025 will be 0.5 million euros and will be carried out through successive calls for proposals. This budget may leverage other types of public and/or private funding.

## BACKGROUND

In recent decades, the total amount of cancer patients being diagnosed has increased due to population growth, an ageing population, exposure to risk factors (such as tobacco, alcohol, pollution, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, among many others) and, for some cancers, increased early detection. Cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide and has negative connotations in our society, given that it is associated not only with death, but also with pain and suffering, and therefore has a strong impact on the subjectivity of those affected and on people’s collective imagination. Furthermore, cancer is a great burden for regional economy, since the increasing incidence, as well as the strain on health systems due to the high cost of treatment and medical equipment, produces a loss of productivity due to premature deaths and sick leave, and the financial situation of people living with cancer and of their carers ends up being affected too.

Investment, through public and private programmes, in prevention, early detection and more effective cancer treatments is essential in order to help save and improve the lives of cancer patients, as well as saving public money and the money of patients and their families. For all these reasons, tackling cancer is an extremely socially relevant challenge and is given the highest priority on the agenda of all governments and health systems on different levels within each region.

There is abundant scientific evidence proving that:

- physical exercise (strength, aerobic, a combination of both);
- balanced, targeted and personalised nutrition;
- psychological support through relaxation techniques, self-control, emotion management, etc.,

have a positive impact on the efficacy of conventional therapies, quality of life and survival of cancer patients, and of those who have completed their treatments successful from a clinical point of view.

In particular, there is very strong evidence that suggests that physical exercise improves physical function, body composition and quality of life and reduces fatigue, depression and anxiety in cancer patients and survivors. There has also been published work showing (with weaker evidence) that physical exercise can improve sleep, bone health, tolerance to treatment and reduce some of the side effects of cancer therapies. It is also worth noting that numerous studies have found a positive connection between cancer patients' physical activity and their survival. Similarly, in studies with animal experiments, exercise has been shown to reduce the size and infiltration rate of tumours. However, these promising results in terms of cancer treatment and survival will need to be confirmed by clinical trials. In view of these positive results, various oncology professional associations in many countries and initiatives recommend and prescribe physical exercise as part of standard practice in cancer care as a complementary therapy that helps to counteract the adverse effects of cancer and its treatment. Similarly, there are also projects to provide nutritional support for people during cancer treatment.

Psychiatric comorbidity must also be taken into account. In fact, cancer patients have a higher risk of presenting psychiatric symptoms and of developing mental disorders and even suicide, so psychological support is vital. In addition, there is literature that also proves how physical exercise and nutrition can improve psychological state and, in turn, how this influences the progress of the disease. Psychological support for patients and their environment is vital in order to adhere to conventional treatments and any complementary interventions.

However, in order to develop specific and systematic protocols that integrate the above-mentioned dimensions, as well as to establish services based on these multiple protocols that can be offered en masse to cancer patients and survivors, rigorous studies still need to be carried out in order to provide more and stronger scientific evidence and to comprehensively analyse the economic and social impact that their practical implementation can have in a value-based healthcare approach.

## **EUSKAMPUS MISSIONS**

Euskampus Fundazioa is an entity of the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network recognised as a supply-demand intermediation agent. By its very constitution

and mission, Euskampus aims to organise complex and cooperative actions that are truly cross-cutting between the members of its board of trustees and with any other stakeholder in the Basque region (in an extended perimeter that includes Bordeaux) with a high potential impact on the common good.

The Euskampus 2030 Strategic Plan considers Euskampus Missions to be a way of orchestrating the rich diversity of skills, talent and experience held individually by the UPV/EHU, University of Bordeaux, TECNALIA and DIPC, providing a defined direction for cooperation that steers actions featuring various groups: students, teachers, researchers, managers, professionals from diverse business and social stakeholders, and even citizens.

An Euskampus Mission is a collective response led by the Euskampus trustees, and coordinated with other entities and actors, to achieve predefined goals that address a huge scientific, technological, environmental, cultural or economic challenge, or a mixture of them, through a coordinated agenda of education, research, knowledge transfer and dissemination actions.

The Euskampus Missions programmes were created with the aim of generating and organising networks of research, training and innovation agents that will take part in coordinated actions to define and develop specific missions with a high potential of having social impact, mobilising transdisciplinary capacities in a cross-cutting, systemic and orchestrated manner which must be activated from the design phase to the execution phase.

Euskampus Missions are aligned with and framed within the Basque Country, State and European research and innovation and territorial development policies and plans, specifically the Science, Technology and Innovation Plan 2030 (PCTI2030) and the Horizon Europe Programme.

In the particular case of this ONKO-ON Mission, it is clearly in line with the objectives and deployment of the Transversal Driver Initiatives of the PCTI2030; and it is aligned with the framework of Horizon Europe's European Missions, specifically the Cancer Mission, prioritising the optimisation of diagnoses and treatments and support for the quality of life of cancer patients. It is also in line with the objectives of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the State Health System Cancer Strategy, the Basque Country Cancer Plan 2018-2023 and the Osakidetza Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this call, ONKO-ON Mission 2023, is to open a process for receiving "expressions of interest" to participate in and contribute to the development of the Euskampus ONKO-ON Mission, in accordance with the procedure and criteria set out in the Provisions of this document.

## PROVISIONS

### Article 1. - Entities that can participate

This first call to participate in the ONKO-ON Mission will be open only to research staff belonging to Euskampus Entities<sup>1</sup>.

### Article 2. - Orientation of expressions of interest

The ONKO-ON Mission includes the following actions, among others:

- Identify the actors that need to be mobilised around this mission, whether they belong to the Euskampus entities or to any other entity or stakeholder.
- Design and implement a multidimensional intervention plan through protocols that are complementary (not alternative) to cancer therapies that combine and integrate the three factors mentioned (exercise, nutrition and psychology). Such protocols should have the following features:
  - Personalised and structured, based on the situation of each person (age, type and stage of cancer, type and phase of medical treatment, professional and relational situation, etc.) and adjusting the implementation to the person's own progress.
  - Monitored, through constant and systematic recording of physical parameters (such as weight, muscle mass, fat, physical function, etc.), specific biomarkers (depending on the type of cancer, the stage of the disease and the type of treatment being carried out), and also a permanent record of the psychological evolution of each person (quality of life, fatigue, sleep, pain, etc.) through regular measurements and analyses.
  - Consequently, they will be designed and supervised by a multidisciplinary team that accompanies the physical and emotional development of each patient.
- To develop such an intervention plan as an action-research programme by combining research and intervention, and with the aforementioned rigorous and comprehensive monitoring to assess and measure the impact on various stakeholders through the generation of structured narratives based on quantitative indicators that serve both to provide further evidence and to guide the evolution of more and more effective, large-scale protocols.
- To generate an exploitation/implementation model that develops the service (or service models) to implement such protocols through a "commercial" offer that is structured and evidence-based, and which can be prescribed to cancer patients and survivors, and which is equal, sustainable and scalable (public or private, public-private, for-profit or not-for-profit, etc.) within the paradigm of value-based healthcare.

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<sup>1</sup> Euskampus institutions include knowledge-generating entities that belong to its Board: UPV/EHU, Tecnalía, DIPC, and University of Bordeaux.

- To establish a schedule for all planned actions.
- To define and execute an estimated budget.

In particular, expressions of interest will contribute to the following thematic areas and must clearly identify a specific challenge to which they respond and how they fit in with the overall mission:

- Development of physical exercise protocols for cancer patients
- Development of nutrition protocols for cancer patients
- Development of psychological intervention and support protocols for cancer patients
- Development/application of multidimensional methodologies for the implementation, monitoring and control of interventions based on these protocols
- Capture and management of large volumes of data
- Development of apps and artificial intelligence for patient care, data management and decision-making
- Measuring economic and social impact
- Definition of service(s) in terms of a value-based healthcare model
- Development of possible business models for services
- Any other line deemed appropriate to contribute to the development of the mission

Proposals will be highly valued if they include a series of activities aimed at involving undergraduate or postgraduate students, or recent graduates, as well as the development of new training offers.

### **Article 3. - Financing provided by Euskampus**

The grant provided by Euskampus will be transferred to each entity, stating the amount granted to each participating unit within each entity. Beneficiary organisations will manage the grant according to their internal procedures; the grant will be used for the activities proposed by the participants and no indirect costs can be charged. The following costs may be covered:

- Staff costs.
- Miscellaneous implementation costs such as consumables, materials, publications, travel, organisation of internal and external meetings, etc.

The grants will be used as co-funding with other grants or funds available to the participating staff of each entity, giving priority to complementarity with projects requested or underway, whether individual or collective, and that respond to the approach of the expression of interest. Priority will also be given to approaches showing a projection towards other local, national and, particularly, international calls for proposals, or towards the search for sponsorship from private entities, with the support of Euskampus being a lever for accessing these programmes and funding.

The total amount earmarked by Euskampus for this call is 200,000 euros. Such funding may cover expenses incurred in the activity during the financial years 2023, 2024 and 2025.

#### **Article 4. - Obligations of selected participants**

Euskampus Fundazioa will play a promotional role, maintaining at all times the orientation towards the proposed purpose and exercising a general coordinating role in the mission:

- It will put participants into working teams.
- It will facilitate the definition of the action plan.
- It will manage the deployment of all activities.
- It will catalyse collaboration between all actors and potential stakeholders involved.
- It will interact on behalf of the mission with public and private stakeholders who can contribute to or benefit from the development of the mission.
- It will actively seek external funding for the deployment of the mission.

Therefore, the selection and approval by Euskampus of the events submitted to the current call for proposals will entail the following obligations for the beneficiaries:

- Active participation in the definition and development of the Mission's Global Action Plan
- Active collaboration with the rest of the participants, prioritising the collective approach to the mission over the particular interests of each participant
- Search for ways to collaborate with external stakeholders to enrich the development and impact of the mission
- Permanent coordination with the Euskampus operational team in charge of the promotion and management of the mission
- Use of funding provided by Euskampus exclusively for activities approved as part of the mission

#### **Article 5.- Procedure for the submission of expressions of interest**

Proposals for expressions of interest shall be drawn up in accordance with the model in the appendix "Missions\_Euskampus\_3.0". The report shall contain the following sections:

1. Understanding of the mission. An assessment and interpretation of the mission statement with the necessary contextual elements for its understanding is requested (1 page)

2. Proposed work plan highlighting the how it adds value and its holistic and systemic nature, detailing the following aspects (maximum 9 pages):
  - a. Contextualisation
  - b. Objectives pursued
  - c. Work plan
  - d. Own resources activated
  - e. External resources expected to be activated
  - f. Expected results and impacts
  - g. Potential work schedule
  - h. Estimated budget
3. Staff involved in the expression of interest. Presentation of the persons or team showing their suitability regarding the proposal (maximum 2 pages).
4. List of background and references that endorse the team behind this value proposal (maximum 2 pages)
5. Other actors/stakeholders to be mobilised throughout the action, justifying their presence and the value they bring to the proposal (maximum 2 pages)

Brief CVs of the people who appear under an expression of interest, in line with the format provided by the Spanish Science and Technology Foundation (FECYT), established by the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation. The brief Curriculum Vitae shall be generated automatically by the Normalised CV FECYT application. Researchers from the University of Bordeaux may submit their CVs under the format proposed by the ANR- National Research Agency.

Expressions of interest in this call should be sent by e-mail to the following address [misiones@euskampus.eu](mailto:misiones@euskampus.eu) with the reference #misiones\_euskampus\_2023 before 5pm on 10 December. Any expressions of interest received after this date will not be considered.

Euskampus Fundazioa may ask the participants for as much complementary and/or additional documentation as needed to appropriately comprehend, evaluate and process the expression of interest.

Entering this tender process implies the acceptance of its conditions and its resolution, which is unlikely to be contested.

#### **Article 6. - Admission and correction of expressions of interest**

If the proposal is not completed in all of its terms, or if it is not accompanied by the required documentation in this procedure, the interested party will be asked (preferably via e-mail) to solve the issue or provide the compulsory documents within a period of **2 working days**, indicating that if they fail to do so, the application will be considered to have been withdrawn.

Failure to include the requested Report in the proposal shall be considered an error that cannot be rectified.



## Article 7. - Assessment of the expressions of interest submitted

Out of all the expressions of interest received in this call, Euskampus Fundazioa will select the approaches that will enable it to design the mission project that best suits the objectives pursued.

The selection of the events will be carried out by a delegated commission within Euskampus Fundazioa, and will be approved by its Executive Committee.

As a result of the assessment process, the work teams that will begin to develop the mission will be established, and any expressions of interest that are not aligned with the values of the Euskampus Missions and the objectives of the ONKO-ON Mission may be rejected.

### Personal Data Protection

Pursuant to the prevailing regulations, processing of personal data provided in the application to participate will be governed by the following:

- Data Controller: Euskampus Fundazioa (Tax Code: G95658688).
- Purpose: process the applicant's participation in the call for the **"Euskampus ONKO-ON Mission"** 2023; keep applicants informed of Euskampus Fundazioa's activities via electronic means (only if express consent has been given to do so on the website participation form); publish the names and surnames of the beneficiaries of this tender on the Euskampus website and social media.
- Legal basis of processing: the legal basis that legitimises the processing of participants' personal data by Euskampus is the express consent provided by submitting the form to participate in this tender.
- Storage of personal data: participants' personal data shall only be kept by Euskampus for the time required to process their participation in the tender; on completion of this period, they will be deleted. If consent has been given to receive communication from Euskampus (i.e. information related to its own events, activities and tenders), the data will be kept until this consent is revoked.
- Recipients and international transfers: Euskampus shall only communicate data related to participants in the **"Euskampus ONKO- ON Mission"** when required to do so by administrative and/or judicial order.
- Euskampus shall not make international data transfers to third countries (with the exception of the University of Bordeaux as a trustee of Euskampus Fundazioa and its associated entities).
- Rights of data subjects: the legislation recognises a series of rights in relation to the processing of the participants' personal data, whereby they may access, correct, delete, limit and oppose the processing of their data, request the portability and withdraw their consent via e-mail (to [info@euskampus.eu](mailto:info@euskampus.eu) indicating "Ejercicio derechos" (Exercise Rights) in the subject and including their name and ID Number in the message), or via ordinary post (to Euskampus Fundazioa Ed. Rectorado - Barrio Sarriena s/n - 48940 Leioa – Bizkaia – Spain). They may also contact the Spanish Data Protection Agency via [www.aepd.es](http://www.aepd.es) for this purpose.