

Bern, January 2026

Swiss Cancer Institute / BMS HEM Pioneer Grant

Although the prognosis of patients with blood cancer such as multiple myeloma, types of lymphoma or leukemia has improved substantially over the last decade, many remain incurable and are associated with severe morbidity and increased mortality. The Swiss Cancer Institute HEM Pioneer Grant is funded by Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) and aims to support projects and research that could potentially pave the way for a game changing outcome in the field of blood cancers.

Impactful discoveries are often the result of pioneering work in research areas with limited evidence. Therefore, the potential magnitude of impact of projects shall weigh more than the likelihood of success assessed on the current basis of evidence. In other words, the grant shall foster explorative pilot projects in rather uncharted waters that potentially offer the base for larger studies and grants leading to significant advances for patients or subgroups of patients suffering from blood cancer.

The grant for the pilot project is endowed with CHF 20'000.- and recurring on an annual basis. The grant will be awarded at the Swiss Cancer Institute semi-annual meeting in June.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects should intend to pave the way for a potentially game-changing impact in the field of hemato-oncological diseases including their premalignancies.

Pilot projects shall have an explorative character in the sense of initiatives with preliminary testing of an idea for future:

- prospective clinical trials
- translational research
- cohort studies
- novel patient care models
- supportive care
- assessment tools

Note that no basic science projects will be considered for evaluation.

Aspects under investigation might be related to, but are not limited to:

- treatment approaches and methodological aspects
- mode of action of drugs/treatments
- mode of disease
- enhancement of interdisciplinary communication and collaboration between
- oncologists, hematologists, nursing staff, patients, relatives, etc.
- psychological and social aspects

Eligible pilot projects shall be conducted in Switzerland.

Eligible Applicants

Practicing physicians, researchers and professionals in patient care institutions/societies may apply for the HEM Pioneer Grant. Applicants must have a primary place of business in Switzerland and must finance their project via an institutional banking account. Grant payments will not be paid to private accounts.



Application Process and Timelines

Applications must be submitted electronically to events@swisscancerinstitute.ch. Only complete submissions can be considered.

Please refer to <https://www.swisscancerinstitute.ch/en/researchers/awards-fellowships/> for all requirements.

Briefly, your application must:

- be written in English language
- include a letter of application (max 2 pages), the description of the project (max 5 pages without references) and the CV (max 2 pages) of all applicants
- The description of the project should contain the following parts: project title, rationale/background, aim/hypothesis of the project, project plan, expected results, methodology incl. statistical methods, timelines/duration of the project, detailed financial plan/budget and how this may have a significant impact in the studied blood cancer typ. In addition, information must be given on potential other founding parties

The application window opens with the official announcement on www.swisscancerinstitute.ch and closes on April 27, 2026.

Jury

The jury acts and decides independently on the proposals and is composed of 4–5 individuals:

- 1 chairperson of the jury from Swiss Cancer Institute network, 1 vote
- 1-2 medical oncologists or hematologist from Swiss centers, 1–2 votes
- 1-2 members of the Swiss Society of Hematology (SGH/SSH), 1–2 votes

For each grant period of 1 year, the Swiss Cancer Institute scientific committee appoints the chair of the jury.

Each jury member has one vote per project to score the proposals. The winning project is selected based on the scoring sum of a project. In case of a draw, i.e. a consensus cannot be reached, the chairperson has the final decision.

If a jury member encounters a conflict of interest, i.e. is directly or indirectly participating in a submitted project, the jury member is not allowed to vote on this very project.

Criteria for Project Evaluation

Project proposals will be mainly evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Attractiveness of idea
- Potential to translate pilot project into a bigger study
- Estimated magnitude of impact in the field of the respective blood cancer type
- Robustness of project and financial plans
- Feasibility as a Swiss Cancer Institute project

Notification of the Winner, Grant-Ceremony and Follow-Up

Notification and grant ceremony

All applicant(s) will be notified in writing by the Swiss Cancer Institute typically within 3–4 weeks after the application deadline. The grant winner will be announced at the Swiss Cancer Institute semi-annual meeting and will be requested to present a short exposé on the planned project/research. Further announcements may follow in the info@ONCO-SUISSE magazine after the grant ceremony and on the Swiss Cancer Institute website.

Payments

Bank transfer of the grant sum to the grant winner will be accomplished by the Swiss Cancer Institute within 2 months after the grant ceremony. Payments will only be processed to institutional bank account holders. The grant



winner is obliged to inform the Swiss Cancer Institute in case of a job change that includes the change of the current institution. In the latter case, any residual grant money must be transferred within 30 days to the institution at which the grant winner is newly employed.

Follow-up

The grant winner must provide a brief update on the progress or the final results of the project at the next SOHC or the Swiss Cancer Institute semi-annual meeting in spring. The winner must further provide a written summary of the project no later than 1 year after the grant ceremony. The written summary, sent to the Swiss Cancer Institute, will be forwarded to the jury president.

Questions about this grant can be addressed to:

Swiss Cancer Institute, E-Mail: events@swisscancerinstitute.ch