Research Program (PEPR)
« Food Systems, Microbiomes and Health (SAMS) »

Call for a junior chair 2026

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The growing incidence of chronic diseases is a major public health issue. It is largely the result of an altered relationship between humans and their microbes under the influence of various environmental factors, such as diet, lifestyle, and exposure to pollutants and xenobiotics. This alteration varies from one individual to another and can contribute to different responses or even a lack of response, for example, to nutritional or therapeutic interventions. The activities of the Microbiomes and Health pillar of the PEPR SAMS aim to improve understanding and take into account the host-microbiome symbiosis in preventive approaches and in pathological contexts, in order to reduce the incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases and their impacts. This call aims to fund a junior chair, which will complement the three chairs already recruited (see website: https://pepr-sams.fr/).

This chair will be based on a research and innovation project proposed by a young scientist (10 years after obtaining their PhD). The objectives are to develop excellence in research in the field of the microbiome and human health, and to enrich the skills and expertise of the research environment and infrastructure currently being built in this field in France.

JUNIOR CHAIRS

This junior chair will enable a **young scientist to start leading a research team at an established laboratory in France** and develop **an outstanding project on the microbiome and health**.

Candidates' projects must cover at least one of the **priorities/focus areas of the Microbiomes and Health pillar of the PEPR SAMS**, and in particular those addressing the following issues (which are described in more detail on the website: https://pepr-sams.fr/):

- Developing cutting-edge research on host-microbiome symbiosis;
- Identifying disruptive elements—whether internal to the microbiome, environmental, dietary, or related to the host itself—and explaining the sequence of microbial, metabolic, immune, and other events that cause disruption of symbiosis and homeostasis;
- Identifying biomarkers of risk, diagnosis, and prognosis, as well as predictors of treatment response and toxicity, in order to include them in the medical arsenal for personalized care;
- Developing new preventive and therapeutic strategies, as well as specific, controlled interventional studies that identify and correct “defects” in the microbiome in order to improve and ensure prevention in the general population, patient care, and optimize treatments.
- Developing data science relating to the study of human holobionts (host-microbiome) at the interface of biology and medicine, and mathematics (medical informatics, statistics, modeling, artificial intelligence).

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Duration

The chair will run for a maximum period of 42 months.

Eligibility criteria

- Experience criteria: open to any young scientist, regardless of their current position and nationality, who has obtained their PhD or equivalent degree within the last 3 to 10 years as of April 30, 2026;
- Candidates who have held a temporary position at a French national research organization or university for more than 36 months on the closing date for Phase 1 applications must propose a change of unit/laboratory. Returning to the laboratory where the candidate completed their doctorate is not encouraged;
- Candidates who hold a permanent position in a national research organization or French university at the time of submission are eligible regardless of the length of time between their recruitment and the submission of their application, with the obligation to create a new team;
- For maternity and paternity leave, the time requirement since the doctoral thesis defense may be extended by the documented number of days of leave taken for each child born before or after the doctoral degree was obtained, at the candidate's request. For long-term sick leave, the time requirement since the doctoral thesis defense may be extended upon justification.

Assessment criteria

- The PEPR chair will be awarded on the basis of scientific excellence and its relevance to the scientific priorities of the PEPR SAMS;
- The candidate's professional experience, in particular achievements attested by significant publications, additional responsibilities within the laboratory, the setting up and management of collaborative projects, teaching and promotion activities, participation in international councils and committees, invitations to international conferences, awards, and scholarships;
- Multidisciplinary expertise will be encouraged.

Funding

- Maximum €500,000 (excluding management fees) over 42 months.
- The host laboratory must provide the selected candidate with sufficient office and laboratory space to accommodate an emerging team (approximately 50 m²) as well as access to local technology platforms.

Selection procedure

First step: call for applications.

- Applications must be submitted in English via the Inserm EVA3 online platform (https://www.eva3.inserm.fr/login).
- Candidates will be evaluated on their scientific excellence by a committee of specialized scientific experts;
- Only selected candidates will be eligible to apply for the second stage;
- Candidates selected during the first stage will be informed of the committee's decision by the PEPR management.

Second step: call for projects.

- Eligible applicants will be informed of the submission procedure and timetable organized by Inserm, following the decision of the eligibility committee;
- The second stage consists of submitting a project proposal in collaboration in a host laboratory based in France (written in English);
- The projects submitted will be assessed by an international jury.

Host laboratory:

- The research project must be carried out in a French host laboratory;
- The identification of a host laboratory is not compulsory at the first selection stage. A non-exhaustive list of possible host laboratories will be provided by the PEPR SAMS management;
- The host laboratory must be involved in the design of the research project and the applicant must ensure that the host laboratory has all the equipment required for the proposal, in order to guarantee the best possible conditions for success.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

The provisional schedule is available on the call page.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR APPLICATION

1. Curriculum Vitae;
2. Doctorate diploma;
3. A brief description of the applicant's scientific career and main achievements (in English);
4. A letter of motivation outlining the candidate's interest in joining the French research environment (in English);
5. Two letters of recommendation.

CONTACT

PEPR management team: equipe@pepr-sams.fr
Technical support for the application submission platform: support.dsi@inserm.fr