

## 2023/2024 Hersentumorfonds - Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation - Funding Operation

### Call for proposals

In 2023/24 Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation will again be funding one or more research projects in the same field. The 2023/24 grant program of € 300,000.00 will open on October 18, 2023. From that date researchers – PI's and Postdocs - in both Tumor-Immunology and Neuro-Oncology are invited to send in their applications – at first in the form of a pre-proposal. Deadline for handing in this information is January 5, 2024.

In the year 2018, Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation / Hersentumorfonds for the first time in its existence funded two very promising research projects in the field of brain cancer immunology. Both based at Amsterdam UMC, location VUmc, these parties were granted a total amount of € 270,000.

A third research project - *T cell exclusion in gliomas: studies into immune resistance program and effective combination immune therapy* - by Debets/French at Erasmus MC was funded in 2019 for an amount of € 200,000.

In 2021 Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation/Hersentumorfonds has awarded a total of € 250,000.00 to two research projects; Marjolein Geurts from Erasmus MC received a grant of € 50,000.00 for her research project *Unlocking T cell immunity in glioblastoma: identifying targets to neutralize myeloid cell-mediated suppression*; Bart Neyns & team from UZ Brussel received a grant of € 200,000.00 for research on *Unraveling the immune response induced by immunotherapy in the adaptive phase I GliTIpNi trial in recurrent glioblastoma*.

In 2023 Kiavash Movahedi and his team (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) received a grant of € 200,000.00 for research on *Unraveling the spatial and longitudinal heterogeneity of glioblastoma tumors and its relationship with treatment response and patient survival*.

Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation started in 2016 as a new organization in the landscape of Dutch brain cancer research funding. About 90% of its budget was brought together in the past years by the hundreds of people dedicated to the Ventoux3 foundation: a successful yearly cycling event that aims to raise the indispensable money required for high quality research on primary brain cancer. In 2023 a new cash flow was created in cooperation with NL Tour Rides: The IJsselmeer Challenge (cycling around the IJsselmeer) generated over € 58,000.00 in its first year.

This 2023/24 call is based on Hersentumorfonds's / Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation's main goal (mission and vision):

**'To dedicate the available funding by focusing on one subject in particular: the (future) role of immunotherapy within the treatment of glioma patients.'**

In view of this vision of the foundation, we ask for projects that fit this vision and will lead to an answer to the challenge summarized below:

*Immunotherapy has gained an enormous momentum in the past decade, and has drastically altered the treatment of many solid cancers. To date, the promise of immunotherapy has not materialized for glioma. Promising immune-based clinical approaches unfortunately failed to improve patient outcome.*

*The key question is; 'How to make immunotherapy successful for patients with brain tumors?'. To answer this question, it is of utmost importance to get better insight in the immunological landscape within the brain tumor micro-environment. Therefore, the aim of the Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation is to grant project applications that:*

- **UNDERSTAND THE IMMUNE STATE: focus on a better understanding of the tumor microenvironment of brain tumors, or**
- **UNDERSTAND THE CLINICAL TRIAL OUTCOME: lead to a better understanding of already performed immune-based clinical trials in glioblastoma patients, or**
- **DEVELOP: develop an alternative strategy based on a better understanding of the tumor microenvironment of brain tumors**

## Procedure

### Goals:

- To invite skilled and enthusiastic researchers in the field of brain cancer and/or immuno-oncology to apply for a research grant.
- To attract proposals from excellent talents with groundbreaking ideas that help improve research results in the combined field.

### Guidelines:

- To provide optimal research opportunities, candidates are either Principal Investigator (PI) or Postdoc.
- Their proposed project should fit and strengthen the applicant's research theme(s).
- Applicants (PI's or Postdocs) have an appointment of at least 0,5 FTE during the entire project at the research institution. Salary costs for a PhD student can be part of the proposal.
- One applicant (PI or postdoc) can apply for one project only
- Applicants who aim for extension of running projects are also very welcome to propose their project
- **2 types of grants** are available for 2023/24, adding up to an amount of € 300,000 this year.
  - < € 50,000 grant. Estimated funding period: up to 2 years max
  - € 50,000 to € 200,000 grant. Estimated funding period: 2 – 4 years
- Applicants should have full support from their institute to execute the project as demonstrated by a support letter from the department or institution head.
- The selected candidates are supposed to be head of a multi-disciplinary team consisting of at least one immunologist (biomedical scientist).
- The selected candidates are supposed to start their research as soon as possible after the funding has been officially granted.

### Selection procedure:

- The Dutch Brain Tumor Foundation will advertise the call for proposals on their own website [www.hersentumorfonds.org](http://www.hersentumorfonds.org), and on websites of partner organizations, like [www.hersentumor.nl](http://www.hersentumor.nl).
- An invitation-letter will be sent to Dutch & Belgian Academic Medical Centers, Departments of Communication.
- After it has been forwarded to the specific research areas, those interested are invited to write a pre-proposal.

- Pre-proposals must be submitted in the correct format, containing details of applicant, CV, embedding, research work plan, title of research idea and a summary of the research idea in max 300 words plus 5 key terms. Only pre-proposals sent in using the supplied official form are accepted.
- The selection committee will rank the projects on scores for Project description, Originality and innovation-strength, Research work plan, Quality of researcher, Presentation and Argumentation.
- The selection committee decides which projects are selected. Whether this selection will contain one large or a few smaller grants, depends on the quality (promise) of the applications.
- Those selected are invited to write a full research proposal, based on their pre-proposal.

### Schedule for the selection procedure in 2023/24

October 18, 2023	<b>Call for pre-proposals</b> Announcement
January 5, 2024	<b>Deadline for pre-proposals</b>
January 19, 2024	<b>Decision</b> by selection committee. <b>Projects selected</b> to be elaborated into a full proposal
April 12, 2024	<b>Deadline for full proposals</b>
April 19, 2024	<b>Full proposals to reviewers</b>
April 26, 2024	<b>Deadline reviewers</b>
May 3, 2024	<b>Read and judge reviews by Scientific Board of Advisors</b>
May 10, 2024	<b>Send reviews to applicant for rebuttal</b>
May 31, 2024	<b>Deadline for rebuttals</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> week June 2024	<b>Meeting Scientific Board of Advisors + communication to applicants of final proposals.</b> <b>Draft contract, receive grant.</b>

## Appendix 1



### Pre-Proposal application form 2023/24

<b>Main Investigator/ Applicant</b>	The main applicant is the person with overall responsibility for the scientific aspects of the project.
Name, title	
Institution, department	
Address	
Phone/Fax	
E-Mail	
Short CV, relevant work experience, max 5 relevant publications	
<b>Co-applicants/ Collaborators</b>	Can be repeated if there are more co-applicants/collaborators.
Name, title	
Institution, department	
Address	
Phone/Fax	
E-Mail	
Short CV, relevant work experience, max 5 relevant publications	
<b>Title of the grant proposal</b>	A concise and specific title
<b>Category</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Category I € &lt; 50,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Category II € 50,000 – 200,000</b>
<b>Brief explanation to contributors (Dutch)</b>	<p>Title of the project (in plain language)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the subject of the research project?</li> <li>2. What is the impact of the contribution of those donating to the research project and possible spin offs?</li> <li>3. What outcome may contributors expect?</li> </ol> <p>No more than 300 words.</p>

<b>Summary of the grant proposal + Keywords</b>	A brief and concise summary of the research project. No more than 300 words and a maximum of 5 keywords.
<b>Objectives &amp; Approach</b>	Main arguments of the project proposal: problem description and significance. Category I: max 300 words Category II: max 700 words
<b>Feasibility</b>	Description of feasibility of the project, including the way it is embedded in the organization and the research group. No more than 300 words.
<b>Budget proposal</b>	Please state the total amount for which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● budget is requested</li> <li>● budget is or will be obtained from other sources</li> </ul> Personnel  Materials costs  Equipment(s)  Services
<b>Signatures</b>	<i>Name, Initials, Date, Signature</i>
<b>Main Investigator/ Applicant</b>	
<b>Co-applicant(s)/ Collaborator(s)</b>	
<b>Intended supervisor</b>	
<b>Intended Head of the department</b>	