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Sanofi Innovation Awards 2024-2025

***Call for Pre-Proposals***

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**April 22, 2024**

*iAwards Program Description and Objectives:*

Sanofi is a global life sciences company committed to improving access to healthcare and supporting the people we serve throughout the continuum of care.

Sanofi iAwards initiative is a multi-institutional partnership program designed to support collaborations with academic investigators to accelerate innovative early stage, disease-relevant research towards the clinic. With this program, Sanofi aims to fund cutting-edge translational research that can contribute to our early-stage pipeline and ultimately benefit patients.

Award winning proposals will receive:

* $150,000 research funding including institutional direct and indirect costs for 12 months.
* Sanofi R&D expertise and guidance.

Sanofi’s main objective in creating the iAwards program is to convert successful and promising iAwards projects to sponsored research programs and subsequently create in-licensing and start-up opportunities with the potential to continuously enrich Sanofi’s early-stage portfolio.

*Pre-Proposal submission:*

Provided with this call is the pre-proposal submission template, as well as the areas of interest on page 3.

Only selected members of Sanofi and your Institution will have access to your pre-proposal; however, we recommend that information in the pre-proposal should not contain any confidential information or unpublished results. Pre-proposals should not include third parties except members from other Partner institutions also involved in the iAwards Program (listed on page 4).

All pre-proposals must be submitted to Sanofi by June 3rd, 2024 at the latest using [**this link**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/fd760226146d4bc88a640bc584fe8697)

The timelines of the iAwards North America Program 2024-2025 are further described on page 4. Pre-proposals that would not respect the guidelines (format, timelines, etc.) will not be evaluated.

*Areas of Interest:*

**IMMUNOLOGY & INFLAMMATION**

* Indications of interest: Dermatology, Gastroenterology, Rheumatology, Respiratory diseases.
* Novel targets and approaches in autoimmune diseases (e.g., Treg enhancement, tolerance induction, checkpoint modulators etc.) incl. development of complex cellular in vitro co-culture system(s) / organoids.
* Multi-specific biologics approaches to increase efficacy in treatment refractory patient populations.
* Tools/Biomarkers for patient stratification or responders / non-responder analysis.
* Transformational genomic medicine approaches in immunology with deep durable efficacy / remission potential in inflammation & immunology – e.g., novel approaches to in vivo immune cell engineering, including chimeric antigen receptors.

**ONCOLOGY – Adult and childhood cancers**

* New therapeutic targets and new cell surface markers for priority indications (Multiple Myeloma, Acute Myeloid Leukemia, gastrointestinal cancers, lung cancers, childhood cancers).
* New strategies of Immune Cell Engagers (engagers of NK cells, engagers of unconventional immune cells).
* Novel strategies for targeting tumor micro-environment (including myeloid / macrophages, fibroblast targets, vascular normalization, etc.)
* Novel in vivo delivery approaches.
* Novel translational models in Immuno-Oncology.

**RARE & NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES**

* Biology, transport mechanisms and delivery of therapeutics to muscle and/or CNS
* Novel targets and mechanisms for neuroinflammation and/or to achieve neuroprotection in neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric diseases including MS, ALS, PD and AD
* Novel targets, models, and therapeutic concepts for genetically defined CNS or musculoskeletal diseases
* Novel targets, assays, models, biomarkers, and therapeutic concepts for proteinopathies (synuclein, tau, TDP-43, TMEM106B)

**GENOMIC MEDICINE**

* Non-viral delivery (i.e. LNP) approaches for delivery of nucleic acids to extra hepatic tissues including ocular tissue
* Approaches to obviate LNP immunogenicity including predictive in vitro models.
* Mechanisms of addressing AAV immunity, immunogenicity, or toxicity.
* Approaches to minimize AAV dorsal root gangliotoxicity.
* Predictive models for T and B cell antidrug immune responses.

**PRECISION MEDICINE AND COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY**

* Artificial intelligence algorithms to extract biological features from histopathology images of inflamed/disease tissues in immunology conditions.
* Computational methods for design and off-target analysis of anti-sense oligonucleotides.
* AI/ML Foundation models for multi-omics target biology and target identification.
* Tissue and disease-associated protein profiles applied to target identification and credentialing.
* Patient endotype and therapy response characterization in Inflammatory Bowel Disease and/or other immune conditions.
* Single cell and spatial characterization of respiratory and autoimmune diseases (i.e., HS, atopic dermatitis, SLE, asthma, COPD).
* Biofluid analyses to understand immune disease pathologies: etiology, severity, response to treatments.
* Characterizing disease heterogeneity through unsupervised embeddings of high dimensional multi-model data.

**VACCINES**

* Vaccines directed towards chronic diseases:
* Tolerogenic vaccines to prevent or treat auto-immune diseases or allergy.
* Strategies to potentiate immune system to eradicate chronic infection.
* Microbiome-based interventions:
* Microbiome composition altering therapeutic strategies for infectious related diseases.
* Microbiome based therapeutic delivery.
* Genetically engineered phages delivering therapeutic cargo (skin, gut, oral).
* Immunology of infectious disease vaccines:
* Antigen delivery strategies to elicit mucosal immune response.
* Exploring existing human clinical or epi cohorts for vaccinology research.
* Innovative approaches to support exploratory immunology (technology coming from neuroscience field, oncology, vision biology, live imaging solutions, etc).
* Innovative immunological assays (low volume, mucosal immunology, rapid, vaccine efficacy assessment, using supportive artificial intelligence tools).
* Strategies targeting innate immune system and innate memory/trained immunity.
* Antigen design – new methods for antigen discovery, optimization and characterization, supportive artificial intelligence tools:
* Rationale versus precision antigen design.
* Native versus de novo antigen design.
* Impact on glycosylation on antigen design for bacterial and viral targets.
* New in silico tools for vaccine candidate selection and optimal antigen design/prediction value.
* Build on “Smart RNA vaccines” with highly regulated & cell-specific expression.

*Call timelines:*

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| *Key steps* | *Due date* |
| Call for Pre-proposals  | April 22nd 2024 |
| Submission of completed Pre-Proposals to Sanofi by Institutions | June 3rd 2024 |
| Notification of Pre-proposals chosen to be pursued - Call for Full Proposals | July 11th 2024 |
| Submission of completed Full Proposals to Sanofi by Institutions | September 2nd 2024 |
| Institutions informed funding decisions | October 22nd 2024 |