

Six postdoctoral fellowships for research on biomaterials for advanced healthcare solutions

The BREATH programme, co-financed with European funds, opens the second call to attract international talent

The programme supports CIC biomaGUNE as a leading centre for training first-rate researchers who will develop innovations for diagnosis or treatment

San Sebastian, 21 July 2026. CIC biomaGUNE has launched the second call of the pioneering postdoctoral programme [BREATH](#), to select six postdoctoral researchers who will be able to train for 24 months thanks to a competitive international training programme. The call, open until 30 September, will offer the selected researchers the opportunity to apply their advances to innovation in the biomedical sector, by developing cutting-edge solutions for the diagnosis or treatment of diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative diseases, etc.

The BREATH (Boosting Future Researchers in Biomaterials for Advanced Health Solutions) project is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe programme, within the [COFUND](#) framework of Acciones Marie Skłodowska-Curie ([MSCA](#)), and aims to strengthen links between cutting-edge research in biomaterials and advanced biomedical solutions. Applicants must submit a scientific proposal in line with CIC biomaGUNE's scientific strategy.

From September, the five people selected in the first BREATH call, which closed in February this year, will join CIC biomaGUNE. "They have obtained excellent scores in the evaluation process, which includes an external evaluation of their CV and scientific proposal and a second stage involving an interview, during which the applicants defend their scientific proposal before a panel of scientists", explains Aitor Marcos, manager of the BREATH project.

Unique research infrastructure

Over the next few years, "BREATH will welcome excellent postdoctoral researchers from around the world, who will prepare themselves to lead the next wave of innovations in biomaterials for advanced medical care. At CIC biomaGUNE they will find an environment designed for scientific excellence. Our unique research infrastructure enables a transition from the engineering and fundamental characterisation of biomaterials to pre-clinical validation", adds Aitziber L. Cortajarena, research professor at the Basque Foundation for Science (Ikerbasque) and scientific director at CIC biomaGUNE.

The postdoctoral programme offers the opportunity to research and develop projects in biomaterials applied to the diagnosis or treatment of different diseases; in other words, the researchers will be able to work on "the challenges we face every day at CIC biomaGUNE in the design of functional nanostructures and biomaterials and their application as tools for understanding biological processes and developing new

therapies”, under the guidance of internationally renowned researchers at CIC biomaGUNE. In addition, “the programme seeks to promote cross-sector, interdisciplinary and international training and to foster the professional prospects of the fellows”, adds Aitor Marcos.

The awarding of this postdoctoral programme by the European Union is a recognition of the work of the Centre for Cooperative Research in Biomaterials (CIC biomaGUNE). “We are proud of the confidence placed in our centre to deliver a postdoctoral programme of this scale, which truly tackles the challenges in the field of biomaterials research and provides competitive training for postdoctoral researchers in the earlier of their career, enabling them to progress in their professional development”, says Cortajarena.

A bridge connecting academia, industry and clinical research

BREATH brings together a diverse [alliance](#) of 12 internationally-renowned clinical research organisations, 13 SMEs from the biotechnology, medical and pharmaceutical sectors, and 4 clinical research institutions. “This entire ecosystem will help strengthen the relationship between industry and research”, concludes Marcos. “BREATH is much more than a postdoctoral fellowship”, affirms Cortajarena, “it is a bridge that connects academia, industry and clinical research.”

Marcos highlights the “high standard of the international research institutions that make up the consortium, who will give the scholarship holders the possibility to do stays abroad.” These institutions are: Universität Wien, CNRS, Leibniz Institute for New Materials, Universidade de Aveiro, Universiteit Antwerpen, Universidade do Porto, Università degli Studi di Padova, SISSA, University of Szeged, Institut Curie, University of Queensland and Karolinska Institutet.

Marcos considers that “the Health Research Institutes Bioaraba, Biogipuzkoa and Biobizkaia, and the University Clinic of Navarra, will assist with the development of the potential clinical aspects of the projects and bring additional competitiveness to the consortium.”

The scholarship also includes training in business environments, thanks to the participation of biomedical and pharmaceutical SMEs such as AJL Ophthalmic, Aquadat, Biolan Health, Domotek, GlobalPET, Graphenea, I+Med, Innoprot, Microliquid, Nanobots Therapeutics, Oncomatrix and Polykey Polymers.

Lastly, BREATH’s partner ecosystem includes four public-private innovation entities (Mondragón Unibertsitatea, Fomento San Sebastián, Bic Gipuzkoa and Innobasque) who will provide training in innovation, technology transfer and entrepreneurship to help research results reach the healthcare market.

About CIC biomaGUNE

The Centre for Cooperative Research in Biomaterials, [CIC biomaGUNE](#), a member of the Basque Research and Technology Alliance ([BRTA](#)), is a non-profit research organisation in San Sebastian that carries out cutting-edge research at the interface between chemistry, biology and physics, with a particular focus on the study of the

molecular-scale properties of biological nanostructures and their biomedical applications. In 2018, it was accredited as a María de Maeztu Unit of Excellence, for meeting the excellence criteria of having a significant impact and high level of competitiveness in its field of activity in the global scientific community.