

Announcement for the opening of a call for research grant

Reference: 2026_08_BI_NUTRIBRAIN

A competition is open for the attribution of 1 research grant in the framework of the project “**NUTRIBRAIN- Flora costeira para promoção do bem-estar mental: Desenvolvimento de suplementos alimentares a partir de compostos de plantas dunares com impacto na sinalização BDNF-TrkB**”, with reference **COMPETE2030-FEDER-00686600 (no. 15759)**, funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF/FEDER) through COMPETE 2030 – Innovation and Digital Transition Program, at the Research Unit - CIIMAR - Interdisciplinary Research Center Marine and Environmental, under the following conditions:

- 1. Scientific area:** Biochemistry
- 2. Admission requirements:** Any national, foreign and stateless candidate (s) who hold (s) a BSc degree in Biochemistry, Pharmacy, or scientific related areas. The candidates must be enrolled in a Master or Integrated Master degree, with the aim of consolidating their scientific training through the development of research work leading to the achievement of the MSc degree integrated in a research project and/or be enrolled in a non-academic degree course integrated in an educational project of a developed higher education institution in association or cooperation with one or more R&D units*. Students who are enrolled in non-degree-granting courses may only be awarded if they do not exceed, with the signing of the grant contract in question, including possible renewals, an accumulated period of two years in that type of grant, whether consecutive or intermittent.

Candidates are expected to have scientific and technical knowledge on the following eliminatory parameters:

- a) Genomic DNA extraction and quality assessment
- b) PCR amplification and DNA sequencing
- c) Microscopy techniques and digital image acquisition
- d) Experience in plant, algal, and/or cyanobacterial taxonomy
- e) Preparation of culture media;
- f) Handling mammalian cell cultures and conducting bioassays in cell systems;
- g) Extraction, fractionation and chemical characterization of natural matrices through spectrophotometric and chromatographic techniques;
- h) Proficiency in spoken and written English will be strongly valued, as well as good interpersonal skills in the context of a multidisciplinary research team;

Other extracurricular activities of interest for the position will also be considered.

Preference will be given to candidates with excellent academic track records, with candidates with a Bachelor average graduation grade **superior to 16 values** (out of 20) being valued.

- 3. Work plan:** The selected candidate will join the BBEH team and play a key role in supporting the tasks of NUTRIBRAIN project, with a strong focus on handling mammal cells cultures. The responsibilities will include

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i) Analysis of cell organelles by Fluorescence Lifetime Imaging Microscopy; *ii)* determination of different protein levels by RT-PCR and western blot; *iii)* extraction, fractionation and chemical analysis of natural matrices; *iv)* support in the preparation of project reports. The candidate is also expected to actively support the performance of bioactivity assays in collaboration with the research team.

4. **Legislation and official rules:** Law nº. 40/2004, 18th August (Research Fellowship and Studentship Regulation) in its current version; Regulations for Studentships and Fellowships of the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P. and CIIMAR Grants Regulation approved by FCT.
5. **Work place:** The selected candidate will work under the supervision of Dr. Graciliana Lopes, integrated in the Research Team “Blue Biotechnology, Environment and Health” at CIIMAR (University of Porto). The laboratory is located at the headquarters of CIIMAR, in the modern Cruise Ship Terminal of the Port of Leixões, in Matosinhos, Porto’s metropolitan area. The selected candidate will work in an international and highly multidisciplinary environment with a strong connection to the Ocean.
6. **Duration of the grant:** Duration of 12 (twelve) months starting on 1st April 2026, under the regime of exclusive dedication.
7. **Monthly Maintenance stipend:** The monthly maintenance allowance is 1090.98€ € (one thousand, ninety euros and ninety eight cents).
8. **Selection methods:** A global appreciation of the candidates’ merit and motivation (valued from 1 to 10) will be made on the basis of the evaluation of their scientific and curricular track-record, in particular the quality of their research outputs related to the subject area of the present call. The ranking of candidates will be performed by a global evaluation based on:
 - Evaluation of the *Curriculum Vitae* - merit of the academic curriculum and performance: global appreciation considering the BSc and further enrolled studies, and its appropriateness to the position as well as the performance of the candidate in such degrees – 40%
 - Relevant experience and qualification for the proposed research area - 50%
 - Motivation and research interest alignment with the goals of the project – 10%

The evaluation process will result in a pre-selection of the three highest-ranking candidates, with a final score equal to or higher than 75%. This will be communicated to the candidates, and an interview may be conducted. If an interview is held with the pre-selected candidates, it will be held to clarify aspects related to the candidates experience, motivation and adequacy to the research plan. This interview will be scored on a scale of 0 to 20 and will carry a relative weight of 10%, while the previous evaluation will carry a relative weight of 90%. The jury reserves the right to not assign the position if none of the candidates meets all the requirements and matches the desired quality profile.

9. Composition of the jury:

President of the jury: Graciliana Lopes, PhD

Vogal: Guilherme Scotta Hentschke, PhD

Vogal: Isabel Benta Oliveira, PhD

10. Deadline for application and how to apply: Candidates interested in this position should send their application between the 02/03/2026 until 13/03/2026 to rh@ciimar.up.pt and glopes@ciimar.up.pt . The subject of the e-mail must contain the competition reference "2026_08_BI_NUTRIBRAIN". The application must be formalized compulsorily by sending the following documents (all documents in English language):

- Detailed *Curriculum Vitae* in English including the e-mail address and phone number of the candidate as well as two reference contacts (name, e-mail and current position);
- Motivation Letter (max 2 pages) that includes a short description of the professional accomplishments that the candidate considers relevant in the past 5 years;
- Copy of the eligibility certificates, specifying mandatorily the final Bachelor classification;

The whole application should be no bigger than 5 MB.

Applications that do not include all the previously indicated elements will not be considered.

All candidates who formalize their applications in an improper way or fail to prove the requirements imposed by this tender will be excluded from admission. In case of doubt, the panel is entitled to request any candidate to present further documentation supporting their statements.

11. Form of advertising/ notification of the results: The results of the first step of the evaluation (pre-selection) will be sent to the candidates by e-mail. The candidates have a 10-working day term in which to contest the decision, if they so wish, as provided for in the Administrative Procedure Code, in a preliminary hearing setting. After the eventual collection of the reference letters and interviews, the final results will be communicated by e-mail to the candidates. The jury reserves the right not to assign the work contract if none of the candidates meet all the requirements and match the desired profile.

12. Non-discrimination and equal access policy:

CIIMAR actively promotes a non-discrimination and equal access policy, wherefore no candidate can be privileged, benefited, impaired or deprived of any rights whatsoever, or be exempt of any duties based on their ancestry, age, sex, sexual preference, marital status, family and economic conditions, instruction, origin or social conditions, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, origin territory, language, religion, political or ideological convictions and union membership.

Pursuant to Decree-Law nº 29/2001 of February 3rd, disabled candidates shall be preferred in a situation of equal classification, and said preference supersedes any legal preferences. Candidates must declare, on their honor, their respective disability degree, type of disability and communication/expression means to be used during the selection process on their application form, under the regulations above.