

### Blue Sky Grant for Innovative Cancer Research & Technology 2026

Cancer Research KI invites applications for up to six project grants supporting innovative pilot projects in cancer research that seek to establish proof-of-principle concepts and generate preliminary data for future research development.

The Blue sky grants aim to fund exploratory, innovative and curiosity-driven projects not yet able to attract funding from conventional funding agencies, but likely to attract substantial support if successful. The explicit aim should be to obtain proof-of-principle/feasibility within the duration of the project. The project should not be a continuation or expansion of already funded projects. However, a general thematic alignment to the applicant's previous research is possible. The Blue Sky grant call welcomes all types of research projects relevant to the cancer field.

#### Eligibility

The call is open to researchers at Karolinska Institutet, including post-docs researchers. This year only applicants who are up to 15 years post-PhD will be considered. Deductible time may be accepted.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Hold a PhD,
- conduct the proposed research at KI,
- be employed or affiliated at least 50% at a KI department, or
- work at least 50% at Karolinska University Hospital with an affiliation to a KI Department.

Applicants who received a Blue Sky grant last year should wait one call period before reapplying. We strongly encourage applications from researchers from underrepresented groups and welcome diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and approaches in cancer research.

#### Funding

The grant is awarded for one year, amounts to SEK 500 000 + 25 % INDI, and can cover all types of project-related costs, except stipends.

#### Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by external reviewers based on the following criteria;

- (1) the scientific quality,
- (2) the novelty,
- (3) the potential to acquire subsequent funding after the funding period,
- (4) the merits of the applicant in relation to career stage, and
- (5) the blue sky nature of the project

The first three criteria will each be scored on a scale from 1-5: 1= Weak, 2= Good, 3 = Very good, 4 = Excellent, 5 = Outstanding). The merits (4) will be scored from 1 to 3. The Blue Sky nature of the project (5) will be scored from 1 to 7, because special emphasis is given to the Blue Sky character of the proposal.

#### Application instructions

The application should be written in English and include:

- **Research program** (five pages maximum, including references). It should be explicitly described what makes this a Blue Sky Grant project

- **Gender and diversity:** (maximum 1/2 page) Describe how gender and diversity aspects will be considered and integrated into both the research team and the research process.
- **2-page CV** of the principal investigator (including current funding)
- **Publication list** for the last eight years (2018-2026) in reverse chronological order. Please mark your five most important publications with an asterisk and emphasize your own name in bold. Please categorize your publications (1. peer-reviewed original articles in international journals, 2. peer-reviewed conference contributions, 3. review articles/ book chapters, 4. Patents, 5. other publications including preprints). Indicate equal contributions of first and last authorships
- **Project budget** (simple project budget for the Blue Sky grant sum)
- 500 words to describe the **absolute positive outcome** of the project as well as a 500 word description of the **specific risks**.

Please submit your application on the [PRISMA](#) platform: no later than September 14.