

BIOMICS Women's Leadership Pilot Programme

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

OPEN CALL: 30 SEPTEMBER – 30 OCTOBER 2026

1. About the Programme

The BIOMICS Women's Leadership Pilot Programme is a career and leadership development initiative designed to support women postdoctoral researchers at GIMM in reflecting on their professional development, exploring career progression opportunities, strengthening their leadership potential, and preparing for positions of increased responsibility within science and research-related careers.

Developed within the framework of the [BIOMICS Twinning project](#), the programme responds to needs identified through the BIOMICS survey on women's leadership and career development at GIMM, including strategic career planning, confidence, negotiation, visibility and recognition, career progression, mentoring and access to professional guidance.

A maximum of 15 participants will be selected for the first edition of the programme.

The programme combines four complementary components:

- **Individual self-assessment** — guided reflection on strengths, competencies, career interests, development priorities and professional goals;
- **Peer support** — regular interaction within small peer groups of three;
- **Individual mentoring** — at least four individual meetings with an experienced mentor over a six-month period, with additional meetings possible if mutually agreed; and
- **Leadership development** — opportunities to strengthen leadership-related competencies through reflection, mentoring, and dedicated development activities.

2. Eligibility

Applicants must meet **all** the following eligibility requirements:

- be a woman postdoctoral researcher at GIMM at the time of application;
- expect to remain affiliated with GIMM until at least July 2027, covering the full duration of the programme;
- have an interest in their professional and career development; and
- be willing and available to actively participate in all programme activities throughout its duration.

No previous formal leadership experience is required.

Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not proceed to the evaluation stage.

Eligibility is determined exclusively on the basis of the criteria listed above.

3. Expected Commitment

The programme is designed as an active development experience extending over several months.

Selected participants will be expected to:

- attend the Onboarding Day & Meet the Mentors, planned for December 2026;
- actively participate in the individual self-assessment and peer-reflection activities;
- participate in at least four individual mentoring meetings over the six-month mentoring period, with additional meetings possible if mutually agreed between mentor and mentee;
- participate in at least four peer-group meetings over the six-month period, scheduled independently by each peer group;
- engage with light-touch programme monitoring and evaluation activities; and
- attend the Closing & Reflection Session, planned for July 2027.

Meeting dates and times will be agreed directly between mentor-mentee pairs and, separately, among peer-group members, allowing flexibility according to participants' availability.

Applicants should carefully consider their availability before submitting an application. By submitting an application, applicants confirm their willingness to undertake this commitment if selected.

4. Application Period and Deadline

Applications open on 30 September 2026 and close on 30 October 2026 at 23:59 (Lisbon time).

Applications must be submitted through the official BIOMICS Women's Leadership Pilot Programme Application Form: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/BhqfNA3XaB>

Applications submitted after the deadline or incomplete applications will not be considered.

5. Application Requirements

A complete application consists of:

1. Completed online Application Form: Applicants must provide the information requested in the online form and confirm that they meet the programme eligibility and participation requirements.

2. Motivation Letter: Applicants must upload a motivation letter with the following specifications:

- maximum one A4 page;
- Arial 11 pt;
- 1.2 line spacing;
- PDF format only; and
- maximum file size: 10 MB.

The file should be named: **Surname_FirstName_BIOMICS_WLP_MotivationLetter.pdf**

The motivation letter should address:

- your motivation for participating in the programme;
- your current career aspirations, questions and/or development priorities;
- what you hope to gain from participating in the programme; and
- how mentoring and peer support could contribute to your professional development.

Applicants are encouraged to be specific and reflective. There is no expectation that applicants already have a defined leadership role or a fully established career plan.

6. Selection Process

Applications will first undergo an eligibility check.

Only applications meeting all eligibility requirements will proceed to evaluation.

Eligible applications will be reviewed by the Programme Organising Committee and the BIOMICS General Assembly according to predefined evaluation criteria.

Applications will be assessed based on:

- motivation for participating in the programme;
- clarity of career-development interests and/or needs;
- expected benefit from participation;
- alignment with the objectives of the programme; and
- willingness and ability to commit to the programme activities.

Selection will be based on an overall qualitative assessment of the application and motivation letter. Eligible applicants will be selected where their application demonstrates a sufficiently strong motivation for participation, a clear potential to benefit from the programme, and an appropriate level of commitment to its activities.

The selection process will also seek, where possible, to establish a cohort representing a diversity of career experiences, aspirations and development needs.

Meeting the eligibility requirements alone does not guarantee selection.

Where the number of suitable applications exceeds the number of available places, applications will be compared based on the criteria above to determine the final cohort.

The evaluation and selection process is scheduled to take place between 2 and 13 November 2026.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome by 18 November 2026.

7. The Mentor Pool

The BIOMICS mentor pool is being developed to bring together experienced professionals representing diverse career pathways, sectors and areas of expertise relevant to the career development of postdoctoral researchers.

Mentor recruitment is currently focusing on profiles with experience in areas such as:

- academic and scientific leadership;
- biotechnology, pharmaceutical and other industry careers;
- entrepreneurship, innovation and start-ups;
- research management and research support;
- research funding and grant-related careers;
- business development and investment;
- science communication and training;

- research policy and non-governmental organisations; and
- non-linear and alternative career pathways within and beyond academia.

The pool will include national and international perspectives and aims to provide participants with access to a broad range of professional experiences and career trajectories.

The final composition of the mentor pool will depend on mentor availability and confirmation of participation.

8. Mentor–Mentee Matching

Selection for the programme does not constitute assignment to a specific mentor.

During the Onboarding & Meet the Mentors session, selected participants will have the opportunity to learn about the professional backgrounds, career trajectories, expertise and mentoring interests of the confirmed mentors.

Following onboarding, participants will be given a defined deadline to indicate up to three preferred mentors, ranked in order of preference, and briefly explain their choices.

Final matching will consider:

- mentee preferences;
- career goals and development needs;
- mentor expertise;
- mentor availability; and
- mentoring capacity.

While every effort will be made to accommodate participants' preferences, assignment to a specific mentor cannot be guaranteed.

Final matches will be confirmed before the six-month mentoring cycle begins.

9. Confidentiality and Programme Monitoring

Mentoring conversations are intended to provide a confidential space for professional reflection and development.

Participants will not be required to disclose the content of confidential mentor–mentee discussions to the Organising Committee or BIOMICS.

Light-touch monitoring and evaluation activities will nevertheless be used to document programme implementation, participation, and overall experience. These may include brief feedback forms, confirmation of mentoring activities, and programme evaluation questionnaires.

The individual self-assessment undertaken during onboarding is primarily a personal reflective exercise. Participants will decide which elements they wish to share during peer reflection and mentoring activities.

10. Indicative Timeline

Open Call	30 September – 30 October 2026
Evaluation and selection	2–13 November 2026
Applicants notified	18 November 2026
Onboarding Day & Meet the Mentors	December 2026 – date TBC
Mentor–mentee matching	December 2026 – date TBC
Mentoring & peer-support cycle	January–June 2027
Closing & Reflection	July 2027 – date TBC

Final dates will be communicated to selected participants.

11. Participation Costs

Participation in the BIOMICS Women’s Leadership Pilot Programme is free of charge for selected participants. For the Onboarding Day, lunch, snacks and refreshments will be provided. No formal coffee breaks are planned; however, refreshments will remain available throughout the day, and participants will be free to take short breaks as needed.

12. Checklist Before Submission

Before submitting your application, please ensure that:

- ☐ I meet all eligibility requirements.
- ☐ I expect to remain affiliated with GIMM until at least July 2027.
- ☐ I have considered the time commitment required by the programme.
- ☐ I have completed all mandatory fields in the Application Form.
- ☐ My motivation letter does not exceed one A4 page.
- ☐ My motivation letter uses Arial 11 pt and 1.2 line spacing.
- ☐ My motivation letter is in PDF format and does not exceed 10 MB.
- ☐ I have submitted my application before 23:59 (Lisbon time) on 30 October 2026.

13. Questions and Support

Questions regarding eligibility, the application process or the programme should be addressed to: biomics@gimm.pt. Applicants are encouraged to contact the BIOMICS team sufficiently in advance of the application deadline if clarification is required.