**NOTICE OF OPENING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR THE SELECTION OF A PhD HOLDER RESEARCHER**

**Internal code: Researcher/FCT/i3S/2409/2026**

A call is opened for the position of a PhD holder, for an unfixed term work contract to carry out research duties within the project ***"PSGL-1 immune checkpoint protein antibody blockade as a strategy to treat non-Hodgkin lymphoma"***, with reference 2023.17791.ICDT, funded by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P.

**Scientific Area:** Oncobiology

**1. Project summary and work plan**

The immune system plays a central role in cancer prevention, progression, and treatment. Despite the success of immune checkpoint blockade therapies in certain cancers, non-Hodgkin lymphomas remain largely resistant to such approaches. This highlights the urgent need for novel immune checkpoint targets. P-selectin glycoprotein ligand-1 (PSGL-1), a glycoprotein implicated in immune regulation and lymphoma pathogenesis, has emerged as a promising candidate. We showed that PSGL-1 blockade with a monoclonal antibody (mAb) enhances T cell activation, alters the lymphoma immune microenvironment, and improves CAR-T cell efficacy in preclinical models. The SPECIFIC AIMS of this project are: 1) to determine the impact of PSGL-1 blockade on the immunophenotype and transcriptional programs of immune cells infiltrating lymphomas; 2) to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-PSGL-1 therapy alongside existing immunotherapeutic and other therapeutic modalities.

To accomplish AIM 1, we will treat the A20 mouse lymphoma syngeneic model with anti-mouse PSGL-1. The lymphoma microenvironment spatial composition and immune cell activation states will be characterized by advanced techniques. We also plan to determine whether the anti-tumoral effect of PSGL-1 blockade is mediated by T cells, by treating T cell-deficient lymphoma-bearing mice with anti-PSGL-1. To assess the impact of anti-PSGL-1 treatment on T cells infiltrating patients' lymphomas, we will perform autologous co-cultures with or without anti-PSGL-1 treatment.

To accomplish AIM 2, we will assess the therapeutic value of combining the administration of anti-PSGL-1 with anti-CD20, which is a standard targeted immunotherapy (rituximab) for B-cell lymphomas, versus each one alone. Also, we will treat A20 lymphoma mice with anti-PSGL-1 in combination with immune checkpoint inhibitors, and determine the impact of combination therapy versus each agent alone on lymphoma growth. Since anthracycline chemotherapeutic drugs can induce immunogenic cell death, we will assess whether doxorubicin treatment combined with anti-PSGL-1 improves the anti-tumor immune response and reduces tumor growth. Since radiotherapy was shown to induce immunogenic cell death and its combination with ICB therapy was shown to improve anti-tumor T-cell responses and tumor regression, we will treat A20 lymphoma-bearing mice with low-dose radiation and anti-PSGL-1. Multiparameter flow cytometry will be performed to assess how the



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combination of anti-PSGL-1 therapy with each therapy improves anti-lymphoma immune responses.

**2. Applicable Portuguese legislation**
Decree No. 57/2016, of August 29 – Legal Framework for Scientific Employment (RJEC) – in its current version.
Portuguese Labor Code, in its current wording.

**3. Jury**
Chairman: José Carlos Lemos Machado; Other Members: Sónia Maria Almeida Guedes de Melo, Maria do Céu Fontes Herdeiro Figueiredo; Substitute: Nuno Lages Alves.

**4. Workplace**
i3S - Rua de Alfredo Allen, 208 Porto, research group Intercellular Communication and Cancer.

**5. Professional category and monthly remuneration**
Junior Researcher
€2.408,11, corresponding to index 33 of the Tabela Remuneratória Única, whose application is intended for PhD holders with reduced post-doctoral experience or without a post-doctoral scientific curriculum.

**6. Requirements for admission**
***Mandatory:***
a) PhD degree in Oncobiology or related areas;
b) Motivation Letter in English;
c) Relevant publication record in peer-reviewed journals in oncobiology;
d) Extensive hands-on expertise in hemato-oncology;
e) Proven experience in cancer mouse model studies;
f) License to work with laboratory animals issued by the DGAV for A+D functions, in accordance with Decree-Law No. 113/2013;
g) Fluency in written and spoken English;
h) Good teamwork and interpersonal skills;
i) Immediate availability to start the contract.

***Preferential:***
a) License to work with laboratory animals issued by the DGAV for A+B+D functions, in accordance with Decree-Law No. 113/2013;
b) Experience in managing research projects will be valued.

**7. Evaluation of the applications and publication of the results**
The evaluation of the scientific and curricular background of the candidates should focus on the activity of the last five years that the candidate considers most relevant. The five-year period may be extended by the jury, at the candidate's request, when justified by suspension of scientific activity for socially protected reasons, namely for


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reasons of parental leave, prolonged serious illness, and other situations of unavailability for work that are legally protected.

**Weight of the different curricular valuation criteria:**
a) Detailed Curricula (80%);
b) Motivation Letter in English (10%)
c) Interview (10% - *facultative*)

If the jury decides to obtain further clarifications and additional information about the curricular elements presented, the 2 (two) best candidates classified on the basis of the curriculum may be called for an interview. The final classification system of the candidates is expressed on a scale of 0 to 100. Candidates who are not interviewed will have their maximum score limited to 90% of the evaluation.

Candidates who submit their application incorrectly or fail to meet the required qualifications for this competition will be excluded from admission.
The jury reserves the right to request any candidate, in case of doubt, to provide supporting documents for their statements.

False statements made by candidates will be sanctioned in accordance with the law.

The jury will draw up minutes of its meetings, which can be consulted at the candidate's request within 10 working days after the selection results are released.

The jury deliberates by means of a reasoned vote according to the evaluation criteria, with no abstentions allowed, and draws up a list of excluded and admitted candidates, ordered by respective classification.
All candidates are notified of the selection results by email. After notification, candidates have 10 working days to comment.

In the 90 days following the deadline for submission of applications, the jury's final decision is communicated to the candidates. Subsequently the institute Director, who is also responsible for the final decision of hiring, will ratify the decision of the jury.

This call is intended exclusively to fill the indicated position on offer and may be canceled before the final ranking list of candidates is ratified by the Director. Accordingly, the position will no longer be available.

**8. Submission of applications**
Applications must include all the documents proving that they fulfill the admission requirements, namely:
a) Copy of certificate or diploma of PhD degree in Oncobiology or related areas;
b) Detailed Curriculum Vitae;
c) License to work with laboratory animals issued by the DGAV for A+D or A+B+D functions, in accordance with Decree-Law No. 113/2013;
d) Motivation Letter in English;



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e) Other documentation relevant for the evaluation of qualifications in a related scientific area.

The submission of applications is digital, in pdf format, from September-24 to October-08, in the following link:

https://dozer.i3s.up.pt/applicationmanagement/#/addapplications/1010a2f83d4f5ee313703a6765cecf3f

**9. Start and duration of the contract**

The anticipated start date of the contract is December 1st, 2026, and is subject to budget availability. The expected duration of the contract will be 12 months, eventually extendable.

**10. Non-discrimination and equal access policy**

i3S actively promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access. No applicant shall be privileged, benefited, prejudiced, or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty on the basis of ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic origin or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs, or trade union membership.

Within the framework of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, i3S adopts the Open, Transparent and Merit-based (OTM-R) principles for the recruitment of researchers, with the aim of conducting fair and transparent recruitment processes, bringing equal opportunities to all candidates.

**11. Applicants with disabilities**

Under the terms of Decree-Law 29/2001, of February 3, the candidate with a disability is given preference in equal ranking, which takes precedence over any other legal preference. Candidates must declare under oath their degree of disability, the type of disability and the means of communication/expression to be used in the selection process, under the terms of the aforementioned decree.



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