

FungiBrain ITN - A Case Study

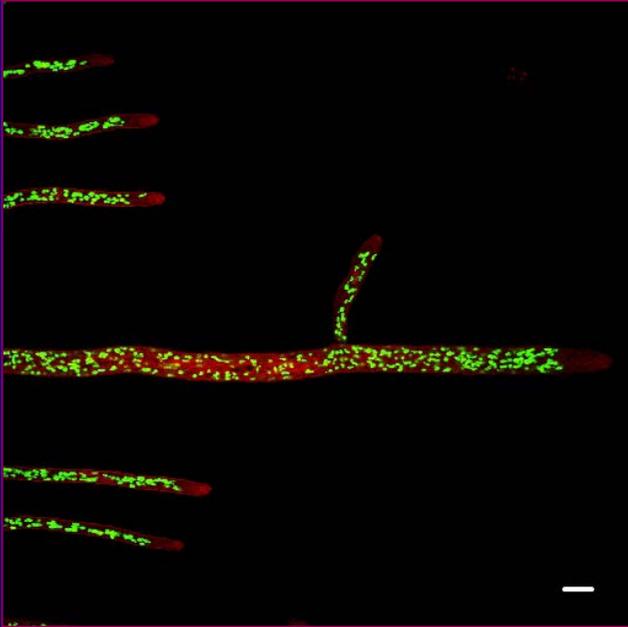
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Overview of talk

- What is FungiBrain about?
- The FungiBrain ITN Partners
- Preparation of the proposal
- From notification of funding until the start of the grant
- Tips for implementation of the grant

What is FungiBrain about?



The sensing and integration of signals governing cell polarity and tropisms in fungi

Involves interdisciplinary studies on:

- A range of yeast and filamentous fungi, including plant and human pathogens
- Antifungal drugs that disrupt fungal cell polarity and tropisms

FungiBrain ITN - The 12 Players

Academic Partners

- 9 Partners: max of 2 Partners per country (UK x2, France x2, Spain x2, France x2, Switzerland x1)
- 3 'Partners' each comprised of 2 PIs
- Gender balance: of the 12 PIs involved, 3 were female
- High profile, experienced and new 'high flying' researchers (good publication and funding records)

Industrial Partners

- 3 Partners: 1 SME; 2 big companies
- SME is FTG Ltd which is Manchester-based

Preparation of the FungiBrain grant proposal 1

- Important to identify and communicate with Partners, particularly Industrial Partners, asap
- Used a consultant (Helix Advisory Services Ltd) to advise on grant preparation - cost < £1,500
- Wrote the application in Cordoba (Spain) with another Partner who previously had written a successful ITN proposal
- Do not underestimate the time required to write the application (74 pages - main text was 36 pages)
- Need to follow very strict rules about format of proposal and page lengths for each section
- We applied for 11 x 3-year Early Stage Researchers (PhD students) and 3 x 2-year Experienced Researchers (Postdocs)

Preparation of the FungiBrain grant proposal 2

- Four main sections of the application that are assessed:
 - Science and Technology Quality (30%)
 - Training (30%)
 - Implementation (20%)
 - Impact (20%)
- Major emphasis throughout the application should be on the training network for Early Stage Researchers (PhD students)
- Applied for funding (€50 K) for an international meeting at the end of the grant period
- Rules and layout of application had changed from those for previous ITN applications - could not easily cut-and-paste text from other successful proposals :(

From the notification of funding until the start of the grant

- Notification of the likely funding of the grant - bit cryptic - confirmation of funding requires further negotiation
- We received a score of 95.40% - funding threshold was 92-93%
- Important to develop a good rapport with your EU Project Officer
- Need to then prepare 'Annex I - Description of Work' - another 36 page document - before signing Grant Agreement!!
- Agree financial breakdown and distribution between partners
- Sign Consortium Agreement
- 11 months between submission of application and start of project

Important things to do before the grant starts

- **Publicise** - Send round details of project, and who you want to recruit, to all your colleagues
- **Advertise early** (once you know that you have got grant and before signing formal Consortium Agreement)
- Produce a **recruitment slide** for conferences
- Recruit an outstanding **Project Manager** (ideally someone with good administrative and organizational skills, and an understanding of the science) - PM funded for 4 days per week
- Most of you will be shocked about how much the ESRs (PhD students) and ERs (postdocs) are paid!
- Have a pre-agreed date for early **Kickoff meeting** after start of the grant

FungiBrain ITN - Tips for implementation

- Have experienced Partners in the ITN
- Set up a website at the beginning of the project (cannot advertise on Euraxess website until one has a website)
- Link up and compare notes with other related ITNs, feeding into established networks and training events/conferences
- Attend ITN Project Coordinators briefing in Brussels early
- Know the rules inside out; ITNs are not like other FP7 grants
- Make sure all partners aware of what is required from them (deliverables, milestones and reporting)
- Plan ahead for the next four years - Mid-term most important time

FungiBrain ITN contact details

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This presentation will be made available