The CNIC coordinates an EU project to foster partnership between researchers in academia and industry

01/03/2017

The 4DHeart project is underpinned by a €1.5 million budget spread over 4 years

The 4DHeart project (4D Analysis of Heart Development and Regeneration Using Advanced Light Microscopy) was launched on January 1 2017. This European Commission financed European Industrial Doctorate (EID) project is coordinated by Prof. Miguel Torres at the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cardiovasculares Carlos III (CNIC) and has a total funding of €1.5 million spread over 4 years. The goal of the project, part of the European Union H2020 Programme, is to foster research partnerships between academia and industry.

The benefits of free and open exchange between universities and industry might seem obvious, and likely to have a positive impact on society; however, the industrial and academic sectors often work in separate worlds. For Prof. Torres, turning this situation around is one of the key challenges of this new project.

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The project will support 6 predoctoral researchers in universities across Europe. The students will be incorporated through a rigorous selection process that will take account of their academic record. Each of the predoctoral researchers will be jointly supervised by one investigator from the academic sector and another from industry, and will spend half their training period in the industrial partner's installations. At the end of the project, each student will defend his or her doctoral thesis at one of the host universities in the project.

The business partners in 4DHeart are renowned world leaders in industrial innovation:

- Acquifer combines experience in the development of assays, instruments, and tools for screening programs in animals and cells.

- Leica Microsystems' Life Science Division, supports the scientific community in imaging technology through advanced innovation and technical experience in the visualization, measurement, and analysis of microstructures.

- Philips Ibérica, uis a product division of Royal Philips Electronics.

- Bitplane, is a leader in interactive microscopy imaging.

The predoctoral trainees will be based at one of the participating academic centers:

- The University of Bern (UBERN) is a research leader in areas of high social and scientific importance. The representative in 4DHeart is Prof. Nadia Mercader.

- The CNRS Optics and Biosciences laboratory at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. 4DHeart students will be hosted by an interdisciplinary group of investigators led by Prof. Willy Supatto.

- The Institut de Génétique et de Biologie Moléculaire et Cellulaire (IGBMC) near Strasbourg is one of the leading multidisciplinary research centers in Europe. The host lab is led by Prof. Julien Vermot.

- Idiap Research Institute (IDIAP), participates through the Computational Bioimaging group, led by Prof. Michael Liebling.

- Other participants are the Autonomous University of Madrid, the Carlos III University of Madrid (UC3M), the University of Starsbourg, and the IE Business School, Madrid. Students on the project will also receive training from Juan Sarasua of Science Communication Strategies.

Beyond preparing the participants for their future postdoctoral research, 4DHeart will broaden the

professional opportunities available to them at the end of their training period. The training offered through this EID project is broad and comprehensive, so that at the end of the program, participants will be able to choose among careers in academic or industrial research, patent protection, or science communication, and could even be inspired to form their own start-up.

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