

i4KIDS ACCELERATION PROGRAMME 2026

Participation rules

1. INTRODUCTION

The i4KIDS Paediatric Innovation Hub (i4KIDS), an initiative launched by Sant Joan de Déu Barcelona Children's Hospital (SJD) as the coordinator of a network of 52 entities (<https://www.innovation4kids.org/en/>), is committed to advancing innovation in foetal, paediatric and maternal health through the development and testing of solutions tailored to the needs of children and mothers. In line with this objective, i4KIDS announces the launch of the 3rd edition of the ACCELERATION PROGRAMME 2026, extending invitations to 7 eligible projects dedicated to positively influencing the future of children and mothers.

2. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The **i4KIDS Acceleration Programme** is a six-month initiative designed to fast-track early-stage innovations in fetal, paediatric, and maternal health. The programme supports high-potential projects through two structured phases. The **Phase 1** (May–July) helps teams define and strengthen their value proposition through specialized training, mentoring, and gap assessments. The **Phase 2** (September–November) builds on this foundation, offering expert consultancy and pitch preparation support. The programme culminates in a final pitch event during *Demo Day* on **November** in Barcelona.

The basic timeline for the 2026 edition of the programme is as follows. A detailed calendar is represented in Appendix A:

Key Dates:

1. **March 9th, 2026:** Call for projects.
2. **April 12th, 2026:** End of the call for projects.
3. By the end of April, the seven projects selected to join the Acceleration Programme will be announced.
4. **May 4th, 2026:** **In-person** Kick-off meeting and start of the programme for the participants.
5. **November 2026:** End of classes and Pitch competition.
6. **December 18th, 2026:** End of the Programme.

i4KIDS Acceleration Programme 2026								
MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.
Open call	End of call	Kick-off						Pitch
Phase 1						Phase 2		

Format of Sessions:

- **Group Classes (Masterclasses):** All masterclasses will take place **in person** from 15:00 to 18:00 CEST (1.5–2 hours). To ensure accessibility, participants who cannot attend a session physically may request a **hybrid participation link**.
- **One-to-One Mentoring Sessions:**
Mentoring sessions will be arranged individually, considering the availability of both participants and the assigned mentors or consultants. For those theoretical sessions that include a compulsory individual mentoring component, and as outlined in the present document, **two specific dates will be assigned for scheduling these meetings**.
Participants must book their individual session within one of these two dates to ensure timely completion and alignment with the programme schedule. Providing two options allows mentors and participants to coordinate and confirm a suitable time during the allocated slots.
In the exceptional case that a participant cannot attend during either of the proposed days, alternative dates will be explored to find a feasible solution.

2.1. Phase 1. May - July

The Phase 1 is designed to validate early-stage innovation projects (TRL 2 to 3) by confirming their value proposition through a structured approach comprising the following steps:

- **Specialized Training:** Participants engage in a specialized training programme that guides them through the key stages of healthcare innovation, from identifying unmet needs to navigating IP, regulations, business models, and market access. Along the way, they gain practical insights into clinical trials and patient engagement. The programme blends group workshops with one-on-one mentoring, ensuring a balance between shared learning and personalized support.
- **GAP Assessment:** Using a healthcare innovation cycle methodology, like the CIMIT/KTH approach, we conduct a GAP assessment to pinpoint disparities between the current project state and the desired project outcomes. This process enables strategic planning and resource allocation to efficiently bridge these gaps.

Following Phase 1, a comprehensive analysis will determine the most suitable services for the project's advancement. The specific list of services will be agreed upon between the i4KIDS team, mentors and participants (Appendix B). At the end of the Phase 1, the project team should have a clear idea of its strengths and what it needs to work on in the following phase.

2.2. Phase 2. September - November

The Phase 2 is designed to de-risk early-stage innovation projects by increasing their value and maturity through a structured support programme. This phase runs from September until the end of November, with the final project presentations taking place in Barcelona in November.

Programme Highlights:

- Need/Problem Validation: This step entails a thorough evaluation of identified needs. It involves engaging clinical experts in interviews to validate the hypothesis that has risen. Insights obtained from these stakeholders ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges being addressed.
- Mentorship accompaniment: Engaging experienced mentors who provide guidance and support tailored to the specific needs of each project, aiding in navigating challenges and maximizing opportunities for success.
- Workshop in impact: Workshop to enhance project strategies, encourage collaborations, and increase positive social impact in paediatric healthcare.
- Consultancy services providing access to expert consultancy services in areas such as Regulatory Roadmap, Business Strategy, Intellectual Property Management, Market Access and Technological Feasibility, while not all services may be covered by the programme, a thorough assessment is conducted to prioritize the most essential services tailored to each project's specific needs and maturity level.
- Deck preparation and communication to pitch: Aid teams in creating persuasive pitch materials that effectively showcase their project's vision, goals, and milestones. Support includes not only the design and structure of the deck, but also strategic guidance on how to communicate the pitch, ensuring clarity, coherence, and impact. The aim is to empower teams to deliver compelling presentations to stakeholders, evaluators, and potential partners.

3. CANDIDATES

Only projects from the i4KIDS member research groups can apply to this programme (the members' list can be found in Appendix C). If you are interested in participating in the programme but are not a member of the i4KIDS network, you can contact our i4KIDS team through contact@innovation4kids.org and our team will evaluate your candidacy for potential adherence to the network.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The i4KIDS Acceleration Programme considers **projects** from both **academic environments and start-up companies** with the following objectives and categories:

- Projects falling within Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 2 to 3.
- Projects dedicated to advancing products and/or services targeting paediatric (from foetal to 21 years old) or maternal health.
- Projects rooted in MedTech, Digital Health, Biotech, or Pharma, situated within the domains of life sciences, health, or well-being.
- Projects must have a committed team with availability to participate in the acceleration programme (including all its activities and phases). Minimum 2-person committed on assisting to the programme sessions and activities.

5. SELECTION

All project submissions must be completed by filling out the "i4KIDS Acceleration Programme form" document before the specified **deadline of April 12th at 11:59 PM**. This form must be filled and

sent in **PDF format** to the email contact@innovation4kids.org indicating in the Subject: “*Application i4KIDS Acceleration Programme 2026*”.

Projects submitted after this deadline will not be reviewed. All proposals will undergo a thorough evaluation to assess their alignment with i4KIDS participation criteria, as well as their relevance to designated areas and fields.

A panel of external experts will evaluate eligible candidates to select **seven projects** for the Acceleration Programme. Notification of selection will primarily be conveyed via the contact details provided in the Project Proposal for the i4KIDS Acceleration Programme, followed by dissemination through i4KIDS communication channels.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals submitted to the i4KIDS Acceleration Programme will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Idea (25%)
 - Identification of an unmet clinical need.
 - Scientific rationale and solution supported by state-of-the-art knowledge and proof-of-idea results.
- Market opportunity (20%)
 - Identification and early validation of the market needs.
 - Target market characteristics.
 - Identification of potential users and customers.
 - Competitors and differential value proposition.
- Transfer and implementation capacity (15%)
 - Current stage of development.
 - Intellectual property maturity and strategy.
 - Plan for project exploitation.
- Impact (20%)
 - Economic and social impact.
 - Benefit for patients.
- Team (20%)
 - Experience in the field and roles complementarity of the project team.
 - Commitment of the team members to participating in the programme.

If necessary, the evaluation panel may request verification of information provided in the proposals through either in-person or online interactions with the applicants.

7. COST OF PARTICIPATION AND PROFIT SHARING

The i4KIDS Acceleration programme is completely free for participants, and organizers abstain from seeking any equity. Instead, a meticulously designed profit-sharing structure is activated upon project or start-up success (success events), considering the programme's valued at 30,000€ per project. In such an event, the generated proceeds will be reinvested into the Foundation Sant Joan de Déu and i4KIDS (FSJD/i4KIDS), guaranteeing sustained backing for innovative endeavours in paediatric and maternal health.

Success events include:

- Sale or licensing of the startup or its technology to a third party.
- Revenue generated from the exploitation of technology (e.g., product sales, service provision).
- Completion of investment round.

In case of any successful event, participants are obligated to notify FSJD/i4KIDS. Below are the details regarding profit-sharing:

- If a lump-sum payment equal to or exceeding 300.000,00€ is received, FSJD/i4KIDS is entitled to the total aid amount (30.000,00€). Payment to i4KIDS will be made within three months after receiving the payment.
- If a lump-sum payment is less of 300.000,00€, and/or in the case of recurring payments, FSJD/i4KIDS is entitled to receive an amount equal to two percent (2%) of each recurring payment, up to 30.000,00€. Payments to FSJD/i4KIDS will be made annually for all recurring payments obtained during the same year, within the first quarter of the following year.

Profit sharing will cease:

- When FSJD/i4KIDS has obtained an amount equal to 30.000,00€.
- After five (5) years since granting of the aid.

8. POST-PROGRAMME OPPORTUNITIES

Upon completion of the Acceleration Programme, participating projects will become part of the i4KIDS Alumni network. This community aims to foster continued growth and connection among past participants, offering opportunities such as follow-up mentoring, visibility in future i4KIDS events, access to a network of innovation experts and partners, and potential prioritization in future i4KIDS initiatives or collaborations. Being an i4KIDS Alumni provides ongoing support and positioning within the paediatric innovation ecosystem.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INDUSTRIAL/INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

This programme entails a commitment to confidentiality from all parties involved, regarding the ideas and information presented, if such ideas and information are not lawfully publicized. i4KIDS will always respect the ownership of the industrial and intellectual property of the participating entrepreneurs, as well as the ideas and know-how they contribute.

Your participation in this programme does not imply any concession or transfer of such rights to us.

10. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Our programme requires all participants to maintain confidentiality regarding the ideas and information shared, until such time as they are lawfully made public.

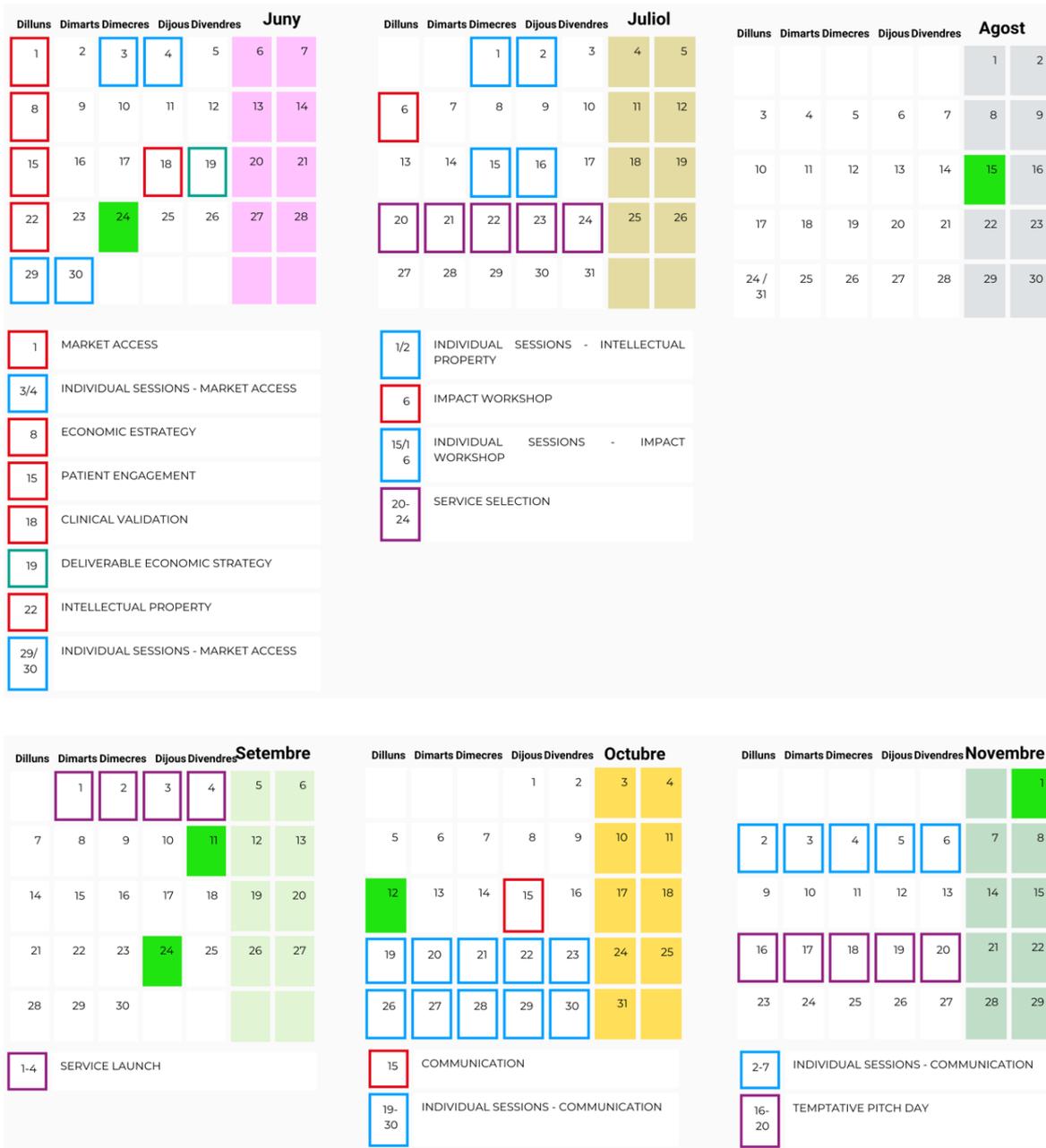
Participants in the i4KIDS Acceleration Programme may have their images and related materials disseminated on social networks and at events for promotional purposes.

Regarding personal data processing, the five candidates selected will sign a specific data sharing agreement. Each party is responsible for processing the personal data of the other party's signatories. Contact details for responsible parties are provided in the agreement.

i4KIDS ACCELERATION PROGRAMME 2026

Appendix A – Calendar

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
30	31						27	28	29	30					25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
9	OPEN CALL PROGRAMME i4KIDS ACCELERATION						12	CLOSED CALL PROGRAMME i4KIDS ACCELERATION					4	KICK-OFF AND UNMET NEED & VALUE PROPOSITION										
							21	COMMUNICATION OF SELECTED PROJECTS					7	UNMET NEED & VALUE PROPOSITION										
															11	BUSINESS MODEL								
															15	DELIVERABLE BUSINESS MODEL								
															18	REGULATORY STRATEGY								
															20/21	INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS - BUSINESS MODEL								
															27/28	INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS - REGULATORY STRATEGY								



Please note that the dates shared in this preliminary calendar are subject to minor adjustments if necessary.

The exact date of the final event will be confirmed during the programme. This calendar is shared to help applicants ensure they can fully benefit from the programme and engage in all key activities.

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Appendix B – Description of the activities and services

Appendix B provides a description of the activities and services that will be provided during the i4KIDS Acceleration Programme.

PHASE 1:

The aim of the i4KIDS Phase 1 is to validate the value proposition of early-stage innovation projects, employing the following steps:

- Group and individual sessions encompassing Regulatory Affairs, Business Strategy, Intellectual Property, Patient engagement, Clinical trials, Market Access and Impact.
- Conducting GAP assessments adhering to the CIMIT/KTH methodology.

This stage is scheduled to commence in early May and culminate by the end of July.

PHASE 2:

The i4KIDS Phase 2 aims to de-risk early-stage innovation projects by increasing their value through the following steps:

- Mentorship accompaniment.
- Consultancy services in the field of:
 - Regulatory
 - Business Strategy
 - Intellectual Property
 - Market Access

Not all these services will be covered by the programme, but an assessment will be done to prioritize the most adequate needed services to be developed during the programme by each project and agreed with the project team, i4KIDS team and mentors.

- Deck preparation and Pitch training.

This phase will start in September and conclude by November, with the final projects being presented in November.

i4KIDS ACCELERATION PROGRAMME 2026
Appendix C – Current members and research groups

Institució	Nombre del grupo de investigació
FSJD	Enfermedades metabólicas de origen pediátrico
FSJD	Sarcomas e Histiocitosis
FSJD	Genética Bioquímica y metabólica
FSJD	Neurometabolismo pediátrico: mecanismos de comunicación neuronal y terapias personalizadas
FSJD	Ambiente y complicaciones en el embarazo
FSJD	Enfermedades cardiovasculares en el desarrollo
FSJD	Cronicidad y curas paliativas
FSJD	Enfermedades infecciosas y Microbioma
FSJD	Oftalmología Pediátrica
FSJD	Neurogenética y Medicina Molecular
FSJD	Medicina fetal y perinatal
FSJD	Grupo de investigación del centro de críticos
FSJD	Estudio de enfermedades por disfunción inmune en pediatría (GEMDIP)
FSJD	Genómica para el diagnóstico de enfermedades minoritarias
FSJD	Genómica Traslacional
FSJD	Leucemia y hemopatías pediátricas
FSJD	Participación de pacientes en la investigación (PERA)
FSJD	Epigenética del cáncer pediátrico

FSJD	Tratamiento del cáncer pediátrico
FSJD	Investigación aplicada a enfermedades neuromusculares
FSJD	Tecnologías de la salud y la innovación
IISPV	Unidad de investigación en pediatría, nutrición y desarrollo humano (PEDINUR)
IISPV	NeuroÈpia - Neurociencia clínica y epidemiológica
IR Sant Pau	Fisiología molecular de la sinapsis
IR Sant Pau	Grupo de investigación en salud de la mujer y salud perinatal
IR Sant Pau	Grupo de Investigación en Cuidados de Enfermería
IRSant Pau	Enfermedades Genéticas
IR Sant Pau	Pediatría
IR Sant Pau	Epilepsia
CIMNE	Grupo de Bioingeniería Computacional
CST	Grupo de investigación en Pediatría
CST	Grupo de Investigación en Salud Integral en la Adolescencia (Sia)
Eurecat	Unidad de Digital Health
Fundació CIM	CIM UPC (Grupo 3D Printing for Health)
ICFO	Laboratorio de microscopía de superresolución y nanoscopía
ICFO	Óptica médica
IDIAP Jordi Gol	PEDICRONICS-AP

IDIAP Jordi Gol	Innovación y Tecnología Pediátrica (InnoTeP)
IDIAP Jordi Gol	Infancia y Dieta Mediterránea (INFADIMED)
IDIBELL	Grupo de Potencia de Células Madre
IDIBELL	Biología de las células madre hematopoyéticas y leucemogénesis
IDIBELL	Nucleasas, cáncer e inmunidad
IDIBELL	Laboratorio de enfermedades Neurometabólicas
IDIBELL	Grupo de investigación sobre Sarcoma
IGTP	Grupo de Oncología Hepática Infantil
IGTP	Grupo de Investigación Neuromuscular de Badalona (GRENBA)
Institut Josep Carreras	Leucemia e immuno-oncología
Institut Josep Carreras	Biología de células madre, leucemia del desarrollo e inmunoterapia
Institut Josep Carreras	RNA regulador y cromatina
Institut Josep Carreras	Desarrollo y patologías linfocíticas
IQS	GEMAT: Grupo de Ingeniería de Materiales
ISGlobal	Grupo de Investigación en Epidemiología y Salud Internacional (GRESI)
I3PT	Grupo de enfermedades minoritarias Parc Taulí
IDIBGI	Endocrinología Pediátrica
IDIBGI	Grupo de Genética Cardiovascular
IDIBGI	Salud Mental

IDIBGI	Investigación Metabólica Materno-Fetal
UAB	Grupo de Sensores y Biosensores
UAB	Tecnología y aplicación multimedia y digital en los diseños observacionales (GRID)
UAB	Nanotecnología
UAB	Ingeniería de Proteínas y Nanomedicina
UAB	Neuropatología Mitocondrial
UAO	Neurometabolismo pediátrico
UB	Brainlab – Grupo de Investigación en Neurociencia Cognitiva
UB	Grupo de investigación sobre aplicaciones de realidad virtual y otras nuevas tecnologías en Psicología clínica y de la salud (VR-PSY Lab)
UB	Trastornos del neurodesarrollo
UB	Bases moleculares de las enfermedades cerebrales raras y canalopatías
F. Mutua Terrassa	Grupo de Investigación Interdisciplinar en Enfermedades Infecciosas MutuaTerrassa (GRIMIMT)
UOC	ChildTech Lab
IRB Barcelona	Genómica comparativa
IRB Barcelona	Laboratorio de Señalización y Ciclo Celular
IRB Barcelona	Biología mitocondrial y regeneración tisular
IRB Barcelona	Transportadores de aminoácidos y enfermedad
IRB Barcelona	Caracterización estructural de ensamblajes macromoleculares

IRB Barcelona	Enfermedades metabólicas complejas y mitocondrias
IRB Barcelona	Laboratorio de División Celular
IRB Barcelona	Degradación dirigida de proteínas y descubrimiento de fármacos
IRB Barcelona	Microtubule Organization
IRB Barcelona	Laboratorio de biofísica molecular
IRB Barcelona	Biomedical genomics (BBGLab)
IRB Barcelona	Envejecimiento y metabolismo
IBEC	Nanoprobadores y nanoswitches
IBEC	Biomateriales para terapias regenerativas
IBEC	Biosensores para bioingeniería
IBEC	Nanobioingeniería
IBEC	Imagen molecular para la medicina de precisión
IBEC	Materiales interactivos bioinspirados y sistemas protocelulares
IBEC	Neurobiotecnología molecular y celular
IBUB/UB	Genética Molecular Humana
IBUB/UB	GRENBA
IDIBAPS	Diagnóstico molecular
IDIBAPS	Laboratorio de Enfermedades Metabólicas Hereditarias y Enfermedades Musculares

IDIBAPS	Investigación traslacional en nuevas estrategias terapéuticas y diagnósticas en enfermedades hepáticas
IDIBAPS	Investigación traslacional en enfermedades pulmonares
IDIBAPS	Grupo de Investigación Infancia y Entorno (GRIE)
IDIBAPS	Medicina fetal y perinatal
IDIBAPS	Genética molecular de los linfomas pediátricos
UPC	Laboratorio de Ingeniería Biomecánica (BIOMEC)
UPC	Ciencia de Datos Inteligente e Inteligencia Artificial (IDEAI- UPC)
UPC	Laboratorio de Bioinformática y Señales Biomédicas
UPC	BIOART
UPC	Robótica Inteligente y Sistemas
UPF	Grupo de Adquisición y Percepción del Habla (SAP)
UPF	Grupo de Investigación en Razonamiento y Cognición Infantil (RICO)
UPF	BCN MedTech
VHIR	Cáncer infantil y trastornos de la sangre
VHIR	Infección e inmunidad en el paciente pediátrico
VHIR	Grupo de Investigación en Patología Neuromuscular y Mitocondrial
VHIR	Grupo de Investigación en Reumatología – Unidad de Reumatología Pediátrica
CRG	Grupo de Eventos Epigenéticos en Cáncer
URV	Alimentación, Nutrición, Desarrollo y Salud Mental

