The Agreement establishing the EMBC, which was accepted by the founding member states and signed by all governments that joined EMBC since then, states in Article II.3:

“Projects studied by the Conference which only some Members are disposed to execute shall be termed Special Projects. Any Special Project shall be approved by the Conference by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting. The execution of a Special Project shall be the subject of a special agreement between the States participating in it. Any Member is entitled to participate at any later time in a Special Project which has already been approved. “

This article allows a subset of member states to work together within the framework of the intergovernmental organization on joint activities furthering cooperation in the area of molecular biology.

The article was initially drafted with a view to working towards the establishment of a European Laboratory for Molecular Biology, which was one of the goals of the founding members of EMBO.

EMBO Laboratory (later EMBL)

(1972 – 1974)

The EMBO Laboratory Committee had been invited by EMBC to elaborate on its proposal for the establishment of a European Laboratory for Molecular Biology. Following many preparatory meetings and intense discussions EMBC decided to establish the European Molecular Biology Laboratory as a Special Project on 28 June 1972. The delegations of 10 member states declared their interest in joining the Special Project. Further discussions lead to the “Agreement establishing the European Molecular Biology Laboratory”, open for signature from 10 May 1973. On 4 July 1974, with the signature of the 10th Member State and thereby securing the targeted budget, EMBL became a legal entity, separate from EMBC. Founding Member States are Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
EMBO Young Investigator Awards


The EMBC had discussed founding an EMBO Young Investigator Programme since 1998. On 30 June 1999 EMBC approved the establishment of the Special Project “EMBO Young Investigator Awards” and on 4 July 2000 EMBC approved the programme's inclusion into the EMBC General Programme. EMBC agreed to cover the networking and administrative costs, but left the payment of the awards to the selected EMBO Young Investigators to the individual member states on a voluntary basis..

With the inclusion of the award component of the EMBO Young Investigator Programme into the Indicative Scheme of EMBC on 24 November 2014, the Special Project “EMBO Young Investigator Awards” became obsolete.

Strategic Development Installation Grants

(2006 - )

The Strategic Development Installation Grants (SDIG) were formally accepted as a Special Project of EMBC on 5 July 2005, following discussions held in Paris in 2004 and in Budapest in 2005.

The scheme is based on and replaced the EMBO/HHMI Startup Grants. The EMBO/HHMI Startup Grants were funded via a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to EMBO for the support of scientists in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Poland. The programme was further developed into the SDIG to allow participating member states to attract scientists
who had received part of their education elsewhere to set up their independent laboratories locally, thereby strengthening science in the receiving EMBC Member States.

The scheme, known as “EMBO Installation Grants”, was entirely funded by the participating member states and had its first call for applications in June 2006. Current and former […] participating member states are:

Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, [Hungary], Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Turkey.

Grantees receive €50,000 per annum for 3-5 years and participate in the networking activities of the EMBO Young Investigator Programme. Selections are made by the EMBO Young Investigator committee, while the SDIG board oversees the programme.

Since 2015 the networking activities and a fraction of the annual grant are included in the EMBC Indicative Scheme.

Members of the SDIG Board:

- Croatia: Lovorka Barač Lauc
- Czech Republic: Jan Buriánek and Zdena Palková (Vice chair)
- Estonia: Maia Kivisaar and Toivo Räim
- Lithuania: Milda Jodinsiene
- Poland: Maria Klimkiewicz and Leszek Kaczmarek (Chair)
- Portugal: Claudio Sunkel
- Turkey: Ahmet Ademoglu