



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 16-046

Dear Colleague Letter: Research Opportunities in Europe for NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows

March 7, 2016

BACKGROUND

To further scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the United States, an Implementing Arrangement was signed on July 13, 2012 to enable U.S. scientists and engineers with NSF-funded CAREER awards and Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to pursue research collaboration with European colleagues supported through EU-funded European Research Council (ERC) grants.

Connecting researchers with complementary strengths and shared interests promotes scientific progress in solving some of the world's most vexing problems. This international research opportunity is mutually beneficial to the U.S. participants and the hosts through cooperative activities during research visits and also by establishing international research partnerships to enrich future research activities in Europe and the U.S.

Under the Arrangement, the ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA) identifies ERC-funded research groups who wish to host NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows for research visits of up to one year within their ERC funding.

OPPORTUNITY

This letter invites current Postdoctoral Research Fellows to apply for research visits to any identified, appropriate European research group. Instructions on how to apply and other relevant policies and requirements are provided below. A similar Dear Colleague Letter invites NSF CAREER awardees to participate (see http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf16052).

ERCEA has provided a list of ERC-funded principal investigators and research teams interested in hosting NSF Postdoctoral Fellows. NSF Fellows should request this list via email from nsf-erc@nsf.gov, and then communicate directly with ERC PIs to ascertain areas of mutual interest and research goals for a visit. Fellows may then submit their requests directly to their NSF Program Officers. If approved by NSF, the request is forwarded to ERCEA for review and for making arrangements with the ERC-funded project.

IN GENERAL, THE EUROPEAN HOSTS WILL PROVIDE FUNDING TO SUPPORT IN-COUNTRY LIVING EXPENSES DURING THE VISITS.

NSF WILL PROVIDE TRAVEL FUNDS TO AND FROM EUROPE.

Activities are subject to availability of funds and all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and programs

of the ERC and NSF.

ELIGIBILITY

Only NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows with active fellowships are eligible to apply. For definition, research visits of less than 6 months are considered short-term, whereas visits of 6 months to one year are long-term visits. The maximum length of a visit is limited to 12 months.

CONDITIONS

NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows may apply for a single short-term or long-term research visit. Time spent in Europe will be in addition to, rather than in lieu of, the NSF-funded fellowship duration. NSF will cover round-trip transportation for the Fellow's visit and, in the case of long-term visits, for qualified family members (as defined in Uniform Guidance §200.474: U.S. Federal travel regulations). During the visit, the Fellow's compensation will be provided from the existing ERC funding. Any applicable social/health coverage expenses, in accordance with the applicable national law and regulations, will also be borne through the ERC grant. Other eligible costs incurred during the visit that are directly related to the ERC-funded project may also be allowed. Fellowship awards will not be supplemented; payment for travel will be issued directly from NSF to the Fellow.

NSF Postdoctoral Fellows will be expected to report on the research visits in their annual and final project reports, as appropriate, and may be asked to participate in follow-up evaluation activities.

HOW TO APPLY

NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows should contact their cognizant Program Officers to discuss the proposed visits prior to submitting their requests via email.

The request consists of:

- Description of research to be performed during the visit at the host location, no more than 3 pages, and how it relates to current research and more broadly to career goals.
- 2-page biographical sketch of the Postdoctoral Fellow
- 2-page biographical sketch of the ERC-funded host
- Time line for the proposed activity
- IRB, IACUC, permits, other special clearances needed, if any
- Communication from the ERC-funded PI host indicating:
 1. how the proposed visit fits within the ERC project,
 2. facilities and resources that will be made available to the Fellow, and
 3. the expectations the ERC host has for the Fellow's visit.
- Communication from the Fellowship sponsoring scientist indicating how the proposed visit fits within the research and career plans of the Fellow.

NSF may share the request in its entirety with ERC staff and the proposed host PI. Requests must be received at NSF at least 4 months prior to the proposed visit.

WHEN TO APPLY

The deadline is April 11, 2016.

For further information, please contact nsf-erc@nsf.gov.

