



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION**  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

**NSF 21-068**

## Dear Colleague Letter: Research Collaboration Opportunity in Europe for NSF Awardees

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April 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

### **BACKGROUND**

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To further scientific and technological cooperation between the United States and the European Community, the National Science Foundation and the European Research Council signed an Implementing Arrangement on October 29, 2019, to enable U.S.-based scientists and engineers with active NSF awards, particularly those early in their careers, 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 their hosts through cooperative activities during research visits and establishing international research partnerships to enrich future research activities in the U.S. and Europe.

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

### **OPPORTUNITY**

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This letter invites current NSF grantees to submit supplemental funding requests for research visits to any identified, appropriate ERC-funded European research group. NSF particularly encourages requests from NSF grantees who are early in their careers or who are still actively building their careers. Further, the letter gives instructions on how to submit supplemental funding requests and other relevant policies and requirements.

ERCEA has provided a list of ERC-funded principal investigators (PIs) and research teams interested in hosting NSF grantees. NSF grantees should request this list via email from

Roxanne Nikolaus, Office of International Science and Engineering, at [rnikolau@nsf.gov](mailto:rnikolau@nsf.gov), and then communicate directly with ERC PIs to ascertain areas of mutual interest and research goals for a visit. NSF grantees then must discuss plans for the visit(s) with the NSF Program Officer managing their award prior to submitting a supplemental funding request. If approved by NSF, the request is forwarded by NSF to ERCEA for review and confirmation with the ERC-funded project.

The European hosts will provide funding to support in-country living expenses during the visits.

NSF will provide travel funds to and from Europe. It is expected that the amount requested will not exceed \$20,000, inclusive of any foreign travel expenses for qualified family members (see Conditions below). Activities are subject to availability of funds and all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and programs of the ERC and NSF.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

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This opportunity is open only to PIs and co-PIs of active NSF awards. Supplemental funding may be used to support travel for the PI, co-PI, or postdocs funded on the award. Supplemental funding may not be used to support travel for other senior personnel or others funded on the award. NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows with active Fellowships also are eligible to submit to this opportunity.

## **CONDITIONS**

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NSF awardees may request supplemental funding for a single short-term or a single long-term research visit or multiple short-term visits. Multiple short-term visits should aggregate to a minimum amount of time as agreed in advance between the NSF grantee and the ERC-funded PI. 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 duration for either a single visit or the cumulation of multiple visits is 12 months. Given the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that travel will not take place until domestic and foreign travel restrictions are eased and risk to the collaborators as related to COVID-19 has dissipated. Visits must be concluded prior to the expiration date of the NSF award.

NSF grantees will continue to receive NSF funding during the period of the European visit. Salaries will be covered in accordance with the award terms and conditions. NSF will provide supplemental funding to the NSF award for the foreign travel expenses (i.e., airfare and directly related expenses such as ground transportation to and from the airport and baggage fees) of the grantee for short-term and long-term visits. If requested, NSF may provide supplemental funding for foreign travel expenses of qualified family members (as defined in Uniform Guidance § 200.474 *Travel Costs*) for long-term visits. In this case, foreign travel expenses for qualified family members means one roundtrip airfare (and directly related

expenses) per qualified family member.

In-country costs should be provided from the existing ERC funding in accordance with applicable national laws and regulations, commensurate with the level of experience of the NSF grantee. These in-country costs may include subsistence on a per diem basis or other appropriate arrangement by the host institution. Other eligible costs incurred during the visit that are directly related to the ERC-funded project may also be allowed and should be agreed with the European host prior to submitting the request.

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

## **HOW TO REQUEST SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING**

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Research visits will be funded for NSF grantees as supplements to their awards. Supplemental funding requests will be prepared in accordance with standard policies and procedures using FastLane. For NSF Postdoctoral Fellows, the form of payment for travel will be determined by the Directorate that funded the Fellowship, in consultation with the Office of International Science and Engineering.

Grantees must consult with the cognizant NSF program director of the original award or Fellowship prior to submitting a supplemental funding request.

The supplemental funding request consists of:

- Description of the research to be performed during the visit at the host location and how it relates to current research and broad career goals (no more than 3 pages)
- 2-page biographical sketch of the U.S. PI
- 2-page biographical sketch of the ERC-funded PI host
- Timeline for the proposed activity
- Confirmation of Institutional Review Board/Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee approvals, permits, and/or other special clearances needed, if any
- Budget and budget justification (e.g., estimated airfare, ground transportation to and from airport, baggage fees)
- Communication from the department chair of the U.S. PI endorsing the visit
- Communication from the ERC-funded PI host indicating:
  1. how the proposed visit fits within the ERC-funded project;
  2. facilities and resources to be made available to the NSF awardee; and
  3. expectations that the ERC-funded PI host has for the NSF awardee's visit.
- Endorsement of the visit from the ERC-funded host institution.

Following consultation with the cognizant NSF program director, supplemental funding

requests should be prepared and submitted via FastLane in accordance with the guidance in the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG), Chapter VI.E.4. NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows should submit their requests via email to the cognizant NSF program director for their Fellowship.

Supplemental funding requests will be reviewed internally by NSF Program Officers. All supplements are subject to (a) the availability of funds and (b) review of the quality of the supplemental funding request.

NSF may share the supplemental funding request in its entirety with ERC staff.

## **WHEN TO SUBMIT**

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Requests must be received at NSF at least 3 months prior to the proposed visit, but no later than June 7, 2021, for consideration using Fiscal Year 2021 funds.

## **CONTACT**

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For further information, please contact:

Roxanne Nikolaus, Office of International Science and Engineering, (703) 292-7578. Email: [rnikolau@nsf.gov](mailto:rnikolau@nsf.gov).

Sincerely,

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