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JAVNA AGENCIJA ZA RAZISKOVALNO DEJAVNOST  
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The Slovenian Research Agency on the basis of Article 34 in conjunction with Articles 12 and 100 of the Scientific Research and Innovation Activity Act (ZZrID) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 186/21; hereinafter: the Act), Article 2 and 11 of the Rules on (co)financing and evaluation procedures and monitoring of implementation of research activities (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 52/16, 79/17, 65/19, 78/20, 145/20 and 186/21 - ZZrID; hereinafter: Rules of Procedure), Methodologies for evaluating applications for calls No. 6319-2 / 2013-38 of 5 June 2017 - official consolidated text, 6319-2 / 2013-39 of 11 December 2017, 6319-2 / 2013-40 of 22 January 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-41 of 1 February 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-42 of 19 February 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-43 of 5 March 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-44 of 14 May 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-45 of 20 June 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-46 of 9 July 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-47 of 17 August 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-48 of 18 October 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-49 of 19 November 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-50 of 17 December 2018, 6319-2 / 2013-51 of 4 February 2019, 6319-2 / 2013-52 of 18 February 2019, 631-2 / 2013-53 of 13 May 2019, 6319-2 / 2013-54 of 14 October 2019, 6319-2 / 2013-55 of 28 October 2019, 6319-2 / 2013-56 of 2 December 2019, 6319-2 / 2013-57 of 3 February 2020, 6319-2 / 2013-58 of 18 May 2020, 6319-2 / 2013-59 of 14 September 2020, 6319-2 / 2013-60 of 5 October 2020, 6319-2 / 2013-61 of 30 November 2020, 6319-2 / 2013-62 of 4 January 2021, 6319-2 / 2013-63 of 19 April 2021, 6319-2 / 2013-64 of 5 July 2021 and 6319-2 / 2013-65 of 6 December 2021 (hereinafter: Methodology), publishes

## **Public call for (co)financing potential ERC candidates to visit ERC grantees for the 2023-2025 period**

### **1. Title and address of the publicly funded body**

Slovenian Research Agency, Bleiweisova cesta 30, 1000 Ljubljana (hereinafter: the Agency)

### **2. Subject matter and objective of the Call**

The subject matter of this Call is the (co)financing of research fellows visiting former or current grantees of the European Research Council (hereinafter: ERC Principal Investigator) who undertake research projects in any scientific field. The duration of a visit by a researcher from Slovenia (hereinafter: Visiting researcher) should be full length and indivisible with a minimum of one month and maximum of six months.

The objective of this public Call is cooperation between the Visiting researcher and one of the former or a current ERC Principal Investigator with a view to develop and prepare his/her own project. Accordingly, the ultimate objective of the Call is that the Visiting researcher applies for an appropriate ERC grant (Starting Grant, Consolidator Grant or Advanced Grant) within two consecutive ERC calls of a kind, after conclusion of the visit.

### **3. Entities that can apply to the Call**

Entities that can apply to the Call are research institutions and private researchers entered in the database on implementers of scientific activities in the Republic of Slovenia and in the Register of

private researchers run by the Agency, meeting the conditions prescribed by the Research and Development Act.

#### **4. The Applicant and Visiting researcher shall meet the following requirements at the time of submitting an application**

##### **4.1. Conditions required for the Research institution**

(1) The applicant may lodge several applications, but no more than one per researcher. Only one research institution is allowed to submit an application for an individual researcher.

(2) The research institution applying to this Call is a research institution through which a Visiting researcher shall apply for an appropriate ERC grant, as follows from paragraph 2 of this public Call.

(3) The applicant has to submit a signed statement declaring that the Visiting researcher shall apply for an appropriate ERC grant within the two consecutive calls of a kind after conclusion of the visit, as follows from paragraph 2 of this public Call. In cases where the latter is unfulfilled, the Agency shall claim the funds paid.

##### **4.2. Conditions required for the Visiting researcher**

(1) The Visiting researcher must have an education obtained under a third-cycle study programme or an education that corresponds to the level of education acquired under a third-cycle study programme and is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in accordance with the law governing the Slovenian Qualifications Framework, and demonstrate internationally comparable research results in accordance with the Act, the Rules of Procedure, Criteria for determining the fulfilment of internationally comparable research results and the period of coverage of internationally comparable research results for the head of the research project and programme, No. 007-5/2022-3 of 16 May 2022 and the Methodology.

(2) Quantitative assessments for individual elements of assessment (A1 and CI) and for individual scientific disciplines, which are defined in the Methodology, are obtained and calculated by the Agency. The Agency will use data entered in SICRIS databases (COBISS) and the Agency's database on the day of the end of the Call (A1) or on the day of the last data collection in SICRIS databases (COBISS) before the end of the Call.

(3) The Visiting researcher ought to have a research number meaning he/she is in the database of implementers of research & development activities in the Republic of Slovenia or in the Register of private researchers run by the Agency.

(4) The Visiting researcher has to submit a signed statement declaring that he/she shall apply for an appropriate ERC grant within the two consecutive ERC calls of a kind after the visit's conclusion, as follows from paragraph 2 of this public Call. In cases where the latter is unfulfilled, the Agency shall claim the funds paid.

(5) A Visiting researcher who has already visited the ERC Principal Investigator on the basis of this Call cannot submit any other application to the public Call for (co)financing potential ERC candidates to visit ERC grantees.

#### **5. Call documentation**

The application must contain:



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- a) Application form ARRS-ERC-FS;
- b) Outline of the disposition of future elaboration of a scientific research project submitted as a proposal to one of the ERC's main calls. The outline should be written in Slovene and English language in the prescribed form. The maximum length of the outline of the disposition should not exceed 15 pages in each language;
- c) Signed statement of the Visiting researcher declaring that he/she shall meet the requirements of the submitted Call at the time of submitting a proposal to one of the ERC's main calls: <https://erc.europa.eu/> (ARRS-ERC-FS-Izjava1);
- d) Signed statement of the applicant and Visiting researcher declaring that the latter shall apply for an appropriate ERC grant within the two consecutive calls of a kind after conclusion of the visit, as follows from paragraph 2 of this public Call (ARRS-ERC-FS-Izjava2);
- e) Curriculum vitae - showing compliance with the conditions for assessing the scientific excellence of the researcher, as follows from paragraph 7.a of this Call. The form of the curriculum vitae should be consistent with the ERC's instructions: <https://erc.europa.eu/>;
- f) Letter of support from the ERC Principal Investigator and hosting research institution with the following prescribed elements:
  - acquaintance of the ERC Principal Investigator and his/her research institution with the requirements of the ERC Fellowship initiative;
  - the ERC Principal Investigator's acquaintance with the proposed research of the Visiting researcher;
  - expert opinion of the ERC Principal Investigator on the outlined research project of the Visiting researcher (strengths and weaknesses, potential success in future ERC calls),
  - description of the strategic plan for active inclusion of the Visiting researcher into an ongoing project of the ERC Principal Investigator.

## **6. Evaluation procedure**

The evaluation process is conducted by a temporary expert body (hereinafter: TEB), appointed by the Scientific Council of the Agency (hereinafter: SCA). With the decision on appointment, the SCA determines the chairman, deputy chairman and members of the TEB and their tasks. The composition of the TEB covers all the scientific disciplines from which the subject of assessment comes. The evaluation process is carried out after each opening of applications.

In case a large number of applications reach the threshold for inclusion in the selection for co-financing, thus exceeding the available funds of the Call, an interview is an integral part of the evaluation process. An interview is intended only for those applications whose overall assessment is equal to the lower threshold, which in this case is determined in the call. At least two TEB members participate in the interview, one of whom is from the scientific discipline which is the subject of the application. Interviews are assessed with a harmonised grade from 0 to 5. The grade of the presentation complements the overall grade. Interviews take into account the quality of the application and the project's chances of success in a future ERC call.

At the end of the evaluation process, the TEB prepares a final evaluation of applications and a financially evaluated priority list of applications, taking into account the total score and possible



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interview. The TEB shall take into account the overall assessment when further ranking applications on the priority list. The TEB then submits a proposal priority list of applications for consideration by the SCA for co-financing. The decision on the selection of applications proposed by the SCA for co-financing is made by the director of the Agency.

Applications that exceed the number of visits specified in the public call in an individual year will be rejected, taking into account the order of arrival according to the date and time of submission of the complete application.

## **7. Assessment criteria**

The detailed evaluation elements applying to the excellence of the research project are set out below.

**a) The following indicators are used for evaluation according to the criterion **Scientific Excellence (10 points)**:**

- Outstanding achievements related to the field of research or goals, as defined in the draft disposition of the research project;
- Demonstrated ability to think independently and creatively;
- Ability to prepare a research proposal and conduct research;
- Adequacy of addressing important research challenges;
- Ambitious and exceptional goals (such as new methods and approaches for development of the discipline) and the potential to reach beyond the current state of science;
- Clarity of the concept, including the interdisciplinary and relevance of the objectives;
- Appropriateness of the proposed research methodology to achieve the objectives.

**b) The following indicators are used for evaluation according to the criterion **Quality and efficiency of implementation (5 points)**:**

- Coherence of activities by the ERC project manager and Visiting researcher;
- Quality of the plan for the involvement of the Visiting researcher in the activities of the ERC project manager;
- Appropriateness of the research capacity of the research organisation of the ERC project manager.

10 points are possible for evaluation according to the Scientific Excellence criterion, and 5 points according to the Quality and Efficiency of Implementation criterion, i.e. a total of 15 points. If an individual application does not reach the threshold, which represents at least half of the maximum possible number of points for each criterion, or the total threshold of the sum of both assessments, i.e. 10 points, it will not be selected for (co)financing.

## **8. The amount of available funds for the Call and (co)financing of visits**

The estimated amount of funds from the public call is approximately EUR 260,000.00. Realisation is tied to budgetary possibilities.

In the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2025, the Agency will co-finance up to 6 visits in a single calendar year. The number of co-financed visits and the scope and date of the start of co-financing depend on budget possibilities.

The Agency shall, with respect to this Call, (co)finance the Visiting researcher's visits with:

- reimbursement of expatriation allowances, including accommodation costs, the cost of one roundtrip to and from the city of the ERC research group, the cost of public transport to the place of the host institution, and meal expenses with a total sum of 1,800.00 EUR per month, multiplied by the Country correction coefficient for living allowance, attached as an Annex to the invitation documentation. For countries where the correction coefficient is not indicated in this Annex, a correction coefficient of 100 is to be taken into account.

The Agency shall (co)finance the Visiting researcher's visit for a minimum of one month and maximum of six months. After receiving a positive notice on the result of application, the applicant shall inform the Agency on the exact date of the visit's start and end which has to be a full length (indivisible) visit with a minimum of one month and maximum of six months. The Agreement between the Agency and the applicant sets out the amount as well as the rights and obligations, and terms and conditions applicable to the awarded grant.

The Visiting researcher, who has visited the ERC project manager on the basis of the relevant call, submits a substantive and financial report within 30 days from conclusion of the visit, which contains an overview of the use of funds by groups of costs of the performed activity. The reports shall be completed on forms defined by the Agency.

When the applicant submits the application for an appropriate ERC grant as follows from paragraph 2 of this public Call, the Visiting researcher has to inform the Agency with valid evidence of application.

## **9. Method, form, and deadline for submission of applications**

### **9.1. Manner and form of application**

Application to the Call is implemented by filling in and submitting application form ARRS-ERC-FS.

The application must be submitted in paper and electronic form. Both application forms (paper and electronic) must contain exactly the same in content.

#### **Paper application**

The paper application form must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked: "DO NOT OPEN - Application for Public call (co)financing of potential ERC candidates to visit ERC grantees" and the name and address of the applicant. There can be only one application in each marked envelope. The paper application must be signed by the representative or authorised person of the research organisation and by the research project manager and stamped by the research organisation.

#### **Electronic application**

The electronic application form must be sent to the address [ERC-GOSTOVANJA@arrs.si](mailto:ERC-GOSTOVANJA@arrs.si) (only the application form ARRS-ERC-FS without attachments is submitted; due to automatic data processing, the .doc format is preferred, which is not signed and stamped, the application should be named ARRS-ERC-FS-Pr.doc, where "Pr" is the surname of the project manager in Slovenia).

### **9.2. Completeness of applications**

Untimely and incorrectly marked applications (it is not evident that it is an application for a Call, or to which Call the application refers, or the applicant is not identified) will not be considered by the commission for opening applications and will be returned unopened to applicants (exception: the applicant cannot be deduced from the envelope and the application is opened). An application is considered formally complete if it is submitted on the prescribed form and contains all the required information and annexes as specified in this Call. If the applicant does not submit the electronic application in time, it is a formally incomplete application. Incomplete applications will be considered in accordance with Article 20 of the Rules of Procedure.

#### **10. Opening date of applications**

The opening committee will open all the received and correctly marked applications in principle three times a year until the opening day, depending on the order of arrival.

#### **11. Deadline by which applicants will be informed of the results of the Call**

Applicants will be informed on the outcome of the Call within eight days after adoption of the decision by the director of the Agency.

#### **12. Duration of the Call**

The public call is open until 2 p.m. on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2024.

#### **13. Place, time, and contact person where interested parties can obtain Call documentation**

This public Call will be published from the date of publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia on the Agency's website [www.arrs.si](http://www.arrs.si). Any additional information related to the Call can be obtained by contacting Aleksandra Panič, the person responsible for the Call, by telephone (01) 400 5924 or by email: [Aleksandra.panic@arrs.si](mailto:Aleksandra.panic@arrs.si).