



**U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION**  
**2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE**  
**ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314**

**NSF 24-053**

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

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February 2, 2024

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 (NSF) and the European Research Council (ERC) signed an Implementation 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 ERC grants.

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

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

### **OPPORTUNITY**

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This letter invites current NSF recipients to submit supplemental funding requests for research visits to any identified, appropriate ERC-funded European research group. NSF particularly encourages requests from NSF funded researchers 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 funded researchers. The NSF Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) website provides instructions on how to access this list at <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/IntlCollaborations/EuropeanUnion/index.jsp>. NSF PIs/co-PIs should communicate directly with ERC PIs to ascertain areas of mutual interest and research goals for a visit. NSF PIs/co-PIs then must discuss plans for the visit(s) with the NSF Program Director 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, postdocs, other Senior Personnel, and graduate students funded on the award. NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows with active Fellowships also are encouraged to pursue international research opportunities and may be eligible to submit to this opportunity. Fellows must contact their cognizant Program Director before submitting a request.

## **CONDITIONS**

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NSF PIs 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 PI 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. It is expected that travel will conform to the safety and health protocols of both the U.S. and the destination country. Visits must be concluded prior to the expiration date of the NSF award.

NSF recipients 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 recipient 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 2

[CFR § 200.475 Travel Costs](#)) for long-term visits of six months or more. 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 researchers. 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 recipients will be expected to report on the research visits in their NSF annual and final annual 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 as supplements to active NSF awards. PIs and fellowship recipients must consult with the cognizant NSF Program Director of the original award or Fellowship prior to submitting a supplemental funding request.

Following consultation with the cognizant NSF Program Director, supplemental funding requests should be prepared and submitted via Research.gov in accordance with the guidance in the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG), Chapter VI.E.5.

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).
- 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).
- Other Supplementary Documents:
  1. 2-page biographical sketch of the ERC-funded PI host, not necessarily in NSF format,
  2. Communication from the department chair of the U.S. PI endorsing the visit,
  3. Communication from the ERC-funded PI host indicating:
    - a. how the proposed visit fits within the ERC-funded project;
    - b. facilities and resources to be made available to the NSF awardee; and
    - c. expectations that the ERC-funded PI host has for the NSF awardee's visit.

#### 4. Endorsement of the visit from the ERC-funded host institution.

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 May 17, 2024, for consideration using Fiscal Year 2024 funds.

#### **CONTACT**

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For further information, please contact:

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Sincerely,

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