



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 16-052

Dear Colleague Letter: Research Opportunities in Europe for NSF CAREER Awardees

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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.-based 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 their 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 CAREER awardees for research visits of up to one year within their ERC funding.

OPPORTUNITY

This letter invites current CAREER awardees to apply for research visits to any identified, appropriate European research group. Further, the letter gives instructions on how to apply and other relevant policies and requirements. A similar Dear Colleague Letter invites NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows to participate (see http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf16046).

ERCEA has provided a list of ERC-funded principal investigators and research teams interested in hosting NSF CAREER awardees. CAREER awardees 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. They then must discuss their plans for their visits with the NSF Program Officer managing their CAREER awards prior to submitting a supplemental funding request. If approved by NSF, the request is forwarded to ERCEA for review and confirmation 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/FROM EUROPE.

Activities are subject to availability of funds and all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and programs of the ERC and NSF.

ELIGIBILITY

Only CAREER awardees with active awards may 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 visit duration is limited to 12 months. The visit(s) should begin at least 12 months prior to the expiration date of the NSF CAREER award.

CONDITIONS

NSF CAREER awardees may apply for a single short-term or long-term research visit or multiple short-term visits, e.g., for joint experiments. Multiple short-term visits should aggregate to an agreed-upon number of visits and minimum time, e.g., 6 months.

CAREER awardees will continue to receive NSF funding during the period of the European visit, and their salaries will be covered in accordance with the award terms and conditions. NSF will provide supplemental funding to the CAREER award for the foreign travel expenses of the awardee for short-term visits and, if requested, for the awardee plus qualified family members (as defined in Uniform Guidance §200.474: U.S. Federal travel regulations) for long-term visits.

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 CAREER awardee. 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.

CAREER awardees 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

Research visits will be funded for NSF CAREER awardees as supplements to their awards. Supplemental funding requests will be prepared in accordance with standard policies and procedures using FastLane following consultation with the cognizant Program Officer.

The supplemental funding request consists of:

- description of the 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 U.S. PI,
- 2-page biographical sketch of the European collaborator
- time-line for the proposed activity,
- IRB/IACUC approvals, permits, and/or other special clearances needed, if any,
- budget and budget justification,
- 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 project fits within the ERC project,
 2. facilities and resources to be made available to the CAREER awardee and,
 3. expectations that the ERC PI host has for the visit.
- communication of endorsement from the ERC host institution.

NSF may share the supplemental funding request in its entirety with ERC staff and the ERC-funded host PI.

WHEN TO APPLY

The deadline for European research opportunity supplements is April 11, 2016.

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