

European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases (EJP RD)

ERN rare diseases training and support program

Research Mobility Fellowship

Call Text

The call opens October 1st 2020
The deadline for application is November 13th 2020

The links to the [electronic application form](#), as well as this call document (pdf) can be found at the [EJP RD website](#)

1. MOTIVATION

An EJP RD survey investigating the needs of the European Reference Networks (ERN) demonstrated that it is necessary to enlarge and intensify training opportunities in the field of research on rare diseases. Based on this result, the EJP RD WP 17 'ERN-RD training and support program' focus group proposed to deliver training programs based on two main components:

- Research **workshops**
- Research **mobility fellowships**

2. AIM OF THE CALL

The call for **Research Mobility Fellowships** aims to financially support PhD students and medical doctors in training working in ERN-member institutions or an ERN affiliated partner to undertake short scientific visits (secondments) **fostering specialist research training** outside their countries of residence and within one of the ERN host institutions or an ERN affiliated partner.

Applicants who will receive fellowships for Research Mobility **should acquire at their host (secondment) institution new competences and knowledge related to their research on rare diseases and with benefit to their ERN.**

The research mobility fellowships are meant to **cover stays of 4 weeks up to 3 months.**

The exchange will be accomplished exclusively within member institutions of the same ERN or between member institutions of different ERNs.

3. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

All proposals will be evaluated by the Scientific Evaluation Committee (SEC) composed of 4 EJP RD WP17 members (coordinators of ERN managing Institutions), 3 independent external scientific experts (not working in any of the 24 ERN's) and one representative of the EJP RD coordination.

Furthermore, after proposals have been selected for funding, they will be remotely evaluated by independent ethics experts, who are members of the Advisory Regulatory and Ethics Board (AREB) of EJP RD, to verify the compliance with the applicable ethics requirements before the starting of the fellowships.

4. APPLICATIONS

4.1 Eligibility criteria

For the purpose of this call, two categories of applicants can apply:

- PhD students with a minimum of one year of research experience at the time of submitting a proposal
- Physicians in specialist training having finished their first year of training at the time of submitting a proposal

Since the programme is aimed at young professionals early in their research career, postdocs or physicians in training who have already obtained a doctorate degree cannot apply for funding.

Furthermore:

- The **applicant must be affiliated to an ERN full member** or to an ERN-Affiliated Partner institution from one of the 24 ERNs at the time when the application is submitted, as well as during the proposed period of the training stay. The list of full ERN members per country and per network can be found [here](#)
- Both, the **home and host (secondment) institutions must be Full members or Affiliated Partners of an ERN** at the time when the application is submitted, as well as during the proposed period of the training stay
- The training stay should last between 4 weeks and 3 months
- The training must be completed within one year from the application approval. DUE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, AN EXCEPTIONAL EXTENSION FOR THE TIMEFRAME OF THE RESEARCH EXCHANGES COMPARED TO THE CALL TEXT WILL BE ALLOWED. THIS MEANS THAT THE RESEARCH TRAININGS MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN 18 MONTHS FROM THE APPLICATION APPROVAL.

4.2 Information to be submitted

The applications must be written in English and must be submitted using the online [application form](#). Applicants must provide personal information and submit a research project plan, information about their current work, information about the home and the host (secondment) institution and about ethics aspects, as specified below. Applications using a different format or exceeding the length limitations of any sections will be rejected without further review.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- a. Surname
- b. First name
- c. Email address

INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANT'S CURRENT WORK

- d. Position
 - PhD student
 - Physician in training
- e. Start date
- f. In what year of training are you?
- g. Expected end date?
- h. CV upload ((1 page, PDF format to be uploaded in the submission system)
- i. If you are a PhD student include a short description of your PhD project briefly summarizing main study area, aims of the project, key results obtained so far (max 1000 characters)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANT'S HOME AND HOST (SECONDMENT) INSTITUTION

- j. Applicant's home institution
 - Name of the institution
 - Department name
 - Full postal address
 - Country
 - Institution membership in the 24 European Reference Networks
 - Full name supervisor
 - Position supervisor
 - Email address supervisor'
 - Letter of support from supervisor (to be uploaded in the submission system), the [template](#) is provided on the EJP RD website
- k. Applicant's host (secondment) institution
 - Name of the institution
 - Department name
 - Full postal address
 - Country
 - Institution membership in the 24 European Reference Networks
 - Full name supervisor
 - Position supervisor
 - Email address supervisor'
 - Letter of support from supervisor (to be uploaded in the submission system), the [template](#) is provided on the EJP RD website

RESEARCH PROJECT PLAN

- l. Project title
- m. Description of the project (max. 2000 characters)
 - Outline of the project stating a clear learning goal for the proposed training stay
 - Research question that you aim to address *during* the fellowship stay OR that will be addressed in the two years *after* the fellowship using the knowledge and skills you obtained during the exchange.

- Information about how the newly acquired skills and knowledge will be transferred back to the home institution
- n. How will this exchange and the transfer of knowledge/skills benefit your personal career and knowledge (max 1000 characters)
- o. How will this exchange and the transfer of knowledge/skills benefit the home and host institutions? (max 1000 characters)
- p. How will this exchange and the transfer of knowledge/skills benefit the RD domain of your ERN? (max 1000 characters)
- q. Description of methods to be learned during the training stay (max. 1000 characters).
 - Clearly describe the methods you will be trained in during your stay and clearly describe the timelines of your project.
- r. Expected start date
- s. Expected duration of the planned stay

ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS:

- t. Does your fellowship involve: Use of human embryos and fetuses /humans/ vulnerable patients / children and minors / patients who are unable to give informed consent / use of invasive techniques / collection or use of human biological samples / processing of personal data / use of animals/ transfer of data or material to third countries/other ethics issues
- u. If you have answered yes to one or more of these questions, please, describe in more detail the ethical issues that have to be considered at the outset and how they will be dealt with (e.g. GDPR, informed consent procedures, ethical approval, policies etc.).
- v. Is there anything else you would like to mention with regard to ethical aspects?

4.3 Timeline

The submission will be opened from 1 October, 2020 until 13 November, 2020.

Two calls a year will be opened in spring and fall, until the end of 2023.

Note: Rejected applications can be resubmitted once. The comments from the evaluation committee should be addressed in the resubmitted application. One research mobility fellowship can be granted per fellow.

5. EVALUATION

5.1 Evaluation criteria

The fellows will be selected based on the following criteria:

Excellence:

- Quality of the proposed training/research plan;
- Applicant's skills and competences;

Impact:

- Impact on/added value of the training for the career prospects and knowledge of the applicant;
- Impact on/added value of the training and newly acquired knowledge/skills to the home and host institution (potential for exploitation of acquired knowledge/skills; establishment of new collaboration);
- Impact on/added value of the training and newly acquired knowledge/skills to the ERN as a whole;

Implementation:

- Organization and proposed methodology of the training;
- Relevance of the resources and budget required;
- Relevance of the training timeline.

5.2 Evaluation of proposals and funding decision

The process for evaluation of the submitted proposals will be organized in four steps:

- **Eligibility check:** the WP17 fellowship coordination team from UKL-Heidelberg and Radboudumc Nijmegen will check all proposals against the eligibility rules described above. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to the SEC. Non-eligible applicants will be notified and can resubmit an application on a next call if they fulfil all eligibility criteria in the next call.
- **Individual (remote) evaluation by the SEC:** Each application will be evaluated remotely by 3 members of the SEC: one ERN representative and two external experts. Proposals will be assessed according to specific evaluation criteria that are in line with Horizon 2020 rules, using a common evaluation form.

A scoring system from 0 to 5 will be used to evaluate the proposal's performance with respect to the different evaluation criteria. Evaluation scores will be awarded for the 3 main criteria (Excellence, Impact and Implementation), and not singularly for the different aspects listed below the criteria. Each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 12. The maximum score that can be reached from all three criteria together is 15 points.

- **Consensus discussion and final funding decision:** The WP17 fellowship coordination team will prepare the Evaluation Book including evaluations of all projects and preliminary ranking list based on the mean scores received by each

proposal.

All 8 SEC members will meet (via a conference call) to discuss further and establish a ranking of the proposals recommended for funding.

The summary review report of the SEC recommendations and reasons for rejection of the application will be prepared by the SEC members involved in the individual evaluation and forwarded by email to declined applicants. The successful candidates will also receive respective notification by email.

- **Ethics evaluation:** Applications that have been selected for funding will be forwarded to the Advisory Regulatory Ethics Board (AREB) of EJP RD for review of potential ethical issues. AREB experts will assess the compliance of a given proposal with applicable ethical requirements. In case of ethics requirements to be fulfilled before the starting of your fellowship, you will be contacted with further ethics related questions. If no ethics related questions remain, your proposal is approved. Only those proposals that fulfil the regulatory and ethical international/EU and national and institutional requirements will be funded.

A representative of the EJP RD coordination will ensure that the whole implementation and evaluation process of the call is in line with the Horizon 2020 guidelines and respects transparency and equal opportunity rules.

Scoring system:

0: Failure: The proposal fails to address the criterion in question, or cannot be judged because of missing or incomplete information.

1: Poor: The proposal shows serious weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question.

2: Fair: The proposal generally addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses that need corrections.

3: Good: The proposal addresses the criterion in question well, but certain improvements are necessary.

4: Very good: The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but small improvements are possible.

5: Excellent: The proposal successfully addresses all aspects of the criterion in question

6. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

6.1 Funding model

Travel up to 400€ for the entire fellowship and accommodation expenses up to 2000€ per month will be covered for a fellowship with a duration of up to 3 months. Please note that the costs covered by fellowship have to be financed in advance by the fellows and will be reimbursed against receipt up to a fixed limit as set out below:

Travel expenses

Fellows will be reimbursed for travel expenses from their place of origin to the host institute, and will receive reimbursement for one single return ticket up to a maximum amount of € 400. The travels must be organized on the basis of the most appropriate and cost-effective means of transport:

- If travelling by air, we will reimburse an economy class ticket only.
- The cost of travel by private car shall be reimbursed at the rate of 0.19 € per km. with a maximum of 1 return per week.

Travel expenses will only be reimbursed on presentation of supporting documents: tickets and/or invoices. These must show the class of travel used, the time of travel and the amount paid. Taxi fares and parking will not be reimbursed.

Accommodation expenses

We will reimburse the fellow's accommodation expenses up to a maximum of € 100 per night and € 2.000 per month (maximum duration exchange is 3 months). Accommodation expenses will be reimbursed only on presentation of supporting documents such as hotel invoices.

Other subsistence costs such as telephone costs, meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.) will not be reimbursed.

It is important to note that fellows will remain under the employment contract of their home institution; thus their home institution should continue to pay their salary, and all social security will apply during their stay.

6.2 Funding contracts

Each fellow will receive and sign a fellowship funding agreement provided by the managing institution. The agreement will specify the rules of reimbursement, timelines and eligibility rules of the incurred costs. The funded fellows are responsible to provide the original invoices in order to be reimbursed. The managing institutions will be responsible to deliver financial report to the European Commission within regular (yearly) EJP RD reporting period.

6.3 Research consortium agreement and ownership of intellectual property rights

Although the primary goal of the training fellowships is not to deliver any specific research results, it is important to underline that each of the research training fellowships will become an integral part of the EJP RD and thus and Framework Consortium Agreement will apply.

Thus, results and new Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) (if any) resulting from projects funded through the EJP RD WP17 internal call for research fellowship will be owned

by the host (secondment) organizations according to specific national/regional rules on IPR and as specified in the EJP RD Framework Consortium Agreement (FCA).

If several participants have jointly carried out work generating new IPR, they shall agree amongst themselves (FCA sections 8.1 and 8.2: *As set forth under Article 26.2 of the Grant Agreement, the joint owners must agree in writing on the allocation and terms of exercise of their joint ownership in a separate agreement (“**Joint Ownership Agreement**”) to ensure compliance with their obligations under this Framework Consortium Agreement*) as to the allocation of ownership of IPR, taking into account their contributions to the creation of those IPR as well as the relevant guidelines on IPR issues.

The results of the research training fellowship and IPR created should be actively exploited and made available for use, whether for commercial gain or not, in order for public benefit to be obtained from the knowledge created (GA article 28.1: *Each beneficiary must — up to four years after the period set out in Article 3 — take measures aiming to ensure ‘**exploitation**’ of its results*).

The EJP RD shall have the right to use documents, information and results submitted by the involved partners and/or to use the information and results for their own purposes, provided that the owner's rights are kept and taking care to specify their origin (GA articles 31.2: *The beneficiaries must give each other access — on a royalty-free basis — to results needed for implementing their own tasks under the action, and 31.3: The beneficiaries must give each other — under fair and reasonable conditions (see Article 25.3) — access to results needed for exploiting their own results*).

6.4 IRDiRC policies and guidelines

The aim of the call is in compliance with the vision and goals set by the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium (IRDiRC), which fosters international collaboration in rare diseases research.

The IRDiRC vision: Enable all people living with a rare disease to receive an accurate diagnosis, care, and available therapy within one year of coming to medical attention.

In order to work towards this vision, IRDiRC has set three goals for the next decade:

- Goal 1: All patients coming to medical attention with a suspected rare disease will be diagnosed within one year if their disorder is known in the medical literature; all currently undiagnosable individuals will enter a globally coordinated diagnostic and research pipeline

- Goal 2: 1000 new therapies for rare diseases will be approved, the majority of which will focus on diseases without approved options
- Goal 3: Methodologies will be developed to assess the impact of diagnoses and therapies on rare disease patients.

The project partners are expected to follow IRDiRC policies and guidelines.

For more information see <http://www.irdirc.org/>.

6.5 Respect of relevant European and international standards

The submitted proposals have to respect relevant European and international standards like:

- The new EU Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. This Regulation applies in all Member States from May 25, 2018 and thus also for the EJP RD Research fellowship granted projects (<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3e485e15-11bd-11e6-ba9a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>);
- The EC Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32010L0063>);
- European Research Council Guidelines on Implementation of Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data (referred to in http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/open-access-data-management/open-access_en.htm);
- To make research data findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable (FAIR), a data management strategy is mandatory (if relevant for the project). For an example of questions for a data management strategy, see Annex 1 in http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgt_en.pdf.
- A data management strategy/plan should include information on:
 - *The handling of research data during & after the end of the project;*
 - *What data will be collected, processed and/or generated and/or reused;*
 - *Which methodology & standards will be applied;*
 - *Whether data will be shared/made open access;*
 - *How data will be curated & preserved (including after the end of the project).*
- General ethical, regulatory and legal requirements: Ethics is an integral part of research.

Please be aware that laws and ethical issues vary across different countries and should be considered from the outset. The EJP RD expects applications to fulfil ethical, regulatory and legal requirements. Among other things, special attention will be paid to potential ethical issues (e.g. research on humans or animals; privacy of data and biomaterials; informed consent; etc.). Only projects that fulfil the regulatory and ethical international/EU and national and institutional requirements will be funded.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES, REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DISSEMINATION

Each successful fellow must ensure open access (free of charge, online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results.

Successful fellows must ensure that all outcomes (publications, etc.) of the EJP RD research fellowships include a proper acknowledgement of EJP RD. This includes the display of the EJP RD logo when possible.

Beneficiaries must also include acknowledgement according to institutions rules, where applicable.

REPORTING

The fellows must submit a short summary on the research training project accomplished at the host (secondment) institution at the latest 3 months after its end to the Call Coordination.

DISSEMINATION

- The fellow should present the research project at either an ERN Annual Meeting, EJP RD meeting, relevant national or local meeting or professional society meetings. If invited to an EJP RD conference, presentation of the research project will be obligatory.
- The fellow has to provide a short text describing his/her research project for digital dissemination purposes (ERN/EJP RD Newsletters, Websites, Tweets) to the EJP RD communication officer, Tanguy Onakoy (email: tanguy.onakoy@ejprarediseases.org)

In addition, unless the EC requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any dissemination of results (in any form, including electronic) must:

- display the EU emblem
- applicable ERN logo
- include the following text:
- "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the EJP RD COFUND-EJP N° 825575";
- when displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

For the purposes of the obligations under this Article, the beneficiary may use the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from the Agency.
This does not however give it the right to exclusive use.

Moreover, the beneficiary may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

SASTISFACTION SURVEY

The mobility fellows have to fill two online satisfaction surveys related to:

- the quality of the research training they received
- the impact on their research activity following the training.

The call coordination team will provide them with the corresponding link.

8. CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information you can contact the Heidelberg and Nijmegen coordination teams, through fellowships@erknnet.org or genturis@radboudumc.nl.