



European Research Council
Executive Agency

Established by the European Commission

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

REFERENCE	ERCEA/SNE/224/2023
POSITION	Research Programme Expert (Seconded National Expert)
FIELDS	Research Ethics or Physical Sciences and Engineering
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION	13 October 2023 by 12:00 (midday) Brussels time (CEST)

The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA), located in Brussels, Belgium, supports the work of the European Research Council (ERC), the first pan-European funding body sustaining excellent frontier research in Europe. The ERCEA is dedicated to selecting and funding the excellent ideas that have not happened yet, and the scientists that are dreaming them up.

The ERCEA is looking for National Experts from public administrations and intergovernmental organisations who will help strengthen cooperation, build up synergies and promote exchanges of best practices. While the ERCEA can benefit from the high level of professional knowledge and experience of the National Experts, the National Experts can learn about the operations of an EU research funding agency and develop new competencies and skills.

Current vacancies for Seconded National Experts (SNEs), also called Research Programme Experts, are in the following fields:

- **RESEARCH ETHICS** or
- **PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING** in one of the following profiles: Chemistry, Computer Science, Earth and Universe Sciences, Engineering, Material Science, Mathematics, Physics.

The initial period of secondment at the ERCEA would be two years. The secondment is renewable, but the total secondment period cannot exceed six years. SNEs continue to be employed and remunerated by their employers throughout the period of secondment, while receiving daily and monthly allowances from the ERCEA. Whereas the same set of eligibility criteria apply to all applicants, the job descriptions and selection criteria of the two fields differ. For more information, including the secondment conditions, please see below.

Candidates interested to apply, have to follow the steps listed on page 5, and clearly indicate in the Application Form if they wish to apply for “Research Ethics” or “Physical Sciences and Engineering”.

1. JOB DESCRIPTIONS

1.1 RESEARCH ETHICS

The SNE in Research Ethics would join Unit B.1, the 'Ethics Review and Expert Management' Unit of the 'Scientific Management' Department of the ERCEA, which defines and manages the processes for ethics review and monitoring, redress and expert management. The Unit counts around 45 highly committed and qualified staff members, subdivided into three sectors. More precisely, the Research Programme Expert will join the Ethics Review Team with 17 staff members specialised in Research Ethics.

Project management

- Perform the pre-screening of proposals; participate in the screening and assessment activities;
- Send out requests for additional information to Principal Investigators after panel meetings and follow-up on replies from Principal Investigators; draft reports;
- Responsible for the full organisation of panels together with colleagues;
- Assign proposals to experts based on their expertise; prepare the documents for the experts;
- Monitor the ethics deliverables in the implementation of the research projects; validate the state of the ethical requirements at each payment; produce ethics monitoring notes accordingly; communicate with the Principal Investigator;
- Draft guidelines for the applicants and the panel members;
- Contribute to the design and implementation of new measures aiming to improve the efficiency of the ethics appraisal process in the Agency;
- Participate to horizontal activities undertaken by the Agency (e.g., communication, feedback to policy).

External communication

- Present the ethics sector and ethics process at workshops, seminars, publications, conferences and other public events;
- Contribute to publications intended for external stakeholders;
- Help collect information and draft replies to ethics questions from external stakeholders such as European Institutions, Member States and / or the general public;
- Extract and disseminate best practices and facilitate exchange of experiences;
- Provide input to the European Commission concerning the ERC programme and the European Research Area concerning research ethics in ERCEA.

1.2 PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

The SNE in Physical Sciences and Engineering would join Unit B.4, the 'Physical Sciences and Engineering' Unit of the 'Scientific Management' Department of the ERCEA, which manages the peer-review process for the scientific evaluation of submitted proposals and the scientific monitoring of ERC-funded projects in the domain of Physical Sciences and Engineering. The Unit counts around 60 highly committed and qualified staff members, subdivided into Panel Teams (see Annex 1). These Panel Teams cover different areas of research and scholarship in the domain of Physical Sciences and Engineering (PE) led by a Research Programme Agent who coordinates the ERC Panel's work.

Coordination of the evaluation and selection of research proposals

- Provide support to the overall management and coordination of the ERC peer review process of submitted applications;
- Provide support to the documentation of the evaluation process and the drafting of guidance documents for applicants;
- Provide support in the analysis of the eligibility of submitted proposals;
- Provide support and work with the evaluation panels and the follow-up of funded projects in areas close to the background and expertise of the candidate;
- Contribute to the development of guidelines, orientations and new approaches relating to the proper implementation of the programme.

Project management

- Assess the scientific implementation of projects primarily in PE panel(s) through periodic reviews, reporting, etc.;
- Contribute to the analysis of the portfolio of ERC funded projects;
- As appropriate, analyse and assess the results and impact of the ERC programme, provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

External communication

- Present the ERC programme and project results at workshops, seminars, conferences and other public events, to external stakeholders;
- Contribute to publications produced by the ERC programme intended for external stakeholders;
- Extract and disseminate best practices and facilitate exchanges of experience;
- Collate information and draft replies to questions from external stakeholders;
- Produce reports and minutes on high-level meetings as required.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be seconded to the ERCEA, SNE candidates must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a national of an EU Member State or of a European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Member State (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) or a national of a country with which the Council has decided to open accession negotiations and which has concluded a specific agreement on staff secondments (Turkey);
- Be employed by a national, regional or local public administration or a public intergovernmental organisation (IGO). The SNE's employer shall continue to pay the SNE's salary, maintain their administrative status, and be responsible for all social rights, particularly social security and pension. On this basis, the secondment is not an employment, nor does it lead to an employment;
- Level of education which corresponds to having completed university studies of at least three years attested by a diploma;
- Have at least three years of experience in administrative, legal, scientific, technical, advisory or supervisory functions;
- Have worked for their employer on a permanent or contract basis for at least 12 months before the secondment and remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of secondment;
- Have a thorough knowledge of one EU language and a satisfactory knowledge of another EU language to the extent necessary for the performance of the duties outlined in the Job Description. An SNE from a non-member state shall have thorough knowledge of one EU language necessary for the performance of their duties. English is the predominant working language at ERCEA and generally considered the lingua franca of the scientific community.

The rules applicable to National Experts seconded to the ERCEA, the 'SNE Rules', may be found [here](#).

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

To be seconded to the ERCEA, SNE candidates must fulfil the following selection criteria as defined by the field they are applying for.

3.1 RESEARCH ETHICS

- Level of education which corresponds to completed university studies of at least three years attested by a diploma in a related profile.
- Two years of professional research experience in dealing with ethics issues.
- Excellent knowledge of English: spoken and written skills equivalent to level C1¹ or higher level for working purposes².

¹ [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#).

- Well-developed analytical skills.
- Excellent drafting skills, with an eye for detail.
- Good prioritisation skills and ability to work within deadlines.
- Ability to work independently as well as with a team.

3.2 PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

- Level of education which corresponds to completed university studies of at least three years attested by a diploma in the domain of Physical Sciences and Engineering.
- Three years of professional research experience or a PhD in the domain of Physical Sciences and Engineering.
- Excellent knowledge of English: spoken and written skills equivalent to level C1¹ or higher level for working purposes.²
- Excellent interpersonal skills (including the ability to work in a team and exercise diplomatic skills).
- Excellent communication and drafting skills, including the capacity to communicate technical or specialised information.

Fulfilling the following advantageous criteria would be an asset:

- Experience, knowledge and understanding of peer review processes in a funding agency or other academic setting.
- Experience in the management of research projects.

4. STEPS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

All correspondence regarding this Call for Expression of Interest will be in English and will be sent to the e-mail which candidates indicated in their application. Should candidates' e-mail address change, they are asked to inform ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu.

Admission to the selection process

Once the deadline for the submission of applications through the Permanent Representations, the EFTA Secretariat or the Permanent Delegation of Turkey, the Selection Committee will check the applications submitted for their profiles against the eligibility criteria as detailed above.

Assessment of the applications

The Selection Committee will assess the applications of eligible candidates with reference to the selection criteria detailed above. Upon completion of the assessment, the Selection Committee will establish a shortlist of candidates best matching the needs of the Units.

Interview and possible written exercise

The interview will finalise the assessment of candidates according to the selection criteria. The interview will be conducted remotely in English and may include a written exercise, which would be communicated to candidates prior to the interview.

Please note that, as a rule, for organisational purposes, appointments set by the ERCEA cannot be changed at the candidate's request.

Reserve List

Candidates who succeed in the interview and the possible written exercise will be included in a Reserve List, initially valid for two years, with the possibility of extension. This Reserve List will be approved by the ERCEA Director and will include the names of approximately 20 candidates, listed alphabetically. Candidates included in the Reserve List could be offered a secondment when there is a vacancy for which their profile is suitable and subject to reference checks. Candidates should note that the inclusion on the Reserve List does not imply any entitlement to secondment.

² The language for this selection process has been defined in line with the interests of the service, which require newly Seconded National Experts to be immediately operational and capable of communicating effectively in their daily work. Accordingly, given that new Seconded National Experts need to be able to assume their duties immediately without receiving additional language training, they must be able to communicate with the scientific community and the already operating staff in ERCEA and services in the Commission in the most commonly working language used in the ERCEA.

5. SECONDMENT CONDITIONS

The candidates on the Reserve List may be offered a secondment with the ERCEA under the following terms:

- Entitlement throughout the period of the secondment, to a daily subsistence allowance (currently € 157,35 per diem) and a monthly subsistence allowance depending on the distance between the place of origin and the place of secondment.
- The initial duration of a secondment is typically two years. The secondment may be renewed up to a total period not exceeding four years (see Article 4 of the SNE Rules).
- The secondment is expected to start as of end of 2023 – beginning of 2024.
- Generous leave entitlements; recuperation of overtime worked; flexible working hours.
- Free access to a European School and access to childcare facilities of the European Commission.
- Opportunities for personal and professional learning and development.
- An inspiring and multicultural working environment in the heart of Brussels, Belgium.
- During the secondment, SNEs are subject to the obligations of confidentiality, loyalty and the absence of conflict of interest (see Article 7 of the SNE Rules).
- Working in parallel for the ERCEA and the institution from which the National Expert is seconded is not possible.
- The place of secondment is Brussels, Belgium.

6. HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in applying for the post, the application needs to include the following documents:

1. A **2-page CV in pdf format** in English. The CV must include three professional references and be saved with the title: FAMILY NAME – ERCEA/SNE/224/2023 – CV.
2. A duly completed **Application Form** in English, which can be found [here](#). Applicants need to add their contact details a motivation letter in English and whether they are applying for Research Ethics or Physical Sciences and Engineering. The Application Form must be saved with the title: FAMILY NAME – ERCEA/SNE/224/2023 –Application Form.
3. A scan of your **current contract** stating that you are "employed by a national, regional or local public administration" and "have worked for your employer on a permanent or contract basis for at least 12 months before your secondment".
4. The **declaration on your status of employment**, which can be found [here](#), indicating that you "shall remain in the service of that employer throughout the period of secondment". Specifically, your employer "shall thus undertake to continue to pay [your] salary, to maintain [your] administrative status throughout the period of secondment [and] shall also continue to be responsible for all [your] social rights, particularly social security and pension".

Applicants must send their completed applications (CV, Application Form, current contract and declaration on status of employment) to the Permanent Representations, the EFTA Secretariat or the Permanent Delegation of Turkey.

The Permanent Representations, the EFTA Secretariat and the Permanent Delegation of Turkey, must forward the applications to:
ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu by **13 October 2023, 12:00 (midday)** Brussels time (CEST).

Applications sent directly to the ERCEA will NOT be taken into account. Please liaise with your Permanent Representation, the EFTA Secretariat or the Permanent Delegation of Turkey, to ensure that your application is sent before the deadline.

At any stage of the selection, the ERCEA can request candidates to present, for example, certified copies of degrees, diplomas, or proof of experience. These documents should not be sent during the selection process, except upon request of the ERCEA. **If it is established at any point in time that the information in the Application Form has been falsified, candidates will be disqualified from the selection process.** Candidates will also be disqualified, or their applications will not be retained, if they do not: comply with the conditions of application for the Call published; provide all requested documents by the deadline; complete the application form including all requested elements; meet all the eligibility criteria; complete the CV and application form and in English.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The ERCEA values difference and promotes equality. The ERCEA applies a policy of equal opportunities and accepts applications without discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, as per Article 1(d)(1) of the Staff Regulations.

8. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The ERCEA ensures that applicants' personal data are processed as required by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (Official Journal of the European Communities, L 295 of 21 November 2018). This applies in particular to the confidentiality and security of such data.

Candidates are invited to carefully read the Data Protection Notice, which provides useful information about the processing of their personal data and relevant rights: <https://europa.eu/!cx3T37>.

9. REQUEST FOR REVIEW

The ERCEA and the Selection Committees operate within the context of the general principles of European Union law as interpreted by the Courts. In assessing candidates' merits, Selection Committees observe the principle of equal treatment. If candidates nevertheless believe that one of these principles has not been applied in their case, they have the right, within 10 calendar days from the date when they receive notification of the decision that was sent to them, to request a review by sending an email stating their reasons to: ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu.

Candidates must quote in the subject line: *reference of this selection process; full name; 'Request for review'*. The ERCEA will forward the request to the Chairperson of the Selection Committee if it comes within the Committee's remit, and candidates will receive a reply as soon as possible.

ANNEX 1

This is an overview of Panel Teams in the “Physical Sciences and Engineering” Unit:

- **PE1 Mathematics**
All areas of mathematics, pure and applied, plus mathematical foundations of computer science, mathematical physics and statistics
- **PE2 Fundamental Constituents of Matter**
Particle, nuclear, plasma, atomic, molecular, gas, and optical physics
- **PE3 Condensed Matter Physics**
Structure, electronic properties, fluids, nanosciences, biological physics
- **PE4 Physical and Analytical Chemical Sciences**
Analytical chemistry, chemical theory, physical chemistry/chemical physics
- **PE5 Synthetic Chemistry and Materials**
New materials and new synthetic approaches, structure-properties relations, solid state chemistry, molecular architecture, organic chemistry
- **PE6 Computer Science and Informatics**
Informatics and information systems, computer science, scientific computing, intelligent systems
- **PE7 Systems and Communication Engineering**
Electrical, electronic, communication, optical and systems engineering
- **PE8 Products and Processes Engineering**
Product and process design, chemical, civil, environmental, mechanical, vehicle engineering, energy processes and relevant computational methods
- **PE9 Universe Sciences**
Astro-physics/-chemistry/-biology; solar system; planetary systems; stellar, galactic and extragalactic astronomy; cosmology; space sciences; astronomical instrumentation and data
- **PE10 Earth System Science**
Physical geography, geology, geophysics, atmospheric sciences, oceanography, climatology, cryology, ecology, global environmental change, biogeochemical cycles, natural resources management
- **PE11 Materials Engineering**
Advanced materials development: performance enhancement, modelling, large-scale preparation, modification, tailoring, optimisation, novel and combined use of materials, etc.

In addition to these eleven Panel Teams, the Unit also has a PE 'Synergy' Panel Team, linked to the ERC Synergy call.