



European Research Council
Executive Agency

Established by the European Commission

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

REFERENCE	ERCEA/SNE/230/2023
POSITION	Seconded National Experts (Research Programme Expert)
DOMAIN	Life Sciences
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION	15 February 2024 by 12:00 (midday) Brussels time

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 fundamental activity of the ERCEA, via its main frontier research grants, is to provide attractive, long-term funding to support excellent investigators and their research teams to pursue ground-breaking and ambitious research. The ERCEA funds projects in any field of research, with excellence as the sole selection criterion.

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.

The Seconded National Expert, SNE, (also called Research Programme Expert) would join the Life Sciences Unit (B.3) of the Scientific Management Department of the ERCEA, which defines and manages the coordination of the evaluation and selection of research proposals submitted to the ERC grant schemes and the scientific monitoring of funded projects. The Life Sciences Unit has around 45 highly committed and qualified staff members, subdivided into Panel Teams. These Panel Teams cover different areas of research and scholarship in the domain of Life Sciences (LS) allocated along nine ERC Panels (see the panel descriptors in Annex 1):

- **LS1** Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions
- **LS2** Integrative Biology: from Genes and Genomes to Systems
- **LS3** Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration
- **LS4** Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing
- **LS5** Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System
- **LS6** Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy
- **LS7** Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases
- **LS8** Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution
- **LS9** Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering

In addition to the Panel Teams linked to the nine ERC Panels, the Unit also includes a LS Synergy Panel Team, linked to the ERC Synergy call.

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. For more information, including the secondment conditions, please see below.

1. JOB DESCRIPTION

The Research Programme Expert in Life Sciences would be working in a small team of four to five scientific officers lead by a panel coordinator and would be entrusted with the following tasks.

Support in the evaluation and selection of research proposals

- Provide support to meetings of scientific panels for the selection of research proposals in the area of Life Sciences by external experts, including the preparation, organisation, operation of the meetings and the documentation of results;
- Provide support to the ex-post assessment of completed projects by external experts;
- Contribute to the development of guidelines, orientations and new approaches relating to the proper implementation of the programme.

Project/process management

- Assess the scientific implementation of projects in Life Sciences through periodic reviews, reporting etc.;
- Contribute to the analysis of the ERC portfolio of funded projects;
- As appropriate, analyse and assess the results and impacts of the programme, provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

External communication

- Present the programme and project results at workshops, seminars, conferences and other public events, to both internal and external stakeholders;
- Contribute to publications produced by the programme intended for external stakeholders;
- Extract and disseminate best practices and facilitate exchange of experiences;
- Collate information and draft replies to questions from external stakeholders;
- Produce reports/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.

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.

Essential selection criteria

- Completed university studies of at least three years in a scientific/technical area relevant for this profile, attested by a diploma.
- Excellent knowledge of English: spoken and written skills equivalent to level C1¹ or higher level for working purposes².

Advantageous selection criteria

- Three years of professional experience in conducting research in the domain of Life Sciences, or a PhD in the domain of Life Sciences;
- Experience in the management of research projects;
- Experience, knowledge and understanding of peer review processes in funding agencies or other academic settings.

Job-related competencies (tested during the interview and/or the written exercise)

- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to work independently as well as with a team, good prioritisation skills and ability to work within deadlines and exercise diplomatic skills;
- Excellent communication and drafting skills, including the capacity to communicate technical or specialised information.

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 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 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 candidates who meet the eligibility and selection criteria, 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.

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

² English is the predominant working language at ERCEA and generally considered the lingua franca of the scientific community. 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 SNEs 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 € 161,63 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 in the second half of 2024.
- The place of secondment is Brussels, Belgium; an inspiring and multicultural working environment.
- 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.
- 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.

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/230/2023 – 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. The Application Form must be saved with the title: FAMILY NAME – ERCEA/SNE/230/2023 – 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 **15 February 2024, 12:00 (midday)** Brussels time.

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; '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

Overview of the nine LS Panels and Panel Descriptors:

- **LS1 Molecules of Life: Biological Mechanisms, Structures and Functions**
For all organisms: Molecular biology, biochemistry, structural biology, molecular biophysics, synthetic and chemical biology, drug design, innovative methods and modelling
- **LS2 Integrative Biology: From Genes and Genomes to Systems**
For all organisms: Genetics, epigenetics, genomics and other 'omics studies, bioinformatics, systems biology, genetic diseases, gene editing, innovative methods and modelling, 'omics for personalised medicine
- **LS3 Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration**
For all organisms: Structure and function of the cell, cell-cell communication, embryogenesis, tissue differentiation, organogenesis, growth, development, evolution of development, organoids, stem cells, regeneration, therapeutic approaches
- **LS4 Physiology in Health, Disease and Ageing**
Organ and tissue physiology, comparative physiology, physiology of ageing, pathophysiology, interorgan and tissue communication, endocrinology, nutrition, metabolism, interaction with the microbiome, non-communicable diseases including cancer (and except disorders of the nervous system and immunity-related diseases)
- **LS5 Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System**
In humans and all other organisms: Nervous system development, homeostasis and ageing, nervous system function and dysfunction, systems neuroscience and modelling, biological basis of cognitive processes and of behaviour, neurological and mental disorders
- **LS6 Immunity, Infection and Immunotherapy**
The immune system, related disorders and their mechanisms, biology of infectious agents and infection, biological basis of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, innovative immunological tools and approaches, including therapies
- **LS7 Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Human Diseases**
Medical technologies and tools for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases, therapeutic approaches and interventions, pharmacology, preventative medicine, epidemiology and public health, digital medicine
- **LS8 Environmental Biology, Ecology and Evolution**
For all organisms: Ecology, biodiversity, environmental change, evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology, microbial ecology, marine biology, ecophysiology, theoretical developments and modelling
- **LS9 Biotechnology and Biosystems Engineering**
Biotechnology using all organisms, biotechnology for environment and food applications, applied plant and animal sciences, bioengineering and synthetic biology, biomass and biofuels, biohazards