



European Research Council  
Executive Agency

Established by the European Commission

# CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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 establishing a Reserve List of qualified candidates from which to hire for the position of:

## Research Programme Agent in the domain of Life Sciences

REFERENCE	ERCEA/TA/221/2023
CONTRACT TYPE	Temporary Agent, AD 6 (Step 1 or 2)
MINIMUM BASIC SALARY	€ 6.169,72 (plus benefits)
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION	31 January 2024 by 12:00 (midday) Brussels time

## POSITION

Research Programme Agents in the ERCEA are responsible for the coordination of ERC Panel Teams. The Life Sciences Unit of the ERCEA counts 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 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 the nine ERC Panels, the Unit also includes a LS 'Synergy' Panel Team, linked to the ERC Synergy call.

## Job description

The Research Programme Agent in Life Sciences would be entrusted with the following tasks and duties:

### Support in the coordination of the evaluation and selection of research proposals

- Coordinate the peer-review process for the selection of research proposals for the relevant evaluation panels, including the preparation, organisation and operation of the meetings, and the documentation of results.
- Contribute to the development of guidelines, orientations and new approaches relating to the proper implementation of the programme.
- Coordinate one or more ERC LS Panel Teams – usually two or three Project Advisers and an Administrative Assistant – under the guidance of the Head of Sector.

### Project management

- Assess the scientific implementation of projects primarily in LS 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.

Key strengths needed to establish trust-based relationships with different stakeholders and to manage demanding situations include: effective organisational, analytical and communication skills, as well as outstanding drafting and presentation skills.

While not being directly involved in scientific research, the position requires an excellent knowledge of the state of the art in the field and the ability to leverage this knowledge for portfolio analysis and for research project management.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Candidates must fulfil the following **general criteria** by the deadline for application mentioned on page 1 of this Call:

- Be a national of a member state of the European Union and enjoy full rights as a citizen.
- Have fulfilled any obligations imposed by the applicable laws regarding military service.
- Meet the character requirements for the duties involved.<sup>1</sup>
- Be physically fit to perform their duties.<sup>2</sup>

Candidates must fulfil the following **specific criteria** by the deadline for application mentioned on page 1 of this Call:

- Have a level of education corresponding to completed university studies of at least three years, attested by a diploma.

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<sup>1</sup> In case of inclusion on a Reserve List and in case the ERCEA decides to offer a contract of employment, prior to appointment, the successful candidate will be asked to provide a certificate from their police file indicating that they do not have a criminal record in line with Article 12.2(c) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS).

<sup>2</sup> In case of an offer of employment by the ERCEA, prior to appointment, the selected candidate will be asked to undergo a compulsory medical examination by one of the Institutions' medical officers to demonstrate the fulfilment of the requirement of Article 12.2(d) of the CEOS.

Only qualifications issued by EU Member State authorities and qualifications recognised as equivalent by the relevant EU Member State authorities will be accepted.<sup>3</sup>

- Have professional experience of at least five years. This should be acquired after graduation referred to under the qualifications above. A completed doctoral programme, even unpaid, will be counted as professional experience for a maximum of three years.
- Have a thorough knowledge of English and a satisfactory knowledge of another official EU language to the extent necessary for the performance of the duties outlined in the Job Description. English is the working language of the ERCEA and is generally considered to be the lingua franca of the scientific community.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria will be assessed at the various stages of the selection process. The applications of candidates who at any stage of the selection process are found not to meet one or more of the essential selection criteria, will not be considered further.<sup>4</sup>

It is the candidates' responsibility to make explicitly clear in their Application Form how and to what extent they meet the selection criteria, in particular to highlight the relevance of their educational and professional background and motivation for the position, as well as their strengths and past achievements relevant for the position.

### Essential selection criteria

#### Professional research experience

Research qualification at PhD level PLUS two further years of professional experience related to research in any of the areas covered by the nine ERC panels of the Life Sciences domain.

OR

Five years of professional experience in conducting research in any of the areas covered by the nine ERC Panels of the Life Sciences domain.

#### Knowledge of languages

Excellent knowledge of English: spoken and written skills equivalent to level C1<sup>5</sup> or higher level for working purposes.<sup>6</sup>

#### Skills and competences

- Outstanding drafting and presentation skills, with an eye for detail.
- Ability to work well under pressure in demanding situations and ability to handle several tasks simultaneously.
- Ability to deliver quality and results individually and in a team while working in a multicultural environment.
- Strong organisational and communication skills.
- Ability to coordinate and inspire a small team as well as evaluation panels involving senior external experts.

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<sup>3</sup> In case diplomas are obtained from a non-EU Member State, the candidate may be required to provide the relevant document of comparability by a recognised authority. UK diplomas awarded until 31 December 2020 are accepted without an equivalence. UK diplomas awarded as from 1 January 2021 must be accompanied by an equivalence issued by a competent authority of an EU Member State.

<sup>4</sup> Please note that fulfilling the essential criteria is mandatory, meaning that an application will not be further assessed if a candidate does not fulfil the essential selection criteria.

<sup>5</sup> [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#).

<sup>6</sup> The language for this selection process has been defined in line with the interests of the service, which require newly recruited Temporary Agents to be immediately operational and capable of communicating effectively in their daily work. Accordingly, given that new recruits need to be able to assume their duties immediately without receiving additional language training, the new Temporary Agents 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.

## Advantageous selection criteria

- Motivation for the position and strengths and achievements relevant for the position.
- Excellent knowledge of the state of the art in the field, and ability to make use of it in portfolio analysis and feedback to policy.
- Experience in conducting research in a relevant area for the profile.
- Experience managing research projects at an institutional, national, European, or international level, including experience at a research funding organisation.
- Other professional experience related to research (e.g., science policy, science journalism, impact assessment, foresight, etc.)
- Knowledge of European research policies and programmes.
- Experience in supervising staff or leading teams.

## 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 from which candidates submitted their application. Should candidates' e-mail address change, they are asked to inform [ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu).

The selection process will take several months to complete. Candidates will be informed of the outcome of the different stages in due time. Please note that, as a general rule, for organisational purposes, appointments set by the ERCEA cannot be changed at the candidate's request.

The ERCEA Director will appoint a Selection Committee. The names of the Selection Committee members will be communicated to the candidates invited to interviews.<sup>7</sup>

After the deadline for applications, the Selection Committee will check the applications against the eligibility criteria. The Selection Committee will assess the applications of eligible candidates with reference to the selection criteria detailed above. The Selection Committee will establish a shortlist of approximately 90 candidates best matching the profile and needs of the Agency for the functions and tasks described in this Call, ensuring the appropriate and necessary diversity of scientific backgrounds and specialisations.

These shortlisted candidates will be invited to sit a written test, which is a qualifying step for the interview stage. The Selection Committee will assess the anonymised written tests. The approximately 50 candidates who obtain the highest marks in the written test will be invited to an interview.

The results of the written test will not be taken into account in the assessment of the interview performance. Candidates who succeed in the interview 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 25 candidates who obtain the highest marks in the interview, listed alphabetically.

Candidates included in the Reserve List could be offered a job 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 employment.*

## HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in applying for this post, please download the Application Form which can be found on the ERC website: <https://europa.eu/mjtcF9> and follow the instructions and rules listed in the Application Form. In the Application Form you will have to indicate which of the Life Sciences Panels matches your profile best. In addition, you also have to submit a maximum 2-page<sup>8</sup> CV in pdf format. Both the Application Form and CV must be sent to [ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu) by **31 January 2024, 12:00 (midday) Brussels time.**

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<sup>7</sup> Under no circumstances should candidates approach the Selection Committee themselves, either directly or indirectly concerning this selection process. The ERCEA Director reserves the right to disqualify any candidate who disregards these instructions. In assessing candidates' merits, the Selection Committee shall observe the principle of equal treatment.

<sup>8</sup> All pages beyond the first two will be disregarded.

If the application has been submitted successfully, candidates will receive a confirmation e-mail within three working days. Candidates are strongly advised not to leave the submission process to the last minute. The ERCEA cannot be held responsible for any delay due to, for example, heavy internet traffic or connection difficulties. In the case of multiple submissions, only the latest valid and complete application will be considered.

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; send their application by the deadline; send a complete application including all requested elements; meet all the eligibility criteria; complete the form in English.

## EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The selection process aims to establish a Reserve List of eligible and qualified candidates. These candidates may be offered a contract with the ERCEA under the following terms:

- A **two-year contract as a Temporary Agent 2(f)** with the possibility of **renewal for one year**, which could be followed by a **contract of indefinite duration**.
- The **basic monthly salary** for this post currently ranges between **€ 6.169,72** (in Step 1) and **€ 6.429,00** (in Step 2), according to the assessment of the qualification and professional experience.<sup>9</sup> On top of the basic salary, the remuneration package may include further **monthly allowances** (expatriation allowance; household allowance; dependent child allowance; education allowance; and other benefits). *For example, a Research Programme Agent who has five years' professional experience after the qualifying degree, who is married, has one child, and is entitled to an expatriation allowance, earns an estimated monthly net salary between € 7.037,13 and € 7.556,91.*
- Full **international health insurance** coverage under the European Union Institutions' Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme.
- Access to the European Union's **pension plan** after ten years of service.
- 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.
- An **inspiring and multicultural** working environment in the heart of Brussels, Belgium. The ERCEA cares about **well-being** and offers ample opportunities for personal and professional **learning and development**.

## 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.

## 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

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<sup>9</sup> The classification in Step 1 or 2 will be done in accordance with the ERCEA's general implementing provisions concerning the criteria applicable to classification in step on appointment or engagement and will depend on the assessment of the qualification and professional experience of the selected candidate.

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:

## REQUEST FOR REVIEW, APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

### 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](mailto: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.

### Appeal procedure

If, at any stage of the selection, candidates consider that their interests have been prejudiced by a particular decision, or lack thereof, they can take the following actions:

- Candidates may lodge an administrative complaint pursuant to Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations, at: [ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ERC-SELECTION@ec.europa.eu).

The complaint must be lodged within three months from the date on which candidates are notified of the act adversely affecting them, or lack thereof, only if the rules governing the selection process have clearly been infringed. The ERCEA Director cannot overturn a value judgement (i.e., the quality of a candidate's performance in a written or oral test or the relevance of qualifications and professional experience) made by the Selection Committee. The ERCEA Director will notify the person concerned of its reasoned decision within four months of the date on which the complaint was lodged.

- Should the aforementioned complaint be rejected, candidates may request judicial review of the act adversely affecting them, pursuant to Article 270 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 91 of the Staff Regulations:

[http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2\\_7030/en/](http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7030/en/)

The request for judicial review must be lodged within three months from the date on which candidates are notified of the decision taken in response to the above-mentioned administrative complaint. Candidates must indicate the reference of this Call for Expression of Interest.

### Complaints to the European Ombudsman

Any citizen of the European Union or any natural or legal person residing in a Member State may direct a complaint concerning instances of maladministration to the European Ombudsman pursuant to Article 228(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union:

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/start.faces>

It should be noted that complaints to the European Ombudsman do not suspend the periods mentioned in Articles 90(2) and 91 of the Staff Regulations for lodging complaints or submitting an appeal before the Court of Justice according to Article 270 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It should also be noted that, under Article 2(4) of the Regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the European Ombudsman's duties, any complaint to the European Ombudsman must be preceded by appropriate administrative approaches to the institutions and bodies concerned.

# Annex I

## 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