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## **Implementing Arrangement between the European Commission and the Australian Research Council for Australian early career researchers hosted by the European Research Council grantees in Europe**

In accordance with Article 4 of the "*Agreement relating to scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and Australia*" signed on 23 February 1994 and entered into force on 25 July 1994<sup>1</sup>, as amended<sup>2</sup>, hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement", an Implementing Arrangement (hereinafter referred to as the "Arrangement") to provide research opportunities in Europe for Australian early career researchers is established between the European Commission and the Australian Research Council (hereinafter referred as "the Sides").

From the European Commission side, this Arrangement is intended to be administratively managed by the European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA), which is the dedicated implementation structure of the European Research Council (ERC). The ERC's mission is to encourage the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-driven frontier research across all fields, on the basis of scientific excellence.

From the Australian Research Council (ARC) side, the ARC is intended to be responsible for administering the Arrangement. The ARC is a Commonwealth entity within the Australian Government. The ARC administers the National Competitive Grants Program, a significant component of Australia's investment in research and development. Through the National Competitive Grants Program, the ARC administers the Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) scheme, which provides focused support and creates opportunities for early-career researchers.

The Sides understand that the collaboration under this Arrangement is intended to operate only within the limits of its respective authorities, policies, legal frameworks and other requirements.

Research opportunities are intended to be provided in accordance with the terms set out in the Agreement.

This Arrangement is not intended to create rights and obligations under international or domestic law and it has no financial implications.

### **1. AREAS OF ACTIVITIES**

The Sides intend to provide opportunities specifically for ARC-funded DECRA<sup>3</sup> recipients (hereinafter referred as "DECRA recipients") to pursue research collaborations with European researchers already supported through the EU-funded ERC grants<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L188, 22/07/1994, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L195 28/07/1999, p 32-33.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.arc.gov.au/discovery-early-career-researcher-award>

<sup>4</sup> <https://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/funding-schemes>

It is expected that collaborations would occur where the objectives of the ERC-funded research activity is closely aligned with an ARC-funded DECRA recipient's research, and would clearly enhance the research project for which the DECRA is funded.

## **2. COLLABORATIVE OBJECTIVES**

This collaboration is intended to enable DECRA recipients to carry out research visits with ERC-supported European teams.

The collaboration is intended to enable researchers to participate through a single and long-term (i.e. minimum of three months and up to 12 months) visit or multiple short-term visits (e.g. for joint experiments). Research visits are expected to begin at least 12 months prior to the project end date of the DECRA. Multiple short-term visits should aggregate to a jointly determined minimum (i.e. minimum of one month and up to three months).

## **3. PROCEDURE OF COOPERATION**

The following set of operational steps is intended to be used:

- a) The ERC would solicit expressions of interest from Principal Investigators (PIs) holding ERC grants in hosting ARC-funded DECRA recipients to contribute to their teams for short or longer periods.
- b) The ERC would send to the ARC a listing of the interested PIs/teams, together with the publishable description of their respective ERC-funded projects and other information as mutually decided between the ARC and the ERC to facilitate the collaborations between the researchers.
- c) The ARC would inform Australian Eligible Administering Organisations<sup>5</sup> of the collaborative opportunities available, describing the goals of the ERC programme and the collaborative opportunities as defined by the European researchers. Eligible Administering Organisations hosting DECRA recipients with closely aligned research would be required to communicate directly with the ERC-supported teams to negotiate the terms and conditions of the collaboration with ERC-supported European teams.

## **4. TECHNICAL WORKING MEETINGS**

The Sides intend to have regular technical working meetings with the participation of two representatives from each side. As necessary, each Side may designate additional representatives to the meetings. The technical working meetings should be co-chaired by a representative of the ARC and the Head of the Scientific Management Department of the ERCEA. Best practices consistent with the needs of the respective Sides in order to collaborate under this Arrangement are expected to be discussed during the technical working meetings and be stated in the meeting minutes.

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<sup>5</sup> Primarily Australian higher education institutions, which are listed within the DECRA guidelines

During the technical working meetings, the Sides should review the activities, under this Arrangement and decide if any adjustment would be necessary on a periodic basis. These meetings are expected to take place at least once per year, and they should be held virtually or, if opportune, at the ARC or the ERCEA premises.

## **5. FUNDING**

Activities under this Arrangement are intended to be subject to the availability of appropriated funds, to the applicable laws and regulations, policies and programmes of each Side.

### **(1) The ARC**

Only those DECRA recipients whose award is closely aligned with an ERC-funded research project are eligible to participate in collaborations identified under this Arrangement.

DECRA recipients can continue to receive their grant/stipend according to the terms and conditions of the award. If their award allows, DECRA recipients may use ARC funding for travel expenses. If travel expenses have not been specified, the DECRA recipient may request directly to the ARC to convert a portion of their funding to cover their travel expenses. In accordance with the rules that apply to DECRA scheme all DECRA recipients are required to obtain approval from their Administering Organisation before commencing a collaborative agreement with their European counterparts.

### **(2) The ERC**

Visiting DECRA recipients may be incorporated into the research teams of the ERC-funded Principal Investigators (at the Host Institution of the ERC projects) for the duration of the visit, so that any relevant expenses can be claimed under the ERC grants, supporting the team and the activity as noted below. Sufficient flexibility exists for the ERC grant to support the visiting researcher with no separate direct funding arrangement between the visiting researcher and the ERC being required. The ERC grant agreement provides that only the costs eligible within its terms can be reimbursed and the maximum amount of the ERC grant may not be increased for this purpose. The involved DECRA recipient should be solely in charge of seeking and obtaining any payments or reimbursements under this section without any involvement of the ARC. Eligible cost categories include:

- (i) For researchers receiving a grant/stipend under the DECRA scheme, subsistence costs on a per diem basis, or any other pertinent modality of the Host institution, in accordance with the applicable national law and any other rules or regulations applicable to the Host Institution, which may take into account the level of experience of the individual visiting career researchers.
- (ii) Any other eligible costs incurred during the visit of the DECRA recipient that are directly related to the ERC-funded project.

## **6. ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMES**

The Sides, by mutual consent in writing, may allow the inclusion of other schemes in addition to the DECRA scheme managed by the ARC.

## 7. DURATION

Cooperation under this Arrangement is intended to commence from signature by both Sides. It may be discontinued by either Side at any time.

Signed at Brussels, on 13 February 2019, in duplicate in the English language.

**For the European Commission**



Signe Ratso  
Deputy Director-General  
for Research and Innovation

**For the Australian Research Council**



His Excellency Justin Brown  
Ambassador of Australia to the European  
Union, Belgium, Luxembourg and NATO