

**Implementing Arrangement between the National Research Foundation,  
Singapore (NRF) and the European Commission for NRF-funded researchers  
hosted by the European Research Council grantees in Europe**

An Implementing Arrangement (hereinafter referred to as the "Arrangement") to provide research opportunities in Europe for National Research Foundation, Singapore (NRF)-funded researchers is established between the NRF and the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Sides").

For the NRF, the NRF is intended to be responsible for administering the Arrangement. The NRF is a department within the Prime Minister's Office, Singapore. The NRF sets the national direction in terms of strategy, policy and governance for research, innovation and enterprise efforts in Singapore, and also directly administers competitive research funding.

For the European Commission, 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.

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

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

This Arrangement does not vary the rights and obligations of NRF-funded researchers under their respective Letters of Award issued by the NRF.

## **1. AREAS OF ACTIVITIES**

The Sides intend to provide opportunities specifically for NRF-funded researchers to pursue research collaborations with European researchers already supported through the European Union-funded ERC grants<sup>1</sup>.

NRF-funded researchers are Principal Investigators (PIs) and researchers who are supported by a grant<sup>2</sup> from the NRF following a competitive process, as provided under a Letter of Award issued by the NRF, and where the grant has provided a budget for overseas travel.

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to funding schemes under <https://erc.europa.eu>

<sup>2</sup> The applicable grants are the Singapore National Research Foundation Competitive Research Programme funding scheme and the Singapore National Research Foundation Fellowship.

It is expected that collaborations would occur in similar areas of scientific pursuit.

## **2. COLLABORATIVE OBJECTIVES**

This collaboration is intended to enable NRF-funded researchers to carry out research visits with ERC-supported European teams.

The collaboration is intended to enable researchers to participate through a single research visit or multiple short-term research visits (e.g. for joint experiments). Research visits are expected to begin at least 12 months prior to the project end date of relevant NRF grants. The duration of research visits would not be more than three months within each year of the NRF-funded project.

## **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 NRF-funded researchers to contribute to their teams for short or longer periods.
- b) The ERC would send to the NRF 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 NRF and the ERC to facilitate the collaborations between the researchers.
- c) The NRF would inform NRF-funded researchers of the collaborative opportunities available, describing the goals of the ERC programme and the collaborative opportunities as defined by the European researchers. NRF-funded researchers would be invited 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 NRF 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.

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 appropriate, at the NRF or the ERCEA premises.

## **5. FUNDING**

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

### **(1) The NRF**

NRF-funded researchers can continue to receive NRF funding according to the terms and conditions of their respective grants. Travel expenses related to the research visits could therefore be claimed under the active NRF grant. However, in accordance with the rules that apply to NRF grants, the NRF-funded researchers and their respective institutions are responsible to ensure that the NRF-funded researchers do not charge other expenses to the NRF grants where these expenses are claimed and covered by the ERC grants of the ERC-supported European teams, and NRF-funded researchers are required to obtain approval from their respective institutions before commencing a collaborative agreement with their European counterparts.

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

Visiting NRF-funded researchers may be incorporated into the research teams of the ERC-funded Principal Investigators (at the Host Institutions of the ERC projects) for the duration of the research 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 NRF-funded researchers should be solely in charge of seeking and obtaining any payments or reimbursements under this section without any involvement of the NRF. Eligible cost categories may include:

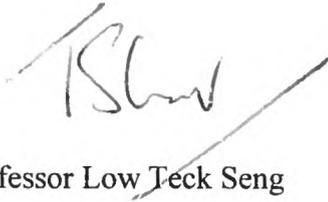
- a) For researchers receiving a grant under the NRF scheme, subsistence costs on a per diem basis, or any other pertinent modality of the Host Institution, in accordance with the applicable national law and any other rules or regulations applicable to the Host Institution, which may take into account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

## **6. 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 Kyoto, on 6 October 2019, in duplicate in the English language.

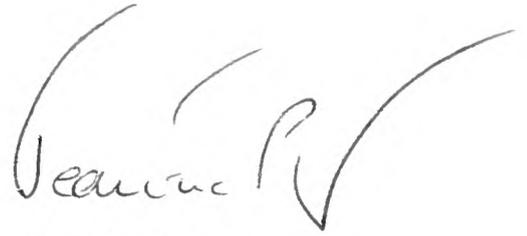
**For the National Research Foundation,  
Singapore**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Seng', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Professor Low Teck Seng

Chief Executive Officer

**For the European Commission**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jean-Eric Paquet', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jean-Eric Paquet

Director-General for Research and  
Innovation