

IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENT
BETWEEN
THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DST)
AND
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EC)
FOR
PROVIDING RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN EUROPE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN
EARLY-MID CAREER RESEARCHERS

In accordance with article 5 of the Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between the Republic of South Africa and the European Community, signed on December 12th 1996 and entered into force on November 11th 1997¹, hereinafter referred to as the 'Agreement', an Implementing Arrangement to provide South African early-mid career researchers with research opportunities in Europe is hereby established between the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the European Research Council (ERC) (hereinafter referred as the "Sides").

The purpose of this Implementing Arrangement is to encourage, develop and facilitate access to research opportunities between the DST and the ERC. This Implementing Arrangement is not intended to create rights and obligations under international law.

1. AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

- 1.1 The Sides intend to provide opportunities to South African early-mid career researchers to pursue research collaboration with European colleagues already supported through EU-funded European Research Council (ERC) grants.
- 1.2 The Sides intend to facilitate the access of ERC-funded projects by South African researchers, initially those supported through the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) Research Career Advancement Fellowships² and the Postdoctoral Research Fellowships³ under Project Funding Agreement number 0118/2012 between DST and NRF concluded on 27 July 2012. It is expected that collaborations will occur in similar areas of scientific pursuit and on topics of mutual interest.

2. COLLABORATIVE OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The collaboration is intended to enable South African researchers supported by the NRF Research Career Advancement Fellowships and the Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to undertake research visits to ERC-supported teams.

¹Council Decision No 97/763/EC, Official Journal of the European Communities L 313, 15.11.1997, p. 25.

²<http://www.nrf.ac.za/division/hicd/instruments/human-capacity-programme>

³<http://www.nrf.ac.za/division/hicd/instruments/human-capacity-programme>

- 2.2 The research visits will be organised as follows:
 - 2.2.1 Single and long-term (e.g. 6-12 months) or
 - 2.2.2 Multiple short-term visits of not less than 10 days and not more than 6 months (e.g. for joint experiments).
- 2.3 The research visits should begin at least 12 months prior to the termination date of the NRF fellowship programme and 18 months prior to the termination date of the ERC grant.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 The Sides intend to use the following set of operational steps:
 - 3.1.1 The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA), as the executive agency of the ERC, solicits expressions of interest, from Principal Investigators (PIs) holding ERC grants, in hosting South African based researchers to undertake collaborative research for short or longer periods of time with the undertaking that travel expenses between South Africa and Europe will be covered by the NRF, being the implementing agency of the DST. The ERCEA would send to the NRF a list of the ERC interested PIs/teams, together with the publishable description of their respective ERC-funded projects.
 - 3.1.2 The NRF would then inform the NRF Research Career Advancement Fellows and the Postdoctoral Research Fellows of the collaborative opportunity through issuance of a Letter that describes the goals of the programme and the collaborative opportunities as defined by the ERC researchers and provides application procedures, eligibility considerations, and relevant policies and requirements, as appropriate. Applying NRF fellows will need approval from their employers (i.e. Designated Authorities), a support letter from their supervisors to ensure synergy with their already funded South African project, and an ERC team / Host Institution (HI) confirmation letter.

4. FUNDING

- 4.1 Activities under this Implementing Arrangement should be subject to the availability of appropriate funds and to the applicable laws and regulations, policies and programmes of each Side.
- 4.2 South African researchers will continue to receive their NRF fellowship funding during the period of the visit. Through this collaboration, the NRF will also provide support for travel expenses. In case of a long-term visit (6 months or longer), travel expenses of accompanying family members will also be covered by the NRF.
- 4.3 Visiting South African researchers will be incorporated into the research teams of the ERC-funded PI (at the HI of the ERC projects) for the duration of the visit, so that any relevant expenses can be claimed under the ERC grant, supporting the team and the activity as noted below. Sufficient flexibility exists for the ERC grant to support the visiting researcher with no required separate direct funding arrangement between the visiting researcher and the ERC. The costs which can be reimbursed under the ERC grant must be eligible within the terms of the grant and the maximum amount of the ERC grant may not be increased for this purpose.

4.4 Eligible cost categories include:

- 4.4.1 Subsistence costs on a per diem basis, or any other applicable modality of the HI, in accordance with the applicable national law and any other rules or regulations applicable on the HI, commensurate to the level of experience of the visiting researcher.
- 4.4.2 Any other eligible costs incurred during the visit of the South African researchers that are directly related to the ERC-funded project.

5. REPORTING

On completion of their fellowships, the NRF researchers are expected to provide the NRF with a full report indicating the benefits of this collaboration for their fellowship programmes.

6. STEERING GROUP

- 6.1 The two Sides intend to set up a Steering Group, consisting of two representatives from each side. The ERC will be represented by the Head of the Scientific Management Department and the Head of Unit for Support to the Scientific Council. The NRF will be represented by the Executive Director International Relations and Cooperation and the Executive Director Human and Infrastructure Capital Development. As necessary, each Side may designate a limited number of additional participants to the meetings.
- 6.2 The meetings should be co-chaired by the Head of the Scientific Management Department of the ERCEA and the Executive Director for International Relations and Cooperation Directorate of the NRF. Operational guidance and management plans consistent with the needs of the respective Side in order to implement this Arrangement will be adopted by the Steering Group. The Steering Group will review the activities under this Implementing Arrangement and decide if any adjustment will be necessary on a periodic basis. The Steering Group will meet at least once per year, and its meetings will be held virtually or alternately at the ERCEA headquarters or NRF offices.

7. DURATION

This Implementing Arrangement shall come into effect upon signature by both Sides. It should continue to have effect for the period of the duration of the Agreement, unless terminated by either side upon ninety days written notice to the other Side, or sooner by mutual written agreement. Termination will not affect obligations already made (and not totally completed) at the time of the termination. This Implementing Arrangement may be amended by written consent of the two Sides.

8. CONTACT PERSONS

The Sides should, in all respect relating to the execution of this Implementing Arrangement liaise with the following persons:

For ERC

Head of Department
Scientific Management
European Research Council Executive Agency

For NRF

Executive Director
International Relations and Cooperation
National Research Foundation

Done in duplicate at BRUSSELS in the English language on 26th day of OCTOBER
2015

For the European Commission



Carlos Moedas
Commissioner in charge of
Research, Science and Innovation

For the Department of Science and Technology



Naledi Pandor
Minister
Science and Technology