



**IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND
THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN EUROPE
FOR U.S. EARLY CAREER SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS**



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

In accordance with the terms of the Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the Government of the United States of America, signed on 5 December 1997, as renewed, hereinafter referred to as the “Agreement”, an Implementing Arrangement to provide research opportunities in Europe for U.S. early career scientists and engineers is hereby established between the European Commission and the National Science Foundation (hereinafter referred to as the “sides”). Research opportunities will be provided under the terms of the Agreement.

The purpose of this Implementing Arrangement is to encourage, develop and facilitate such opportunities between the two sides, conducted on the basis of mutual benefit and equitable and fair treatment. This Implementing Arrangement is not intended to create obligations binding under international law.

AREAS OF ACTIVITIES

The sides will provide opportunities for NSF-funded CAREER awardees and NSF-funded Postdoctoral Research Fellows to pursue research collaboration with European colleagues already supported through EU-funded European Research Council (ERC) grants.

The collaboration draws upon the goals and objectives of SAVI (Science Across Virtual Institutes – www.nsf.gov/savi), notably that scientific excellence exists around the globe, and connecting researchers with complementary strengths and shared interests will advance the frontiers of science and solve some of the world’s most vexing problems.

The two sides will facilitate use of ERC-funded projects to host U.S. scientists and engineers, initially those supported by NSF’s CAREER awards as well as recipients of NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellowships. It is expected that collaborations will occur in similar areas of scientific pursuit or on topics of mutual interest.

COLLABORATIVE OBJECTIVES

- > The collaboration will enable U.S. scientists and engineers supported by the NSF CAREER awards or NSF’s Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to undertake research visits with ERC-supported European teams.
- > NSF CAREER awardees: Single and long-term (e.g., 6-12 months) or multiple short-term visits (e.g., for joint experiments). Research visits should begin at least 12 months prior to the termination date of the NSF CAREER award. Multiple short-term visits should aggregate to an agreed upon minimum (e.g., 6 months).
- > NSF Postdoctoral Fellows: Single and long-term research visits (e.g., 6-12 months). The time spent in Europe will be in addition to (rather than in lieu of) their NSF-funded postdoctoral fellowship (usually 2 years in duration).

IMPLEMENTATION

The following set of operational steps will be used to implement the programme:

- > The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA) solicits expressions of interest from Principal Investigators (PIs) holding ERC grants in hosting U.S.-based scientists to contribute to their teams for short or longer periods with the travel expenses between US and Europe covered by the NSF.
- > The ERCEA sends to the NSF a listing of the interested PIs/teams, together with the publishable description of their respective ERC-funded projects.
- > The NSF informs CAREER awardees and NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows of the collaborative opportunity through issuance of a *Dear Colleague Letter* that describes the goals of the programme and the collaborative opportunities as defined by the European researchers and provides application procedures, eligibility considerations, and relevant policies and requirements, as appropriate.

STEERING GROUP

A Steering Group consisting of two representatives from each side is hereby established. As necessary, each side may designate a limited number of additional participants to the meetings. It shall be co-chaired by the NSF and the Head of the Scientific Management Department of the ERCEA. Operational guidance and management plans consistent with the needs of the respective sides in order to implement this Arrangement will be adopted by the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will review the activities under this Implementation 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 NSF and ERCEA headquarters.

FUNDING

Activities under this Implementing Arrangement shall be subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to the applicable laws and regulations, policies and programmes of each side, and to the terms in this Implementing Arrangement.

NSF

- (1) CAREER awardees will continue to receive NSF funding during the period of the European visit, and their salaries will be covered according to the CAREER award terms and conditions. Through this collaboration, NSF 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 NSF.
- (2) NSF will cover the travel expenses of the NSF postdoctoral fellow (and his/her accompanying family members in the case of a long-term visit of 6 months or longer).

ERC

Visiting U.S. researchers 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 grant, 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 required. The costs which can be reimbursed under the ERC grant must be eligible within the terms of the grant¹ and the maximum amount of the ERC grant may not be increased for this purpose. Eligible cost categories include:

- (1) subsistence costs on a per diem basis, or any other applicable modality of the Host Institution, in accordance with the applicable national law and any other rules or regulations applicable on the Host Institution, commensurate to the level of experience of the individual visiting CAREER awardee.
- (3) the salary of the visiting NSF postdoctoral fellow, including any applicable social/health coverage expenses, in accordance with the applicable national law and any other rules or regulations applicable on the Host Institution.
- (4) any other eligible costs incurred during the visit of the U.S. researchers that are directly related to the ERC-funded project.

DURATION

This Implementing Arrangement shall come into effect upon signature by both sides. It shall 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. This Implementing Arrangement may be amended or extended by written consent of the two sides.

Done in duplicate at Dublin in the English language this thirteenth day of July, 2012.

For the European Commission

For the National Science Foundation

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn
Member of the European Commission in charge
of Research, Innovation and Science

Subra Suresh
Director, National Science Foundation

¹ Essentially, this means the costs must be (a) incurred for the sole purpose of meeting the grant's objectives, (b) be incurred during the duration of the project and (c) correspond to the usual management and accounting practices of the host institution of the Principal Investigator.