

## "POSTDOC" PROGRAM OF FOREIGN SCIENTISTS IN SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (POSTDOC GRANT)

### *Information for Applicants*

### Science Committee (SC) of the Republic of Armenia

### Program overview

#### **Disclaimer**

The English version of this call is intended for guidance and information purposes. It does not constitute a certified translation of the legal source. In case of any doubts as to the interpretation of the call's provisions, the Armenian version should prevail.

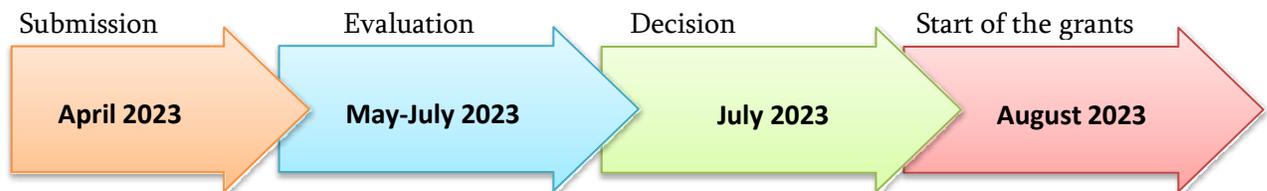
#### **About**

The purpose of *the PostDoc grant* is to help researchers develop their professional careers by funding ambitious research projects at the best Armenian research institutions. The call is addressed to researchers who hold a PhD degree and who have not lived, studied or been employed in Armenia for an uninterrupted period of over 12 months within 4 years prior to the call launch.

#### **Research fields**

*The PostDoc grant* applicants may submit proposals based on individual research plans that can be within the research topics of the specific host or open-topic field of fundamental or applied research. We particularly welcome pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research and proposals of multi- or interdisciplinary nature which cross the boundaries between different fields of research.

#### **Timeline**



## Thematic areas

<b>NS – Natural Sciences</b>	<b>ET – Engineering and Technology</b>	<b>SS – Social Sciences</b>
Mathematics	Urban planning and architecture	Psychology
Computer sciences and informatics	Mechanics	Pedagogical sciences
Physics and astronomy	Electrical engineering and information technology	Economics and business
Chemistry	Mechanical engineering and machine building	Sociology
Earth and environmental sciences	Chemical technology	Law
Biological sciences	Material science	Political sciences
	Biotechnology	Socio-economic geography
	Medical devices	Mass media and communication
	Nanotechnology	
	Ecology	
<b>MS – Medical Sciences</b>	<b>AS –Agricultural Sciences</b>	<b>AH – Armenology and Humanities</b>
General medicine	Cattle breeding, veterinary medicine	History, Archaeology
Clinical medicine	Crop production	Linguistics, Literary studies
Medical biotechnology	Soil science, agro-chemistry, plant protection	Philosophy, ethics
	Agricultural biotechnology	Geology
		Arts

## Eligibility

### *Eligible Applicant*

A successful candidate must have already shown research independence, should be able to demonstrate a promising track record of achievement appropriate to the research field to have success in realizing the project.

*The PostDoc grant* is open to researchers of any nationality who meet the following admissibility and eligibility criteria:

- An applicant must have been born on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1983.
- An applicant should hold a PhD or equivalent doctoral degrees. The first PhD shall have been awarded from January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2010 to present.
- The scientific track record must be presented from a period of 5 years prior to the proposal submission (starting from 2020). In this period of time the applicant must have produced at least 4 publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals of the respective field or 2 publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals for Armenology and Humanities.
- An applicant must relocate to the Republic of Armenia for the duration of the grant and must not have resided, studied or been employed in Armenia for more than 12 months in the 4 years prior to the date of the call.

### *Eligible Host Institutions*

*The PostDoc grant* research program should be conducted at a state-funded research or educational institution in the Republic of Armenia.

- The host institution employs the applicant at least for the entire duration of *the PostDoc grant* for the implementation of the research tasks and the training activities.
- The host institution provides the researcher with full access to the infrastructure and facilities of the institution.
- The host institution may appoint an administrative contact person for the duration of the grant, who will help the applicant with the relocation and with financial and administrative issues.
- The host institution supports the implementation of the program.

### *Submission restrictions*

The following general restrictions for *The PostDoc grant* apply:

- The applicant can only be involved in one application funded by *the PostDoc grant*.
- The applicant, besides *the PostDoc grant*, can be involved in only one more research grant funded by the SC.

## Funding

*The PostDoc grant* includes the remuneration of the applicant, the allocation of eligible direct and indirect research costs.

In the proposal submission, the budget should be presented in the Armenian currency (AMD). The project costs are to be calculated based on the exchange rate of € 1 = AMD 400.

The budget is composed of the following elements:

- Remuneration of the applicant
- Other research costs of € 3750 (ca. AMD 1,500,000) per year

### Remuneration of the applicant

The proposed budget of remuneration should be the same for the entire duration of the project. It may not vary from year to year.

- Remuneration of the applicant for € 1,000 (ca. AMD 400,000) per months
- Family allowance of up to € 375 (ca. AMD 150,000 gross), for applicants whose families (partners and dependent children) will stay in Armenia during the funding period.

If other research costs such as buying new equipment are necessary to sustain the progress of the project, the applicant is allowed to cut some of the remuneration budget.

- Other research costs of € 3,750 (ca. AMD 1,500,000) per year including
- Research supplies and consumables
- Costs of research equipment
- Total indirect costs of up to €250 (ca. AMD 100,000) per year to be used to provide the applicant with a working space. Indirect costs are managed by the host institution.

The applicant is given budgetary flexibility for proper management of the project. A reallocation requires an amendment to the grant agreement subject to approval by the SC before the date the modification should take place. Note, budgetary flexibility is not applicable to the applicant's allowance and the indirect costs, which cannot be changed.

### Possible income opportunities for PI

- *The PostDoc grant* salary - € 1000 (plus family allowance € 375) and State-funded budget - up to € 625
- The applicant may additionally apply for up to 1 SC grants, each with a salary of up to € 700
- The Program of the Ministry of Economy of the RA <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=167054>
- The applicant is free to get involved in the training of young scientists at local universities with a contract salary.

## Expected results and outcome

- Strengthen the independence of a talented researcher by realizing an ambitious project in a host institution in Armenia.
- Peer-reviewed scientific publications with international outreach.
- Initiate national and international collaborations and partnerships.
- Increase the potential of the applicant and the host institution to succeed in applications for international and national funding.
- At the stage of the final report, at least 2 scientific publications in peer-reviewed, international publishing venues (at least in Q2 quarters of “Scimago Journal & Country Ranking”) for NS, ET, MS, AS and SS thematic areas.
- Meeting the afore-mentioned requirements as well as the failure to do so will add/subtract 5 percentage points to the final results which are considered for future project proposals by the PI or team members submitted to the SC.
- During the implementation of the project, the applicant ensures the outreach, public engagement, including creation and dissemination of popular science materials on the topic, promoting public awareness and understanding of science (public talks, publications in popular science journals, participating in science fairs, making science resources accessible to the general public).

## Application Process

The application submission deadline for *the PostDoc grant* is **April 21<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 18:00 Armenia time (UTC +4)**. Please keep in mind that it is not possible to make any changes in the proposal once it is submitted.

Proposals are submitted by the applicant via a web-based online proposal submission system at [postdoc-armenia-2023.scs.am](http://postdoc-armenia-2023.scs.am).

*The PostDoc grant* proposal should include an abstract, a summary for the general public, full project descriptions outlining research methodology, applicant’s research track record including a copy of PhD diploma and a requested budget. Supporting documents by the host institution must be provided. The language of the proposal is English.

The following elements need to be included in the fellowship application:

- The applicant’s application
- Budget
- The project description
- Extensive summary - Evaluated at the first stage of examination
- An abstract for the general public (up to 2 pages including figures and references)

- The conclusion of the scientific council of the host institution or faculty, which should contain information on the relevance, importance of the project to the scientific directions of the organization,
- The applicant's CV, including academic research track and publications
- A copy of applicant's PhD Diploma
- A letter from the host institution, signed by an authorized representative stating that the host institution will employ the applicant at least for the entire duration of *the PostDoc grant*.

## Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria of *The PostDoc grant* are:

1. **Scientific quality of the project:** originality and innovative nature of the project; scientific impact; relationship to the state of the art of research in the field; scientific methods and techniques, research tools, equipment, and devices to be used; expected results, potential for high quality research outputs; sufficiency of the infrastructure and budget.
2. **Qualification of the applicant:** the capacity to implement the project; scientific achievements of the applicant; important contributions to the field; research performance and research output including number of research publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals; research experience gained abroad including number and type of stays.
3. **Assessment of the host institution and impact of the project:** quality and suitability of institutional environment, equipment; mutual gain from transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise between the applicant and the host institution.

## Evaluation

The SC makes every effort to guarantee the ethics and transparency of the criteria-based selection process of the best researchers and projects.

The SC forms a Panel Committee for the evaluation of the applications. Initially, all applications are screened by the SC office in order to ensure that the eligibility requirements are met. After that, the proposal evaluation is divided into two steps.

### **Step 1 - Remote Expert Evaluation**

For the first step of the evaluation, the panel committee, taking into account the extensive summary, the applicant's track record, CV, the compliance of the host institution with the objectives of the project, forms the list of applications that passed the first stage based on the principle of consensus.

## ***Step 2 - Panel Evaluation***

Each proposal that passes the evaluation at Step 1, is now evaluated by at least two external reviewers, who may also be members of the Panel Committee. The reviewers carry out their evaluation based on the complete data included in the proposal.

The panel committee discusses the individual reviews and conducts interviews with the applicants. The interview can be conducted online. The interview provides the input to further clarify the proposal and, in particular, to provide explanations to questions and criticisms submitted by the external reviewers. The panel committee evaluates the applications and provides a final evaluation and score for each application based on the opinions and scores of the external reviewers, panel experts and interviews. Both scores of the external reviewers and the panel experts account for 50% of the final score.

## ***Evaluation process***

The panel committee compiles a ranking list of all applications that passed the evaluation at Step 1, based on the final scores. The applications will be funded for in the order of ranking based on the corresponding budget of SC.

In the final evaluation, the panel committee may prescribe certain conditions that the host institution and the applicant are required to fulfill upon receiving the grant.

The formal funding decisions or rejections are issued by the head of the SC. Each applicant receives the evaluation summary report that reflects the final score for the proposal. The comments and marks must give sufficient and clear reasons for the score and should the project be retained for contracting, if appropriate, recommendations for modifications.

## ***Contracting of grants***

### ***Allocation of program***

Based on the ranking list and the funds allocated for this call, the SC makes a decision on granting or rejecting the application.

A decision on rejecting the application at Step 2 may be made in the following cases:

- Based on the results of the evaluation and the threshold score
- The proposal cannot be funded due to the limited budget for the particular call
- If certain conditions prescribed by the expert panel are not consented by the applicant or the host institution

For each funded proposal, a Tripartite Agreement between the SC, the host institution and the applicant is concluded for the funding term. The agreement entails the rights and responsibilities of the parties within the scope of ***The PostDoc grant***.

## ***Reporting***

The applicant, in cooperation with the host institution, is required to submit a launch, intermediate and final reports to the SC.

- The annual report is submitted to the Committee within 10 days after every 12 months of the fellowship implementation. The panel issues a conclusion based on the report.

### **Research integrity**

Cases of evident intentional false information, fraudulent activities and scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data may result in the rejection of proposals and in a possible restriction on participation of the researcher to any of the programs funded by the SC.

## FAQ

### ***1. When is it possible to apply for the PostDoc grant?***

Applications for ***the PostDoc grant*** are only possible if it has been advertised. The application submission deadline for the current grant is **April 21<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 18:00 Armenia time (UTC +4)**.

### ***2. On which target groups does the PostDoc grant focus?***

This program is particularly suitable for applicants who have already completed an excellent PhD and want to develop their professional careers in Armenia.

### ***3. What is the project duration period?***

Funding may be requested for research projects to be carried out over the period of:

- 12 months
- 24 months

### ***4. Is there any age limit?***

Yes, ***the PostDoc grant*** applicants should have been born on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1983 and have completed their PhD on or after January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2010.

### ***5. Is it possible to apply for the grant with a host institution where the applicant is/was already employed?***

Yes. However, an applicant must not have been employed in Armenia for more than 12 months in the last 4 years.

### ***6. Which publication status must the submitted publications have reached?***

In general, only published papers or papers that are in the press are counted. The status of papers that have been submitted to date must be clearly indicated and attached to the application.

### ***7. Should the applicant contact the preferred host Institution prior to an official application?***

Yes, in any case. In this way, common research areas of interest can be identified with the institute, and it can be determined whether an institute is fundamentally interested and able to provide necessary premises and resources.

### ***8. What is the composition of the panel?***

Each panel consists of experts, leading scientists of the specific research field. These panels are responsible for the pre-selection of applicants as well as for the final recommendation based on the evaluations of the external experts.