

## **“Fellowship BE-FOR-ERC” Call 2021**

Rectress’s Decree N. 1555/2021

**PLEASE NOTE: In case of conflicting interpretations between the English and Italian versions of this announcement, the Italian language version must be considered the definitive version.**

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## CHAPTER I – OBJECT AND DEFINITIONS

### Art. 1 – Subject of the Call

1. Sapienza is publishing a public selective procedure, hereinafter “*BE-FOR-ERC*”, for the award of 12 fellowships, each of which aimed at the realization of a research project of excellence.
2. The BE-FOR-ERC Call is part of the “SAPIExcellence” Programme, the Sapienza initiative to attract the best and most promising researchers by encouraging them to participate in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and European Research Council (ERC) funding schemes.
3. Research projects of excellence proposed in the context of this selective procedure may have as their subject a topic relating to one of the 3 macro-areas and related ERC scientific sectors.

### Art. 2 – Principal Investigator (PI)

1. The term **Principal Investigator** (hereinafter referred to as **PI**) means, for the purposes of this call, the researcher who submits an application for participation in the implementation of an excellent research project lasting 12 months.
2. The PI is eligible if he/she on the expiry date of the deadline for submitting applications to participate in this selective procedure:
  - Is in possession of a PhD or equivalent university degree, obtained in a period between 2 and 7 years before January 1, 2022. The time actually elapsed since the attainment of the PhD may be extended of:
    - 18 months – in the case of maternity leave (cumulative per child);
    - a number of months equal to the duration of the periods of leave taken after obtaining the PhD and due to paternity, internship, long-term long-term illness, military service or national civil service.
  - Is able to demonstrate that he or she has demonstrated scientific maturity and independence by having produced, for example, at least one important publication as main author or without the participation of PhD Supervisor;
  - Is able to demonstrate a promising scientific track, appropriate to his or her research field and career stage, through, for example: significant

publications (as main author) in leading international peer-reviewed scientific journals, invitations to lecture at international conferences, awards and prizes, etc.;

- Received a favorable opinion from the Department of reference for the presentation of the application for participation in this selection procedure and, in the event of a fellowship award, for the awarding of a research grant;
- Does not have a degree of kinship of affinity, up to and including the fourth degree, or a marriage relationship, with a professor belonging to the relevant Department, or with the Rector, the Director General or a member of the University Board of Directors;
- has not submitted, in the context of this selective procedure, more than to participate.

### **Art. 3 – Department of reference**

1. **Department of reference** (hereinafter referred to as **Department**) refers to the structure where the PI intends to carry out the research activity described in the application form.
2. The Department must express, through a resolution by the Department Council, a favorable opinion on the presentation of the application form and on the awarding of a 12-month research grant (“assegno di ricercar”) to the PI, in the event of a fellowship being awarded.
3. The Department, in case of a fellowship awarding, will be responsible for the management of the assigned contribution, for the stipulation of the research grant with the PI, for the identification of a Scientific Supervisor (a Department professor who will have to supervise the activities of research) and the fulfillment of the obligations subsequent to the duration of the fellowship.

## **CHAPTER II – FELLOWSHIPS AND ELIGIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Art. 4 – Fellowship Grant**

1. The amount of each of the awarded fellowships will be €50.000,00, divided as follows:

- €40.000,00 to fund the costs relating to the awarding of an annual research grant (“assegno di ricerca”) to the PI receiving the fellowship;
- €10.000,00 to support the other costs directly associated with carrying out the research activities described in the application for participation, as described in Art. 7 of this call.

#### **Art. 5 – Fellowship Duration**

1. The fellowship will last for 12 months.
2. The start date of the activities cannot be later than 6 months from the date of notification of the fellowship assignment.

#### **Art. 6 – Research Grant (“Assegno di ricerca”)**

1. The Department, in the event of a fellowship being awarded, will provide the PI with a research grant by means of a private law contract (“assegno di ricerca”). This contract does not in any way constitute a subordinate employment relationship, and does not give rise to rights regarding access to the roles of University personnel.
2. The research grant will have a duration of 12 months and may be renewed according to Art. 22, Paragraph 3 of law 240/2010.
3. The overall duration of the relationships established, pursuant to Art. 22, Paragraph 3 of law 240/2010, including any renewals, cannot in any case exceed six years, with the exception of the period in which the fellowship was received to coincide with the research doctorate, within the maximum limit of the legal duration of its course.
4. In any case, the overall duration of the relationships established with the beneficiary of a research grant and fixed-term research contracts, pursuant to Art. 24 of Law 240/2010, stipulated with the same subject, cannot exceed 12 months, even if not continuous. For the purposes of the duration of the aforementioned relationships, periods spent on maternity leave or for health reasons, according to current legislation, are not considered relevant.
5. The amount of the research grant (“assegno di ricerca”) will be €40.000,00, to be understood gross of all tax and social security charges, including those to be paid by the Administration, and will be paid in monthly instalments. Moreover, the research grants are also subject to the fiscal measures established by Art. 4 of the law of 13 August 1984, n. 476 and subsequent amendments and additions, as well as, in social security

matters, those referred to in Art.2, Paragraphs 26 and following, of the Law 8 August 1995, N. 335 and subsequent amendments, on the subject of compulsory maternity leave, the provisions of the Decree of the Minister of Labor and Social Security of 12 July 2007 and on sick leave, Art. 1, Paragraph 788, of Law N. 296 and subsequent changes.

#### **Art. 7 – Direct Costs**

1. Direct costs are the expenses specifically and directly connected to the realization of the research activities, among which we recall, by way of example, but not limited to: participation in training activities, purchase of laboratory material and consumables, participation in conferences or workshops, short missions or field activities, publication of papers or monographs, acquisition and use of patents, etc ...
2. Direct costs are eligible from the start of the project and are identified and incurred by the Department in accordance with the accounting principles and reporting rules provided for by the University Regulations for Administration, Finance and Accounting issued with DR N. 65 of 13.01.2016 and subsequent amendments.
3. Indirect costs are not eligible, i.e. those that cannot be directly identified as specific and attributable to the implementation of the research activities, such as for example: management activities and administrative management of the project.

### **CHAPTER III – SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION FORM**

#### **Art. 8 – Application submission Procedure**

1. The application to participate in the selection procedure must be submitted by the PI no later than 12.00 on 16 July 2021 and exclusively online, using the form available at the following web address:  
<https://forms.gle/CFmMogfHEqZhoir58>
2. The application must be submitted exclusively in English and must be accompanied by the following documents:
  - **Administrative Form A**, drawn up according to the model attached to the announcement (Attachment 1), which provides information on: PI, Department of reference; title, acronym and abstract of the project; ERC scientific macro-areas, sectors and sub-sectors of reference;

- **Part B.1**, drawn up according to the model attached to the call (Annex 2) and divided into synopsis of the scientific proposal (max. 5 pages), CV of the PI (max. 2 pages) and Track record of the PI (max. 2 pages).
  - **Part B.2**, drawn up according to the model attached to the announcement (Annex 3) and containing the detailed description of the scientific proposal (max. 15 pages) divided into: a) state of the art and objectives; b) methodology; c) development possibilities in the ERC area; resources, including summary table of expected expenses.
  - **Resolution of the Council of the hosting Department**  
The resolution, drawn up pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2 of this notice, must necessarily contain:
    1. the name of the PI;
    2. the acronym of the project object of the application participation;
  - **Copy of an identification document;**
  - **Copy of the certificate of the PhD degree;**
  - **Copy of any documents certifying periods of maternity or long-term leave.**
3. The PI must submit an application to participate in the selection procedure, no later than 12.00 on 16 July 2021, only and exclusively online, using the form available at the following web address:  
<https://forms.gle/CFmMogfHEqZhoir58>

**Art. 9 - Causes of exclusion from the selective procedure**

1. The application form will not be considered admissible if:
  - presented after the deadline of 12.00 on 16 July 2021;
  - transmitted through methods and channels other than those indicated in Article 8 of this notice;
  - not containing one or more of the documents indicated in art. 8.5 of this announcement;
  - presented by a *Principal Investigator* who does not meet the eligibility requirements described in art. 2.2 of this announcement;
  - relating to a *Principal Investigator* who has submitted more than one application to participate in this selective procedure.

## CHAPTER IV – SELECTION PROCEDURE

### **Art. 10 – Selection Commission**

1. Applications will be evaluated by a Selection Commission appointed by the Magnificent Rectress.
2. The Commission will be divided into three evaluation panels, one for each of the three scientific macro-areas in which the ERC sectors are grouped, namely "Life Sciences" (LS), "Social Science and Humanities" (SH) and "Physical Sciences and Engineering "(PE).
3. The Commission will be composed of at least 9 members chosen from among the professors and researchers of Sapienza, three for each of the three scientific macro-areas in which the ERC sectors are grouped.
4. The Commission may make use, at no additional cost to public finance, of highly qualified auditors, internal or external to the University.
5. The Selection Committee will be supported, in relation to the planning and completion of the procedures for the instruction and evaluation of applications for participation, by the offices of the Internationalization Area.

### **Art. 11 - Preliminary investigation and evaluation of applications**

1. The assessment procedure will be initiated with the verification by the offices of the Internationalization Area of the formal administrative admissibility of the requests for participation, understood as the existence of the eligibility requirements of the Principal Investigator, compliance with the methods of presentation and completeness of the required documentation (articles 2 and 9-10 of this announcement).
2. The scientific evaluation procedure will be divided into three steps:  
**Step 1:** the Selection Committee will evaluate Part B.1 - that is the synopsis, the CV and the track record. - according to the evaluation criteria referred to in Article 12 of this announcement. Only and exclusively the questions that in step 1 have received a score of not less than 30/40 will be admitted to step 2;  
**Step 2:** the expert reviewers (up to a maximum of two per application, chosen by the Selection Committee on the basis of their expertise in the ERC scientific subsector of reference) will evaluate Part B.1 and Part B.2 of the applications admitted to step 2, according to the evaluation criteria referred to in Article 12 of this announcement. Only and exclusively the questions that in step 2 have received a score of not less than 30/40 will be



admitted to step 3;

**Step 3:** the Selection Committee will call for an interview (which can be held electronically, while ensuring the transparency of the procedures) the candidates whose applications have been admitted to step 2. The interview will focus on the presentation by the candidate of his / her own project proposal.

3. The Selection Committee concludes the scientific evaluation procedure within 180 days from the expiry date of the call, issuing, for each of the three scientific macro-areas in which the ERC sectors are grouped, the ranking of PIs deemed worthy of funding and of the suitable, drawn up on the basis of the scores obtained in the previous phases.

The fellowships will be divided among the three scientific macro-areas taking into account, where possible and in compliance with the evaluation criteria provided for in the call, the number of applications submitted by macro-area and ensuring that at least one application per macro-area is funded;

4. The Rector, after verifying the aspects relating to the administrative-management regularity of the selection procedure, by the Director of the Internationalization Area, approves the results of the selection at his own disposal, which will be advertised on the University Transparency portal, at the following addresses:

<https://web.uniroma1.it/trasparenza>

<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina/sapiexcellence>

In case of renunciation or impossibility by PIs deemed deserving of funding, they will be replaced according to the ranking order of the relative macro-area, provided that the candidate has obtained a score higher than the thresholds indicated in art. 12 of this band, however guaranteeing the transparency of the procedures) the candidates whose applications have been admitted to step 2.

#### **Art. 12 - Evaluation criteria**

1. Applications for participation will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:
  - Excellence of the scientific proposal, understood as the groundbreaking nature, impact, sustainability and quality of the methodological approach of the research activities and as the possibility of being further developed with a view to presenting a new proposal within the next

H2020 ERC Starting Grant calls;

- Scientific excellence of the Principal Investigator, understood as intellectual capacity and creativity in research and as the opportunity to strengthen one's professional maturity / independence during the fellowship and be competitive in the context of the next H2020 ERC Starting Grant calls.
2. For each of the following criteria, scores will be attributed according to the evaluation scale shown in the following summary table:

Evaluation Elements		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Criterion 1: Scientific Excellence of the Proposal	<b>Ground-breaking Nature and Impact of the Scientific Proposal</b> - To what degree does the research proposal address significant scientific challenges? - How ambitious are the objectives? Do they seek to drive the state-of-the art (i.e., by proposing innovative approaches of new interdisciplinary aspects)? - To what degree can the research proposal be considered high risk /high gain (aiming to obtain important results, even if subject to the risk of not being fully achieved)?	1-10	1-10	1-4
	<b>Sustainability and Quality of the Methodological Approach</b> - To what degree is the described scientific approach sustainable, keeping in mind the high risk/high gain nature of the proposal? - To what degree does the proposal include the development of new methodologies? - To what degree are the activities, the methodology, the resources and the PI commitment adequate to the implementation of the project?	1-10	1-10	1-4
	<b>Possibility of Further Development as an ERC Starting Grant</b> - To what degree can the research proposal be developed into further ground-breaking activities? - To what degree can the research activity and methodology be implemented as part of an ERC Starting Grant?	1-5	1-5	1-2
	<b>Total Maximum Score for the Scientific Excellence of the Proposal Criterion</b>	25	25	10
Criterion 2: Excellence of PI	<b>Intellectual and Creative Capacity of the Principal Investigator</b> - To what degree has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct innovative research activity? - To what degree has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct independent creative thinking? - To what degree has the PI demonstrated the required scientific competences and ability to successfully implement the project?	1-10	1-10	1-5
	<b>Ability to Drive Professional Maturity/Independence</b> - To what degree can the PI improve his/her academic career in terms, for example, of acquired knowledge and competences? - To what degree can the PI improve his/her competitiveness for participation in future ERC Starting Grant Calls?	1-5	1-5	1-5
	<b>Total Maximum Score for the PI Scientific Excellence Criterion</b>	15	15	10
<b>Minimum score to access the following step and be considered eligible for funding</b>		30	30	15
<b>Total Overall Score (Criterion 1 + Criterion 2)</b>		40	40	20

## CHAPTER V - REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION

### Art. 13 - Requirements prior to the start of the fellowship

1. The Department, in the event of a fellowship award, must award the PI with a research grant by means of a private law contract, according to the

procedures described in Article 6 of this announcement.

2. The PI must produce a declaration on plain paper within 30 days of awarding the check, under penalty of forfeiture of the right to the same, pursuant to art. 46 of Presidential Decree 28.12.2000, n. 445, which shows:
  - a) date and place of birth;
  - b) citizenship;
  - c) enjoyment of political rights;
  - d) non-existence of criminal convictions and ongoing criminal proceedings.The declaration relating to points b) and c) must indicate that the requirement is met even on the expiry date of the deadline for submitting applications.
3. The winner will be required to issue a substitutive declaration of notoriety regarding the authenticity of the titles presented. In the absence of the release of this declaration, he will be required to present the assessed qualifications in original, or alternatively, to regularize them with stamp duty.
4. The Administration has the right to verify the truthfulness and authenticity of the certificates produced. In the event of a false declaration, the provisions set out in articles 75 and 76 of Presidential Decree 28.12.2000, n. 445.
5. The Department must communicate the start and end dates of the fellowship to the address [giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it](mailto:giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it), at least 15 days before the start of the fellowship. The start date of the fellowship cannot be later than 6 months from the date of notification of the approval.
6. The Department, in case of renunciation or impossibility to start the fellowship, must notify the Internationalization Area and proceed with the return of the contribution received, by the end of the financial year.

#### **Art. 14 - Requirements regarding the performance of the fellowship**

1. The PI will have to carry out the research activities in compliance with the objectives and the plan of activities described in the proposal approved by the Evaluation Commission.
2. The duration of the fellowship will be 12 months and has to be carried out continuously. For the purposes of the duration, the periods spent by the PI on maternity leave or for health reasons do not count, according to current legislation and in accordance with the provisions of the Sapienza Regulation for the awarding of research grants. An overall period of

justified absence not exceeding thirty days in a year does not constitute suspension.

3. In case of forfeiture or termination of the relationship established through the research grant and / or renunciation or impossibility to complete the activities envisaged by the fellowship, the Department must promptly notify the Internationalization Area and proceed with the return of the unspent contribution by the end of the financial year.

#### **Art. 15 - Duties subsequent to the performance of the fellowship**

1. The PI is required to submit to the management of the Department a written report on the research activity carried out, accompanied by the evaluation of the Scientific Director.
2. The host Department must, within 90 days of the end of the duration of the fellowship, send the following documents to the Internationalization Area:
  - copy of the contract for the conferral of the research grant to the PI;
  - copy of the report sent to the management of the Department on the research activity carried out, accompanied by the evaluation of the Scientific Responsible;
  - copy of the reporting form for expenses incurred, filled in according to the model provided by the Internationalization Area.
3. The Department is required to return the funds referred to in art. 4.1, point B, in the case of their partial or non-use.

#### **Art. 16 - Prohibitions on cumulation and incompatibility of the research grant**

1. The research grant cannot be combined with a gross annual personal taxable income from employment, as per art. 49, paragraph 2 of the TUIR title I, chapter IV, exceeding € 16,000.00.
2. The fellowship cannot be combined with scholarships awarded for any reason, with the exception of those granted by national or foreign institutions useful for integrating, in the context of stays abroad, the research activity of the scholarship holders. .
3. The PI holder of the research grant cannot participate in degree courses, specialist or master's degree courses, research doctorates with scholarship or medical specialization, in Italy or abroad.
4. The employee serving in the Public Administrations holder of the research grant must be placed on unpaid leave.

5. The employee of a private employer, even if part-time, cannot benefit from research grants.
6. The research grant cannot be combined with other research grants, even if awarded by different universities, state, non-state or telematic, as well as by the bodies referred to in art. 22, paragraph 1, of Law no. 240/2010.
7. The check is individual; grant holders can carry out self-employment activities, upon written communication to the Department and on condition that such activity is declared compatible with the pursuit of the research activity by the Department itself, does not involve conflicts of interest with the specific research activity carried out by the grant holder, does not prejudice the University, in relation to the activities carried out; the Scientific coordinator and the holder of the research assistant contract must declare that they are not linked by existing or pre-existing professional relationships.
8. The holders of grants who intend to carry out or continue to carry out a work activity involving services rendered free of charge in voluntary associations or cooperatives or non-profit cultural institutions or non-profit social welfare institutions, can carry out it , without prejudice to the full performance of its research tasks.

#### **Art. 17 - Forfeiture and termination of the relationship**

1. Towards the research fellow who, after starting the scheduled research activity, does not continue it regularly and uninterruptedly for the entire period, without justified reason, or who is responsible for serious and repeated failures or non-compliance, the procedure for declare the termination of the contract is started, on the reasoned proposal of the Scientific Responsible, approved by the Department Council.
2. The reasons for termination of the relationship are as follows:
  - unjustified failure to start the activity or delay in the actual start of the activity;
  - unjustified suspension of the activity for a period that would prejudice the research program;
  - violation of the incompatibility regime established by art. 6 of the Regulations, reiterated after a first notice;
  - negative opinion expressed by the Board of the relevant Department or by the restricted administration and management body of the same Department.

## **CHAPTER VI - OTHER PROVISIONS**

### **Art. 18 – Publication**

1. The announcement and the results of the selection procedure will be published via the computer system on the University Transparency portal, at the following addresses:  
<https://web.uniroma1.it/trasparenza>  
<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina/sapiexcellence>
2. Communications relating to the outcome of the application will be sent by e-mail to the PI, to the personal e-mail address indicated at the time the application is submitted.

### **Art. 19 - Head of the procedure and references**

1. Pursuant to the provisions of art. 5 of the law of 7 August 1990, n. 241, the Head of the Procedure referred to in this announcement is Dr. Giuditta Carabella, Sapienza University of Rome, Area for Internationalization, Researchers' Mobility Sector and European Programs - Palazzina Tuminelli, II floor, room 214, P.le Aldo Moro, 5, 00185 Rome, tel. 06 49910416, e-mail: [giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it](mailto:giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it)
2. For information on the selection procedure and for administrative problems, you can contact: Area for Internationalization, Researchers' Mobility Sector and European Programs, tel. 06 49910416; email: [giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it](mailto:giuditta.carabella@uniroma1.it).

### **Art. 20 - Respect for equal opportunities**

Sapienza guarantees gender equality and equal opportunities for the award of research grants.

### **Art. 21 - Treatment of personal data**

1. The processing of personal data is governed by the European Regulation no. 679 of 27.4.2016 - GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) as well as by the national legislation in force.
2. The information pursuant to Article 13 of the European Regulation no. 679 of 27.4.2016 - GDPR, attached and integral part of this announcement (Annex 7), specifies: Data Controller, Data Protection Officer and related

contact details purpose of the processing and legal basis; Nature of the provision of data and consequences of any refusal; Methods of processing and subjects authorized to process; Processing methods and subjects authorized for processing.

**Art. 22 - Reference rule**

1. Although not expressly provided for in this announcement, the provisions of the legislation cited in the premises of this decree, as well as the laws in force on the matter, are valid as applicable.