

What is TECNIOspring PLUS programme?

TECNIOspring PLUS programme is an ACCIÓ's fellowship programme that provides financial support to individual mobility proposals presented by experienced researchers in liaison with a company based in Catalonia with at least 5 employees or a TECNIO centre. The duration of the fellowships is 2 years.

Experienced researchers applying to this action need to develop a research project with focus on technology transfer for the total duration of the fellowship that will enable them to progress in the development of their careers. The fellowship is expected to be part of a structured, long-term personal career development plan that is coherent with past achievements and clearly defines the future aims of the researcher.

Focus on applied research and technology transfer is **TECNIOspring PLUS's hallmark**. Applications too focused on basic research, with no plans for transfer of knowledge, would be out of scope.

TECNIOspring PLUS fellowship programme is co-financed by the European Union through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action "Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)". Therefore successful candidates will be Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows as well as TECNIOspring PLUS fellows.

It is very important for a candidate to be aware that an individual researcher cannot benefit, at the same time, from more than one Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action.

Types of fellowships

TECNIOspring PLUS programme offers two different fellowships:

- Outgoing + return: for researchers of any nationality, willing to join a research or technology centre or R&D department of a private company located outside Spain for one year. This scheme includes a return phase of one more year to a Catalan company or a TECNIO entity.
- Incoming: for researchers of any nationality willing to join a Catalan company or a TECNIO entity for two years.

Who can apply?

TECNIOspring PLUS applications are submitted by an experienced researcher in liaison with a Catalan host organisation which is represented by the scientific supervisor. It is important to note that the experienced researcher and the scientific supervisor are two different people.

Catalan host organisations may be companies located in Catalonia with 5 or more employees, or TECNIO entities¹ accredited by ACCIÓ (Government of Catalonia).

¹ accio.gencat.cat/tecnio

Eligibility Criteria for researchers and host organisations

TECNIOspring PLUS fellowships are directed exclusively at experienced researchers of any nationality who, at the time of the relevant deadline for submission of proposals, fulfil the following conditions:

Level of experience: Experience required varies with the type of fellowship:

- **Outgoing + return fellowships**

In order to be eligible, the researchers must:

- Either be in possession of a doctoral degree (PhD) or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience, including the period of research training, after obtaining the degree which formally allows them to embark on a doctorate; and
- Have experience in applied research and/or technology transfer activities (R&D projects involving companies, patents licensing or spin offs).

- **Incoming fellowships**

In order to be eligible, the researchers must:

- Hold a doctoral degree and four additional years of full-time research experience after obtaining it; or have at least eight years of full-time equivalent research experience, including the period of research training, after obtaining the degree which would formally entitle them to embark on a doctorate;
- Have at least one year of experience in applied research and/or technology transfer activities (R&D projects involving companies, patents licensing or spin offs); and
- Have experience in the management of research groups.

Mobility conditions: Criteria vary with the type of fellowship:

- **Outgoing + return fellowship:** the researcher must not have resided or carried out her/his main activity (work, studies) in the country of the host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline for the submission of applications.
- **Incoming fellowship:** the researcher must not have resided or carried out her/his main activity (work, studies) in Spain for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline for the submission of applications.

As an exception, only for properly detailed and justified career breaks, experienced researchers will be eligible if they have not resided or carried out their main activity in the country of their host organisation for more than 3 years in the 5 years immediately prior to the deadline for submission of proposals.

Short stays, such as holidays, are not taken into account.

Commitment to the Charter&Code:

The Catalan company or the TECNIO entity with which the researcher submits the joint application must sign a declaration of endorsement of the “European Charter for Researchers” and the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”. Successful committed declarations will appear on a list in the ‘Charter & Code’ webpage.

Applicants who do not fulfil all of the above conditions will not be eligible and their proposals will not be evaluated.

How to choose a research topic?

Projects will address one of the areas covered by RIS3CAT² strategy. RIS3CAT identifies seven leading sectors in which Catalonia has competitive advantage, critical mass and future opportunities (Energy and resources, Food, Industrial systems, Sustainable mobility, Design industries, Health industries, Culture and experience based industries); and six cross-cutting enabling technologies (ICT, Nanotechnology, Advanced Materials, Photonics, Biotechnology and Advanced Manufacturing).

There are no predefined priority areas.

Candidates may propose a project on the research topic of their choice to an eligible host organisation within their area of interest.

Catalan host organisations may publish their open positions at EURAXESS. When selecting the candidate for their open positions, **host organisations shall follow the principles of the “Charter & Code”, thus, implementing open, efficient, transparent and supportive selection procedures**, in accordance with the recruitment and selection standards required within a Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme.

When the candidate and the host organisation agree on a research project of interest for both, they are ready to start preparing their application.

How to prepare a successful project proposal?

To be successful, a candidate should contact a host organisation as soon as possible, in order to have enough time to agree on a research project proposal of interest.

The researcher within the Catalan host organisation and the host organisation abroad (for outgoing fellowships only) that will act as the candidate's scientific supervisor(s) during the fellowship will as well need to be clearly identified in the application. Involvement of scientific supervisor(s) in the preparation of the research project proposal along with the candidate is deemed to be fundamental.

The project should aim to reach a realistic and well-defined objective.

Proposals must be **focused on applied research and technology transfer**. Applicants should check whether their proposal provides enough information about:

- The candidate's level of expertise with regard to TT
- The level of expertise of the scientific supervisor(s) with regard to TT
- The trajectory of the host(s) with regard to TT
- TT training planned
- Expected results with regard to technology transfer and/or an exploitation plan of the results
- Expected impact on the market
- Collaborations with industry, naming existing and/or foreseen company contacts

²http://catalunya2020.gencat.cat/web/.content/85_catalunya_2020/documents/angles/arxiu/07_ris3cat_2014_en.pdf

How to apply?

The proposal will be jointly submitted by the researcher and the Catalan host organisation of her/his choice. Proposals will be electronically submitted. Furthermore, host organisations will need to submit the application in person.

Applicants should complete and submit an application form with the help of a tool downloadable from TECNIOspring PLUS website. The application form contains basic data: a summary of the proposed project and contact details of the host organisation(s) and the researcher.

Moreover, applicants shall attach the following documents:

- Researchers' CV model: a template can be found at TECNIOspring PLUS website.
- Project description model: detailed scientific and/or technological project to be developed within the full time employment for the entire duration of the project, as well as other foreseen activities as applicable (e.g. training in technology transfer and soft skills, management, etc.). A template for the project description is provided at TECNIOspring PLUS website. Applicants should strictly follow the template provided. References to web pages will not be taken into account as part of the proposal during evaluation.
- Two letters of recommendation from scientists with whom the researcher has collaborated.
- Only for outgoing mobility scheme: a letter of acceptance from the host organisation abroad.

Applicants must keep their proposal within the page limits indicated on the templates provided. Any excess pages will be disregarded.

Application language

The working language of the expert evaluators is English.

Correcting or revising your proposal

Errors discovered by the applicant in proposals can be rectified by simply submitting a corrected version. After the in person submission by the host organisation, no further additions, corrections or resubmissions will be accepted.

Withdrawing a proposal

Applicants may withdraw their proposal after the deadline by sending the proposal's details (proposal code and acronym) to tecniospring.accio@gencat.cat, clearly indicating on the e-mail subject "Withdrawal of TECNIOspring PLUS fellowship proposal".

Multiple Submissions

Only one proposal per researcher may be submitted to TECNIOspring PLUS programme. Host organisations may submit more than one proposal as long as they involve different researchers, different projects and different scientific supervisors.

An individual researcher can submit an application to TECNIOspring PLUS programme and to another Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant at the same time but cannot benefit, at the same time, from more than one Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action. Thus, the researcher will have to choose one of them in case they overlap.

A researcher cannot hold a TECNIOspring PLUS fellowship and be scientific supervisor of another TECNIOspring PLUS fellow at the same time.

Secondments and lab visits

Applications, especially those coming from incoming candidates, may introduce secondments within their project plans. The aim is for fellows to have opportunities to explore other areas of interest and seek enriching collaborations. Among the evaluation criteria, TECNIOspring PLUS will take into account the planned cross-sectoral secondments. Short visits to other laboratories will be as well positively evaluated.

For example, a fellow hosted by a research centre may be seconded to a company interested in the outcomes of the applied research project. And viceversa, a fellow hosted by a company may be seconded to a research or technological centre to gain insights in some theoretical aspect needed for his/her research.

Secondments may take place at any moment of the project, with an expected maximum duration of 3 months. Candidates shall provide details on the secondment plan (duration, information about the host, expected outcomes).

The 35 Catalonia Trade & Investment Offices of ACCIÓ³ will support fellows by providing information about entities for potential secondments.

Training activities

The main activities of a TECNIOspring PLUS fellow will be based on a training-through-research project prepared by the experienced researcher in liaison with the host organisation, as described above.

TECNIOspring PLUS programme seeks to help researchers develop more industry- or even entrepreneurship-oriented research careers. Therefore, applicants will need to specify the researcher's training needs to attain this goal and how they intend to cover it. Training activities might include:

1. Training on technology transfer management organized by ACCIÓ: courses on different subjects (e.g. IP management, technology valuation and commercialisation, exploitation of research results, entrepreneurship, etc.) offered by ACCIÓ in which fellows will be able to participate. ACCIÓ's available courses will be published at TECNIOspring PLUS website.
2. Additional training offered by the host organisation(s): applicants may propose other courses that will provide the candidate with necessary soft skills (e.g. oral and written presentation of scientific research results; grant planning and writing; project management).
Other activities may also be proposed as part of on-the-job training (e.g. participation in going-on European R&D projects related to the fellows research areas of interest, assuming technical and managerial responsibilities; setting-up collaboration with other

³ http://www.catalonia.com/en/our-services/International_expansion.jsp

research centres or with SMEs and industry; organisation of trans-national workshops, meetings and networking activities to facilitate sharing of knowledge and culture between the participants; etc.).

Ethics issues

Applicants should take into account ethics issues while writing their proposal.

All research carried out must respect fundamental ethics and security principles, including those reflected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. These principles include the need to ensure the freedom of research and the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of individuals and the welfare of animals.

Any ethics issues that may arise must be identified and addressed in the project proposal. In particular, applicants should outline: how ethics issues raised by the proposed research will be handled; the benefit and burden of the experiments; and the effects these may have on the research subject.

TECNIOspring PLUS programme explicitly excludes several areas from funding, just as the European Commission's H2020 does:

- Research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (research related to cancer treatment of the gonads can be financed)
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer

The activities under the project must have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

For outgoing fellowships, the same rules will apply to research undertaken in both the outgoing and return phases of the fellowship, i.e. whilst working outside Spain, fellows must agree to abide by the recommendations of their Catalan host organisation.

Applicants shall fill up the ethics issues table and, if need be in accordance to this table, submit an ethics self assessment made by an ethics committee belonging to the Network of Ethics Committees in Universities and Public Research Entities in Spain⁴,

For applicants that do not have access to an ethics committee, the application shall be evaluated by the programme ethics committee.

In any case, all applications that pose further ethical concerns will be flagged by the experts during evaluation and sent to the programme Ethics Committee.

How much funding is involved per fellowship?

Fellowships fund the salary and research costs of the researcher. ACCIÓ contribution for the outgoing fellowship is an amount of €46.200 per researcher per year during 2 years, to which a correction factor for the cost of living during the stay abroad is applied. For the incoming fellowship, contribution is of €58.500 per researcher per year during 2 years. Furthermore, up to €8.640 per year per researcher will be granted as research costs (equipment, consumables and

⁴ <http://www.ub.edu/rceue/>

supplies needed for the researcher and/or the research project, travelling and participating into conferences) and up to €960 per year per researcher will be granted as mobility/travel allowance costs to join the host institution abroad and/or the TECNIO centre.

Key aspects of the host-researcher agreement

Incoming fellows will join the host organisation of her/his choice located in Catalonia, Spain. The Catalan host organisation will provide the researcher with a full time employment contract for 2 years.

Outgoing fellows will join a host organisation located in any country of the world, but Spain outside for one year and have a return phase to the Catalan host organisation of their choice for one more year. may.

The Catalan host organisation and the researcher shall determine the conditions for implementing the research activities and the respective rights and obligations of the researcher and the host at least for the entire duration of the project. The agreement between the Catalan host organisation and the researcher should be made in the light of the principles of the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers'.

With regard to IPR, publicity and confidentiality issues, Catalan host organisations will need to abide by the conditions set by the European Commission for COFUND projects.

The contract between the Catalan host organisation and the researcher must be in place at the latest at the project start date. Researchers that are already permanently employed by the Catalan host organisation may not be supported.

The project should be executed at the host organisation(s) premises.

Indicative timetable for this call

Official publication of call: **November 2016**

Deadline of the call: **January 2017**

Evaluation of proposals: **February to May 2017**

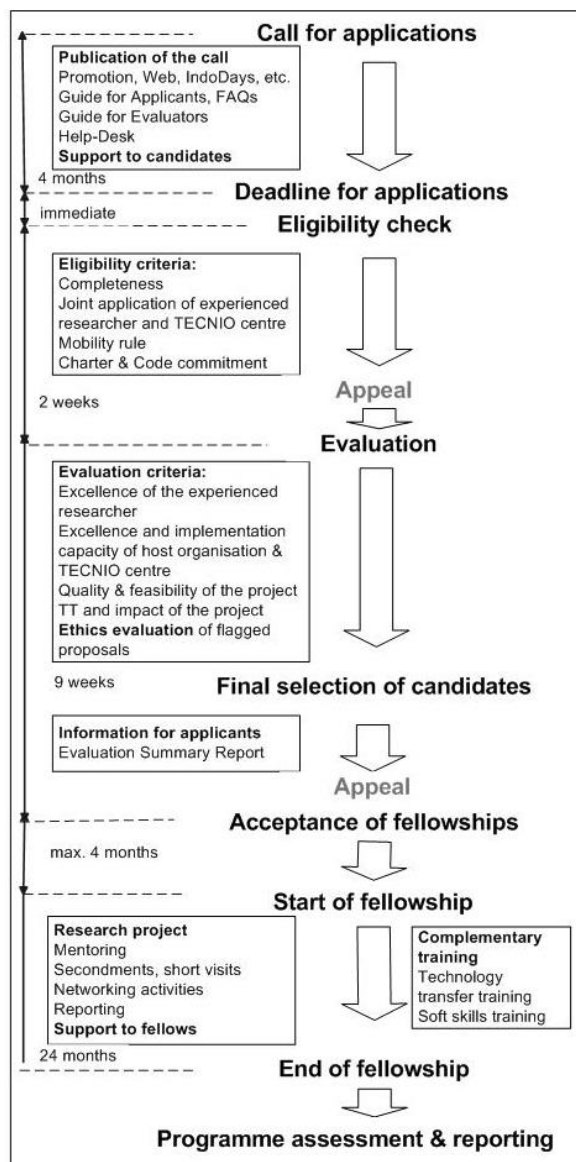
Evaluation Summary Reports sent to candidates: **May 2017**

Signature of fellowship acceptance letter: **May 2017**

Start of fellowship: **June to September 2017**

Evaluation process

Evaluation process will be based on open, widely advertised competition, with transparent international peer review and selection of candidates on merits. Applications will be evaluated under a common multi-disciplinary Evaluation Panel. The following chart synthesizes it:



Selection of experts

Selected experts who will form the Evaluation Panel will be independent, impartial and objective, and behave throughout in a professional manner. The list of experts will ensure:

- a high level of expertise
- an appropriate range of competencies
- an appropriate balance between academic and industrial expertise
- an appropriate balance between experts coming from private and public entities
- a reasonable gender balance
- a reasonable distribution of geographical origins
- regular rotation of experts

Experts will sign an appointment letter, including an agreement of nondisclosure/ confidentiality and conflict of interest before beginning their work.

Evaluation

Each proposal that fulfils the eligibility criteria described above will first be independently assessed by experts belonging to the Evaluation Panel. All applications will be classified by area of expertise. Evaluators will be assigned to applications according to their scientific and technological expertise. ACCIÓ will assess assignments case by case in order to detect possible incompatibilities and to assure there is no conflict of interest between the evaluator and the proposal.

At this first step the experts will be acting individually; they will not discuss the proposal with each other, nor with any third party. Applications will be evaluated against fixed evaluation criteria. Each application will be evaluated by at least two members of the Evaluation Panel with long expertise in the corresponding scientific area. After individual evaluation, a consensus report will be elaborated.

Applications that pose ethical concerns will be flagged during evaluation by the experts and sent to the programme Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may seek a clarification from the applicant before taken a final decision.

Final selection of candidates

The Selection Committee will be responsible for the final selection of candidates. The Selection Committee will be formed by members of the Evaluation Panel and representatives of ACCIÓ.

The Selection Committee will select the applications to be funded based on the applications ranking. Successful applications must have reached the threshold required to receive funding. The more highly-rated applications of each sectorial area will be funded up to the available budget. Following applications will be held in a reserve list.

If necessary, the Selection Committee will determine a priority order for applications which have been awarded the same score within the ranked list. Whether or not such a prioritisation is carried out will depend on the available budget. For every group of ex aequo applications, the criteria for prioritising will be: balance between grants awarded to male and female researchers; endorsement of the "Charter&Code" of the European Commission of the host organisation abroad (for outgoing fellowships only); balance between grants awarded to host organisations; and balance between grants awarded to scientific or technological topics.

All applicants will receive an Evaluation Summary Report. Successful candidates will be asked to produce evidence of their University degrees, experience and career breaks prior to signing their contracts.

Evaluation criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated against predetermined evaluation criteria, applying predefined weighting factors and thresholds.

- *Excellence of the experienced researcher:*
 - Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the experienced researcher and its suitability to the scientific skills and knowledge needed for the development of the project. Both quality and

newness of research results and activities (recent scientific publications, patents, participation in international conferences, posters, etc.) will be taken into account. Applicants for Incoming mobility scheme will be expected to have a track-record of significant research achievements.

- Experience in technology transfer activities (*warning*: this is an eligibility criteria).
 - Experience in management of research groups (*warning*: this is an eligibility criteria for incoming type of mobility).
 - Geographical mobility experience, mobility between academy and industry and interdisciplinary background. Teaching, supervision, teamwork, innovation and public awareness activities, especially recent ones.
- *Excellence and implementation capacity of the host organisation(s):*
- Scientific and technological trajectory, and technology transfer capacity of the selected host organisation(s) and their suitability in connection with the project and CV of the experienced researcher.
 - CV of the fellow's scientific supervisor and existing mentoring schemes at the host organisation(s).
 - Conditions offered by the host organisation(s) to the selected fellows: appropriate research equipment and material. Cross-sectoral secondments and short visits planned. Available refresher courses, updating schemes or careers guidance for candidates who come after a career break. Relevance and quality of additional training. Practical and administrative arrangements for the implementation and management of the applied research project, and support for the hosting of the fellow (incoming, outgoing and/or return host as applicable).
- *Quality and feasibility of the project:*
Candidates must propose a project that contemplates activities related to applied research and/or technology transfer issues. The following will be evaluated:
- Objectives, methodology, work plan and expected results of the project
 - Originality and innovative nature of the project and relationship to the 'state of the art' of research in the field
 - Suitability of research costs with regard to the described project
- *Technology transfer and impact:*
- Exploitation plan of the expected research results
 - Impact of the project on the relevant sectorial area(s) as defined in the regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation of Catalonia (RIS3CAT strategy)⁵.
 - Contribution to excellence and competitiveness of Catalonia
 - Potential for creating long term academic and/or business collaborations, and mutually beneficial co-operation between institutions (secondments, short visits)
 - Impact of the project on the career of the researcher

Scientific achievements will be evaluated in relation with the active research period.

⁵http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/economia/85_Catalunya%202020/Documents/Arxius/RIS3CAT_gener_%202014.pdf.

Evaluation criteria	Weight	
	Outgoing + return	Incoming
<i>Excellence of the experienced researcher</i>	30%	40%
<i>Excellence and implementation capacity of the host organisation(s)</i>	30%	20%
<i>Quality and feasibility of the project</i>	20%	20%
<i>Technology transfer and impact</i>	20%	20%

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the criteria, and not for the sub-criteria. An overall threshold of 75% will be applied.

Checklist of common errors when preparing your application

Before submitting your application, review it to make sure it is correct and complete. The following checklist may help you to avoid common errors:

- Missing description of the Catalan host organisation or host organisation abroad: applicants for outgoing + return mobility type should make sure that both the Catalan host organisation and the host organisation abroad are described within the project description.
- Missing CV or detail about career of the scientific supervisors.
- Too large number of pages: templates indicate the maximum number of pages per section. Excess pages will not be evaluated.
- Missing description of research and mobility costs foreseen in the project.
- Proposal not focused on applied research and technology transfer. Have a look at the checklist above.