



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Secondments for Postdoctoral Researchers

Training and Career Development for Early-Stage-Researchers (ESRs)

Call I 2023, for research stays in 2024

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Secondment



1. Introduction

FORTHEM is an Alliance of European universities composed of nine multidisciplinary public research universities with a strong regional anchoring in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Spain. The FORTHEM Alliance brings together a new generation of creative Europeans able to cooperate across languages, borders, and disciplines to address the societal challenges and skills shortages Europe faces.

This call for funding is part of a series of target activities to **empower and support postdoctoral researchers** from FORTHEM partner universities to strengthen their networks with non-academic partners and to set up their own future research projects together with them. As part of the *FORTHEM Academy for Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs)* and based on the aim to design attractive training and career development actions for ESRs, FORTHEM is funding secondments for postdoctoral researchers, who wish to go to a foreign country and to work with a non-academic partner for up to three months. The maximum co-funding contribution from FORTHEM will be 3000 € (meant to mainly cover travel, accommodation, and a daily allowance).

As a result, FORTHEM offers to postdoctoral researchers (up to 8 years after completing their PhD), within this first call in total **3 financial aids for secondments/research stays in 2024 to non-academic partners in a foreign country for up to 3 months (maximum) linked to a concrete prospective research project** in which the host will be involved (e.g., MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship, ERC Starting Grants, any bilateral funding scheme, etc.). FORTHEM can only co-fund the research stay; at the time of turning in their proposal, applicants already need to have at least an informal agreement in place with one non-academic hosting institution. A simple letter of confirmation would be sufficient. If applicants don't have a partner yet, they may contact the FORTHEM Research Services and Policy office (research-support@forthem-alliance.eu) or the local forthem offices (see chapter 7 below) first to get some help with the partner search, or support with contacting FORTHEM associated partners for a cooperation request. Secondments in their own home country are in general not eligible unless they would be for example still be eligible to apply for an MSCA together with them (should be carefully explained in the proposal). During their research stay, the postdoctoral researchers will act as ambassadors for FORTHEM, e.g., by giving a lecture/talk at their host institution, a public environment etc.

2. Requirements, and application

2.1. Eligible applicants and requirements

- ✓ Postdoctoral researchers from all disciplines
- ✓ PhD obtained no longer than 8 years ago at stage of application
- ✓ Linked to one of the FORTHEM universities (working contract or official stipend/fellowship)
- ✓ Linked to a concrete prospective research project
- ✓ Secondment must take place in one of the nine FORTHEM countries if possible
(In some cases, research stays in other EU Members States or Associated Countries may also be accepted, but before submission of such proposals, applicants must contact the FORTHEM Academy for Early-Stage-Researchers at info@forthem-alliance.eu for confirmation).



2.2. Application submission and assessment

Applications must be made via the following registration page:

[FORTHM Secondments for Postdoctoral Researchers](#)

Only proposals submitted via this website will be accepted.

2.3. Documents to be provided together with the application and after the secondment

Application must be written in English, and consists of the **following documents**:

- Proposal (3 pages maximum). The document must include different sections relating to description of the planned activity, effectiveness, impact, and implementation (plus a short outlook on planned follow-up activities, e.g., grant application).
- Document proving the applicant's postdoctoral researcher status
- Document proving the applicant being working for a FORTHM partner university (fellows may also be accepted after verification of their status, provided they can demonstrate that they will return to the sending university upon completion of the secondment).
- Letter of commitment from the host institution/organization and confirmation of when the planned research stay will take place.
- All relevant documents should be **included in one document** uploaded to the registration form (in pdf format). In total a maximum of 5 documents can be uploaded.

The seconded fellows must submit the following documents **after the secondment**:

- A short-written report on their secondment (max. 3 pages) at the latest 60 days after the end of the seconding period.
- As ambassadors: proof of new networks and possible prospects for cooperation between home and host institutions

3. Submission deadline

Application website will be open from: 01/09/2023 to 30/11/2023.

Applications will be reviewed throughout January and February 2024 and results will be published at the end of February 2024.

A total of 3 applicants will be selected to carry out their secondment in 2024 (secondments must take place between 01/03/2024 and 31/12/2024).

Beneficiaries will be contacted by e-mail once the RI&T Mission Board confirmed the selection process, and results of the call will be published in the FORTHM website: www.forthem-alliance.eu

Applications not meeting the requirements, including data proven to be false, or not submitting them as instructed, will be excluded from the selection process. In case they submit early in advance, the proposal might be returned for improvement if possible.



4. Evaluation of proposals

The review board will be formed by the key officials within the “FORTHM Academy for Early-Stage Researchers” and confirmed by the R&I&T Mission Board. **All 9 FORTHM Alliance universities will be represented in the review board** to ensure that the proposed projects are in line with the goals of FORTHM.

Important evaluation and selection criteria include answers to the following questions:

- Originality and novelty of the project/project idea
- Short summary of how the postdoctoral researcher chose the host, and description of the synergies between the seconded researcher and the host and well as first ideas for a two-way-knowledge exchange
- Clear understanding what larger joint research project the secondment may lead to (e.g., MSCA Postdoctoral fellowship, ERC Starting grant, other grants for postdoctoral researchers on a national level)
- Concrete description of what new methods/procedures/skills the seconded person can learn/acquire from the host and other hosting arrangements (if selected a simple hosting agreement will be signed between the sending and hosting institution as well as the ESR)
- Importance of the proposed secondment for a possible career development of the postdoctoral researcher
- First ideas of the applicant on how to act as an ambassador for FORTHM while seconded (e.g., given a group lecture on FORTHM actions)
- Applications with FORTHM Universities external/associated partners as destination will be prioritized.

Grants will be awarded by the FORTHM Research, Innovation and Transfer (RI&T) Mission Board.

5. Funding and management body

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (JGU) **will be the management university** responsible for payments to the beneficiaries or postdoctoral researchers. Each secondment will be co-funded with a maximum of 3.000 €. On an individual basis it may be decided if the total amount for each secondment will be paid as an extra top-up to the salary, directly to cover the travel and accommodation costs, or as a stipend going directly to the postdoctoral researcher. This depends on the status of the applicant.

6. Expected results and reporting

The main goal of this action is to **empower and support postdoctoral researchers**. Secondments should lead to a project together with the host institution.

The postdoctoral researchers will act as ambassadors, and they will set up new networks and evaluate prospects of cooperation between sending and hosting institutions. The reports need to be turned in at the latest 60 days after the end of the secondment period.



7. FORTHem local offices contact details

The local FORTHem Office will be the responsible for helping during the process for applications:

- **Johannes-Gutenberg Universität Mainz:** forthem@uni-mainz.de / [local FORTHem webpage](#)
- **Jyväskylän yliopisto:** forthem@jyu.fi / [local FORTHem webpage](#)
- **Latvijas Universitāte:** forthem@lu.lv / [local FORTHem webpage](#)
- **Università degli Studi di Palermo:** forthem.office@unipa.it / [local FORTHem webpage](#)
- **Universitat de València:** forthem@uv.es / [local FORTHem webpage](#)
- **Universitetet i Agder:** Forthem@uia.no
- **Université de Bourgogne:** forthem@u-bourgogne.fr / [local FORTHem webpage](#)
- **Uniwersytet Opolski:** forthem@uni.opole.pl / [local FORTHem website](#)
- **Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu:** forthem@ulbsibiu.ro / [local FORTHem webpage](#)

For partner search you may also contact:

- research-support@forthem-alliance.eu

For any clarification on Alliance level

- info@forthem-alliance.eu

8. GDPR of personal data

By submitting the form, you consent to the processing of your personal data by FORTHem. The Link to FORTHem GDPR notice can be found [here](#).

9. Attachments to be uploaded to the registration form (either in 5 separate documents or as one pdf)

- Proposal (3 pages maximum). The document must include different sections relating to effectiveness, impact, and implementation (a short outlook on planned follow-up activities).
- Document proving the applicant's postdoctoral researcher status
- Document proving the applicant being working for a FORTHem partner university (fellows may also be accepted after verification of their status, provided they can demonstrate that they will return to the sending university upon completion of the secondment).
- Letter of commitment from the host institution/organization

Documents to be submitted after the secondment

- A Short-written report on their secondment (max. 3 pages)
- As ambassadors: Proof of new networks and possible prospects for cooperation between home and host institutions