



## HFSP CROSS-DISCIPLINARY FELLOWSHIPS

For applicants *without* experience in the Life Sciences

### Application Guidelines

### Award Year 2026

#### NOTE TO APPLICANTS

Applicants are advised to read these guidelines carefully, in particular the scientific scope and the eligibility criteria. If applicants are unsure of their eligibility or the relevance of their proposed research project, they should consult the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or contact the Fellowships Office at [fellow@hfsp.org](mailto:fellow@hfsp.org).

#### RECENT CHANGES

The HFSP has recently adopted a new [Shared Values Statement](#). While scientific excellence and the potential for research breakthroughs remain the foremost criteria, the HFSP aims to reach higher levels of equity and inclusion in frontier life science research funding, making frontier research more accessible and diverse.

Applicants need to declare their use of AI and be aware that HFSP may use tools to determine if text has likely been written by an AI tool (see Section [11](#)).

#### DEADLINES

All submissions (Letter of Intent, Full Proposal) will be managed through the HFSP portal on *ProposalCentral* ([proposalcentral.com](https://proposalcentral.com)), which will **open on 13 March 2025**. Instructions on how to create a *ProposalCentral* account, and how to initiate and submit a Letter of Intent can be found [HERE](#).

- **7 May 2025:** Deadline to initiate the Letter of Intent (LOI) by opening and saving the online form to obtain a 7-digit LOI ID
- **15 May 2025:** Submission of Letter of Intent by **1:00 pm** (13:00, Eastern Time) via *ProposalCentral*
- **25 September 2025:** Submission of Full Proposal by **1:00 pm** (13:00, Eastern Time) via *ProposalCentral* (only for **invited applicants**)

**Note:** BEFORE the applicant can submit their Full Proposal:

- the host supervisor(s) and referees must have submitted their sections, AND
- the host supervisor(s) and the host institution official must have signed the proposal (electronic signature).

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## 1. OVERVIEW

### 1.1. Mission, objectives, and features of the HFSP fellowship program

The International Human Frontier Science Program (HFSP) aims to strengthen open scientific enquiry by supporting international, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and cutting-edge basic research in the life sciences. Young scientists, driven by adventurous new ideas, selected by a peer review committee on the basis of the excellence of their research proposal will be supported by HFSP to test their hypotheses and to experiment with new methods and approaches. HFSP is committed to supporting original research that has the potential to move the frontiers of knowledge and to open new pathways for innovation.

HFSP encourages talented young scientists to think broadly to stretch their work beyond their current scope of expertise and skillset, and to experience a different research environment by moving to a new country. HFSP enables this transition for selected postdoctoral researchers with highly original and inspiring research projects by allowing them to move to some of the best research institutions and laboratories in the world. The expectations on our postdoctoral fellows are high: incorporate novel investigative approaches at the frontiers of the life sciences and disrupt existing paradigms or established ways of thinking. HFSP fellowship awardees stand out through their utmost dedication, engagement, and commitment to innovative science.

The HFSP postdoctoral fellowship program provides a unique opportunity for young researchers to embark on a new journey that will shape their career trajectory, allowing them to pursue their ambitions of becoming recognized and well-regarded in the research communities. The fellowships allow applicants to work on a challenging research project that is significantly different from their previous PhD or postdoctoral work to broaden their expertise.

Unique features of the HFSP Fellowships program:

- Two-step application process with a Letter of Intent (LOI) and a Full Proposal and a fast result at the LOI stage
- Funding for exploratory research **without the need to present preliminary data**
- Three years (36 months) of funding for the postdoctoral salary and research & travel allowance
- Exciting professional experiences by moving to a new country and working in a different research environment
- Opportunities for establishing and expanding the professional network through connections and collaborations from neighboring disciplines
- Advanced opportunities for career planning through the possibility of using the third year of HFSP support in a flexible manner—by staying in the host lab, moving back to the home country, or to another country.

HFSP offers two categories of postdoctoral fellowships (see [Table 1](#)). Both are 3 years in duration and for applicants who want to embark on a novel and frontier life sciences project: Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships (CDF, *these guidelines*) and Long-Term Fellowships (LTF, *separate guidelines can be found [HERE](#)*).

**Table 1. Comparison of key aspects of the HFSP LTF and CDF programs.**

| Features of the LTF and CDF program                                                                                                                                            | HFSP Fellowship Programs                |                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                | Long-Term<br>(LTF, separate guidelines) | Cross-Disciplinary<br>(CDF, these guidelines) |
| Applicant has a PhD or equivalent degree in a biological or life sciences field (e.g. molecular biology, marine biology, ecology, genetics...)                                 | ✓                                       |                                               |
| Applicant has experience in the life sciences, e.g. during their PhD, research internships, or previous postdoctoral research, but PhD might be from outside the life sciences | ✓                                       |                                               |
| Applicant has a PhD or equivalent degree in a non-biological field (e.g. physics, mathematics...) and has no prior experience in biology/the life sciences                     |                                         | ✓                                             |
| Project <b>must be</b> in the life sciences                                                                                                                                    | ✓                                       | ✓                                             |

## 1.2. **HFSP Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships (CDF)**

HFSP Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships offer the unique opportunity for scientists with no prior training or experience in the life sciences to enter this exciting research area and get exposed to biological questions, problems, and techniques. At the same time, CDF applicants are expected to bring a unique skill set and approach based on their non-biological background to a frontier and challenging problem in the life sciences. A successful CDF proposal will combine the best of life sciences and non-life sciences to solve an outstanding and interdisciplinary research question in biology.

### **Successful CDF proposals:**

- Incorporate novel investigative approaches at the frontiers of the life sciences with the potential to disrupt existing paradigms and current ways of thinking. The results of the research are expected to have an impact beyond the immediate field.
- Demonstrate the change of field of the applicant and demonstrate the ability to formulate a research project with a frontier-extending, risky nature and describe how the applicant's unique training and special skill set will allow them to address biological problems in a novel and distinct way.
- Provide a prospect for novel directions in the host laboratory, made possible through the non-biological expertise of the applicant.
- Clearly show how the proposed project is different from the applicant's research to date (PhD or previous postdoctoral positions) and how it will help the applicant to learn new research approaches and methodologies.

## 1.3. **HFSP Long-Term Fellowships (LTF, separate guidelines)**

Long-Term Fellowships (LTF) are for applicants who hold a doctoral degree and/or have research experience in a biological/life sciences discipline (e.g. molecular biology, marine biology). The LTF application guidelines can be found [HERE](#).

## 2. **SCIENTIFIC SCOPE OF THE HFSP POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM**

### 2.1. **The proposed research**

HFSP postdoctoral fellowships aim to expose awardees to new theories and methods to complement or build on their previous experience and expertise. The proposed research topic must be:

- within the field of **life science**,
- **distinctly different from the applicant's PhD or previous postdoctoral work**, and
- **basic, fundamental research** (applications of purely applied nature will not be considered, see Section [2.2](#)).

The evaluation of the proposed research is based on specific criteria found [HERE](#). Research projects may range from biological functions at the molecular or cellular level, up to the level of biological systems, including cognitive functions. All levels of analysis are supported, for example: studies on genes and individual molecules, intracellular networks, intercellular associations in tissues and organs, networks underlying the complex functions of entire organisms, populations, or ecosystems.

The applicant may consult with the host supervisor in the development and writing of the proposal, but the project should be primarily the idea of the applicant.

Prospective fellowship applicants are encouraged to visit the HFSP website at [hfsp.org/awardees/awards](https://hfsp.org/awardees/awards) to see examples of projects that have been funded in the past. In cases of doubt, applicants can contact the HFSP Fellowship Office ([fellow@hfsp.org](mailto:fellow@hfsp.org)) to get feedback on the alignment of their proposed project with the objectives and scope of HFSP-funded research.

## 2.2. What HFSP does *not* support

The HFSP fellowship program (LTF and CDF) does *not* fund:

1. Projects of a purely applied nature, for example:
  - Primarily clinical and pharmaceutical projects—*but* these may be considered if they allow new insights into the fundamental biological mechanisms of a disease
  - Projects aimed at developing methods of diagnosis or treatment, including the search for potential drug targets or advanced trials of drugs under development
  - Applied research in engineering, biotechnology, or nanotechnology that does not address a fundamental biological problem
  - Projects directly concerned with agricultural problems such as: crop yield, breeding, environmental problems (pollution), or forestry
2. Research aimed at developing novel methods or the study of analogs or models of biological activity unless these methods allow new biological questions to be answered in the context of the aim of the HFSP to fund fundamental research.
3. Observational projects or systematic screening approaches.
4. Large-scale data collection studies or large-scale studies on populations or ecosystems—*however*, studies of the mechanisms of species-species interactions or their co-evolution *are* eligible.
5. Research in for-profit environment—*however*, collaborations are allowed.
6. Proposals representing standard/incremental approaches, obvious next steps in the field or in the host laboratory (e.g. routine projects). Proposals that do *not* represent a significant change in research direction compared to previous work of the applicant (i.e. PhD thesis or previous postdoctoral research) are less likely to be awarded an HFSP fellowship.
7. Projects that are a close continuation—the next logical step—of the applicant's previous work in their PhD or earlier post-doctoral work.

## 3. FORMAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### 3.1. General

HFSP encourages inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (see our [Shared Values Statement](#)), and welcomes applicants independent of gender, origin, cultural background, or age.

In one year, each applicant may submit **only one** Letter of Intent for an HFSP postdoctoral fellowship (Long-Term Fellowship or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship) and must propose a **change in country AND a change in research field**.

There is one competition per year for the HFSP postdoctoral fellowships. **Unsuccessful applicants may apply in subsequent years**, provided they still meet all eligibility requirements. An HFSP postdoctoral fellowship may only be held once. For questions on the eligibility criteria listed below, please contact the Fellowship Office ([fellow@hfsp.org](mailto:fellow@hfsp.org)).

### 3.2. Activation date of the HFSP fellowships

Successful applicants must begin (activate) their fellowship between 1 April 2026 and 1 January 2027.

### 3.3. Nationality

Applicants may be from any country and of any nationality. However, **candidates cannot apply for a fellowship to work in the country of their nationality**, regardless of whether they have obtained their PhD degree in this or another country. Based on the candidate's nationality, the proposed host country must fulfil *one* of the following criteria:

- Candidates who *are* nationals of one of the HFSP Member Countries (Section [3.5](#)) can apply to work in a research institution in any country that they are *not* a national of.
- Candidates who are *not* nationals of one of the HFSP Member Countries (Section [3.5](#)) can *only* apply to work in a research institute in an HFSP Member Country.
- Candidates with dual nationalities may apply to work in a research institution in one of the countries of which they have a nationality, but *only* if they have never studied nor worked in this country *and* fulfill one of the first two criteria. In cases of doubt, applicants need to contact the HFSP Fellowship Office.

In all cases, the host country criteria (Section [3.4](#)) must also be fulfilled.

### **3.4. Host Country**

All of the following requirements must be fulfilled. Candidates must:

- propose a change in country,
- propose a research institution in a host country<sup>1</sup> that they are *not* a national of (for dual nationalities see Section [3.3](#) above),
- *not* propose to move from one laboratory to another in the same country,
- *not* have studied nor worked in their proposed host country for more than 12 months by the activation date of their HFSP fellowship (see Section [3.2](#)).

The *combined* duration of all stays (including research positions, collaborations, internships, Master's and/or PhD work, postdoctoral research, and time as a visiting scientist or technician, etc.) is taken into account.

### **3.5. HFSP Member Countries**

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus (EU part only), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, the Republic of Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA).

### **3.6. Host Institution**

Applicants may *not* propose a host institution at which they have worked for more than 12 months (consecutively or not) by the activation date of their HFSP fellowship (see Section [3.2](#)).

Applicants who are already working at their proposed host institution are eligible only if they have arrived on or after 1 April 2025. In any case, the fellowship must be activated within 12 months after their arrival at the host institution.

For-profit research environments are *not* eligible host institutions, but collaborations are allowed.

### **3.7. Host Supervisor(s)**

Applicants must indicate a primary host supervisor. If scientifically required, applicants may also indicate a secondary host supervisor from the same or a different institution. The rules and requirements for all host supervisors are the same.

Applicants **cannot** propose to work with a host supervisor(s) who are:

- former scientific collaborators,
- former research supervisors,
- or with whom they have worked or published.

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<sup>1</sup> For those institutions that are not classified as national, i.e. international or extraterritorial institutions such as EMBL, ICPT or ICGEB, the country where the laboratory is located will be considered the host country.

Applications will also be **ineligible** if the applicant has spent more than 12 months (consecutively or not) working with the proposed host supervisor at the activation date of the fellowship (see Section 3.2). This is regardless of any change of institution by the host supervisor.

Please note that any host supervisor can endorse *only one* fellowship application (LOI) per competition year. However, the proposed supervisor may simultaneously mentor HFSP fellows from previous award years, and/or be part of an HFSP Research Grant team.

### 3.8. Doctoral Degree

The applicant must have completed their PhD or a comparable doctoral degree with equivalent research experience (for instance, an MD or medical PhD) before starting the fellowship and before 31 December 2026 at the latest. A completed doctoral degree is not required at the time of application.

Applicants are not eligible if the doctoral degree has been conferred<sup>2</sup> more than 3 years (36 months) prior to the submission deadline of the Full Proposal (25 September 2025). Thus, applicants whose doctoral degree was conferred prior to **25 September 2022** are not eligible for the HFSP fellowships, with some exceptions (see below).

Specific post-PhD career interruptions may be exempted and are therefore not counted towards the ‘time since the conferral date’, please contact [fellow@hfsp.org](mailto:fellow@hfsp.org) to obtain an exemption.<sup>2</sup> Eligible interruption periods may include: illness, parental leave (childcare), providing full-time care for an immediate family member, military or civil service. Interruption periods that are *not* eligible include: unemployment and work outside of science. The remaining duration between the conferral date and the submission date of the Full Proposals (25 September 2025) may not exceed 3 years (36 months). The start and end dates for all post-PhD interruptions must be entered in the “CV” section in the application portal.

### 3.9. Publication Requirements: Lead author publication(s)

Applicants need to have *at least one* research publication as lead author, meaning a paper as single author, first author or shared first author. For this demand, review articles and patents are not taken into account; HFSP only accepts full-length original research publications in English for which the applicant must either be the single author, first author, or joint first author (in the case of several first authors). In a joint first author paper, the applicant does *not* need to be listed in the first position, but the equal contribution of the authors must be clearly stated.

**At the Letter of Intent stage**, applicants must have at least one lead author manuscript that is either: (i) already published, (ii) in press, or (iii) accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, and/or (iv) published in a recognized open-access preprint repository.<sup>3</sup>

**At the Full Proposal stage**, option (iv) is no longer valid (see Table 2), therefore the applicant must register *at least one* lead author manuscript that is either (i) published, (ii) in press, or (iii) accepted for publication in a **peer-reviewed journal**.

Table 2. Publication requirements at each stage of the HFSP Fellowship application.

| Status of the mandatory lead author manuscript                               | Fellowship application stage |                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                                                              | 1. Letter of Intent          | 2. Full Proposal        |
| i. already published in a peer-reviewed journal                              | Qualifies                    | Qualifies               |
| ii. in press in a peer-reviewed journal                                      | Qualifies                    | Qualifies               |
| iii. accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal                     | Qualifies                    | Qualifies               |
| iv. <i>only</i> available in an open-access preprint repository <sup>3</sup> | Qualifies                    | Does <b>not</b> qualify |

If the standard publication practice in the applicant’s laboratory or research field makes first authorship impossible (e.g. alphabetical listing of authors), these circumstances have to be explained in the “Additional

<sup>2</sup> Conferral date: degree completion date, indicated on degree certificate or diploma.

<sup>3</sup> Listings of preprint repositories are available through the online resources of ASAPbio (<https://asapbio.org/>) or the Open Access Directory ([http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Main\\_Page](http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Main_Page))

Comments” field under Section 2 (Applicant) of the application. HFSP recognizes that publication practices differ across scientific fields and those cases should also be explained in “Additional Comments”. For cases in which a research article cannot be registered in *ProposalCentral* (e.g. if it does not have a DOI) please also explain this in the “Additional Comments” section.

## 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

### 4.1. Important Notes

Applicants are advised to keep the intended host supervisor(s) and institution aware of their application. It is also important to make sure that the host institution is willing to accept a postdoctoral fellow under the HFSP rules, e.g. with regards to receiving external funding for its postdoctoral researchers. Applicants must also check the institution’s policies for postdoctoral fellows and visa requirements for the proposed host country.

There are two stages of the HFSP Fellowship applications; (1) the Letter of Intent, and (2) the Full Proposal. Successful applicants at the Letter of Intent stage will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply in the next competition year, provided they still meet the eligibility criteria. Application guidelines and criteria may be subject to change each year.

### 4.2. Letter of Intent (to be submitted by 15 May 2025)

The online application platform at [proposalcentral.com](https://proposalcentral.com) will be open from 13 March 2025 onwards. Instructions on how to create an account in *ProposalCentral* and how to submit a Letter of Intent can be found [HERE](#).

To be eligible, applicants must initiate their Letter of Intent in *ProposalCentral* by opening and saving the online form to obtain a 7-digit LOI ID by 7 May 2025, at the latest. The completed Letter of Intent must then be submitted by 15 May 2025.

The Letter of Intent should succinctly summarize the scientific content of the planned project. Information required at the Letter of Intent stage:

- Title of the proposed project
- Personal information (name, ORCID id, email, degrees, short CV)
- Proposed host institution and host supervisor(s), and intended arrival date at the host institution
- Disclosure of any previous or current collaborations (if any) with the proposed host supervisor(s)
- Title and abstract of PhD thesis, and title and abstract of previous postdoctoral projects (if any)
- A summary of the proposed research plan (up to 3000 characters, including spaces) briefly outlining the background of the proposed research project, aims, central hypotheses, experimental approach, and expected outcomes
- Publication list of the applicant
- Additional information on applicant’s publications (e.g. authorship, contributions). The required template for this is available under “Download Template” in the *ProposalCentral* application portal.
- Confirmation that the host supervisor(s) are aware of, and support, the application (the host supervisor(s) will receive an automated email notification informing them of their role in the proposal).

No other documents are required at the Letter of Intent stage. **The host supervisor(s) and institution(s) do not need to provide any further information and do not need to sign the Letter of Intent.** They will not have access to the application at this stage. It is important to be sure that the host supervisor(s) do not endorse another HFSP fellowship application in this year’s competition.

More details and explanations will be found in the application portal on *ProposalCentral*.

### 4.3. Full Proposal (to be submitted by 25 September 2025)

Note that applicants will be contacted by HFSP if they are invited to progress to this stage.

The Full Proposal should introduce the project in more detail. It should also describe the innovative and novel components of the project, the expected impact on the field and the expected outcomes of the research. Applicants are asked to provide details on the experimental design and study system so that the reviewers can assess its originality, feasibility and how it will diversify and contribute to their training in research.

Some information that applicants have provided at the Letter of Intent stage will be automatically carried over to the Full Proposal. In addition, the following information is also required for the Full Proposal:

- Recommendation letter from the proposed host supervisor(s) (see Section [4.3.1](#))
- Reference letters from two additional referees (see Section [4.3.2](#))
- Contact information for the host institution official and host supervisor(s) to enable access to the proposal
- A detailed proposed research plan, including:
  - Summary (carried over from the Letter of Intent, please refrain from changing this)
  - Background and significance (up to 3000 characters)
  - Specific aims of the project (up to 8000 characters)
  - Experimental design (up to 6000 characters)
  - Bibliography (i.e. reference list, up to 15 references). Example format: 1. Authurname A., Authurname B., Publication Title, Journal Name, Volume, Pages (Year). The DOI may be added if available. For references with more than five authors, please list *only* the first 3–5 author names followed by “et al.”
  - How the proposed project is different from the applicant’s previous work (up to 2500 characters)
  - Why the proposed project is at the leading edge of life sciences (up to 4000 characters)
  - Why the host laboratory is a good fit for the proposed project (up to 2000 characters)
- A public summary of the proposed project (up to 2400 characters)
- Publication list of the applicant
- Additional information on applicant’s publications (e.g. authorship, contributions). The required template for this is available under “Download Template” in the *ProposalCentral* application portal.
- Signatures of the applicant, the host supervisor(s), and the designated host institution official
  - The proposal can still be modified after signatures have been collected
  - Important: the proposal cannot be submitted until all signatures have been registered

Please note that the number of characters allowed for each section includes spaces and punctuation. More details and explanations will be found in the application portal on *ProposalCentral*.

#### 4.3.1. Recommendation letter from the host supervisor(s) (required for Full Proposals)

Once the host supervisor(s) contact information has been added in *ProposalCentral*, they will receive an email directing them to their sections to complete. There, they will also find a template to download that includes detailed instructions and questions. In the template, the proposed host supervisor(s) must:

- Register a brief list of their career and research experience
- Include a list of up to 10 of their publications that are relevant to the proposal

- Explain how the applicant's proposed research plan is a new direction for their lab (i.e. host lab) and how it is a significant change from the applicant's prior work (either during PhD or postdoctoral training)
- Explain how and why their lab is particularly suited to supporting the aims and missions of HFSP to enable the most talented young researchers to embark on a frontier research project that will shape their career trajectory
- Outline a mentorship plan for the applicant

If a candidate has two host supervisors, both must provide their information and a letter of recommendation. The host supervisor(s) must submit their sections before the applicant can submit the Full Proposal.

#### **4.3.2. Reference letters from two additional referees (required for full proposals)**

Once the contact information for the referees have been added in ProposalCentral, they will receive an email directing them to their sections to complete. There, they will also find a template containing further instructions and prompts. Referees are asked to describe their impression of the applicant in no more than 3000 characters (including spaces), using the template.

## **5. REVIEW PROCESS**

All Letters of Intent and invited Full Proposals will be assessed for eligibility, and all eligible applications undergo peer review. Please note that we cannot provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants due to the volume of applications that we receive.

The application and selection processes are confidential. Fellowship Review Committee members and external scientific reviewers are also bound by confidentiality.

Assessment criteria and the scoring guide for reviewers can be found [HERE](#).

### **5.1. Eligibility Assessment**

All Letters of Intent (LOIs) are checked for compliance with formal eligibility criteria by HFSP in accord with the criteria described above. Formally ineligible LOIs will not be further considered.

### **5.2. Scientific Peer-Review**

The remaining LOIs are screened for alignment with the objectives of HFSP (see Section [1.1](#)) and scientific scope (see Section [2](#)). A small review committee decides which LOIs will be removed at this stage. Applicants whose LOIs do not align with the scientific scope of HFSP will be notified. All remaining LOIs will go through full peer-review (see below).

#### **5.2.1. Peer-Review of Letters of Intent**

Each eligible LOI that is in scope with the HFSP objectives and scope will be assessed by two Fellowship Review Committee members who will use an alphabetical score (from A [highest] to D [lowest]) to rate the application. In cases in which the two reviewers' scores are significantly different, applications will be assessed by a third reviewer. The scores from all reviewers will be used to establish a ranking of all LOIs. HFSP will then invite the top LOI applicants (usually the top 15–20% of all eligible LOIs) to submit a Full Proposal.

#### **5.2.2. Peer-Review of Full Proposals**

All Full Proposals will first be checked against the eligibility criteria, importantly with regards to the publication requirements. Eligible Full Proposals will then be sent to external scientific reviewers who have expertise in the topics of the proposed research. Each proposal is expected to receive 2–3 evaluations from these external reviewers. Then, two Review Committee members will evaluate each Full Proposal, taking into account the evaluations from the external scientific reviewers.

At this stage, a numerical scale of 1–10 (with 10 being the highest) is used to score the applications based on the following criteria:

- Excellence of the proposed research plan, considering:
  - Scientific originality and novel character of the proposal
  - The potential impact of the project beyond the immediate field
  - Whether the proposal challenges existing paradigms and whether it is going to disrupt the current ways of thinking
  - Whether it addresses an important new problem or a barrier to progress in an established field
  - The level of intellectual contribution of the applicant to the proposed research project
  - If the proposal is a clear departure from the applicant's previous research
- Excellence of the applicant, considering:
  - The readiness of the applicant to embrace the risk of a frontier-extending project and to step beyond the scope of expertise gained through previous work
  - Potential of the applicant to succeed in their new project
  - Matching of the background and experience of the applicant to the need of the proposal
- Suitability of the host lab and environment:
  - Is the chosen host lab a good fit for the proposed project and does it provide the best opportunities for the applicant to achieve their scientific goals?
  - Does the letter of support show clear commitment and willingness of mentorship from the host supervisor?

The full assessment criteria and the scoring guide for reviewers can be found [HERE](#).

The Fellowship Review Committee will meet in early February 2026. At the meeting, each Full Proposal will be discussed, and each of the original Review Committee members defends or revises their initial rating. The numerical scores of the original Review Committee members are then used to suggest an overall score for each proposal. Based on the discussions during the committee meeting, all Review Committee members will provide their scores for all Full Proposals. Then, the average score for each proposal is used to generate a ranked list of proposals recommended for funding.

### **5.3. Notification of outcome**

**Letter of Intent:** Applicants will be notified between mid-August and end of August 2025 as to whether their Letter of Intent was selected or not for submitting a Full Proposal.

**Full Proposal:** Applicants who were invited to submit a Full Proposal are notified of the outcome of their fellowship application once internal HFSP formalities are complete (usually towards the end of March 2026).

## **6. SUMMARY OF HFSP CONDITIONS OF AWARD AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

If offered a postdoctoral fellowship by HFSP, successful applicants will be sent the Agreement (detailed conditions of award), which they, their host supervisor, and an official administrator at the host institution will be required to sign before the activation of the award. The following is a summary only.

### **6.1. General information**

- The HFSP Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship is awarded for 3 years (36 months). It cannot be renewed.
- Fellows must begin their fellowship between 1 April 2026 and 1 January 2027.
- Fellowship allowances are all administered through the host institution and the employment contract must be 100% FTE.
- Fellows should investigate their tax liabilities and other costs such as for visa applications.

## **6.2. HFSP fellowship allowances**

The fellowship award consists of a living allowance and a research and travel allowance (see Appendix).

### **6.2.1. Living allowance**

The host institution agrees to pay the fellow the full living allowance. However, legally compulsory deductions may be made (e.g., for taxation, social security charges, health insurance or pension contributions), if required under legislation in the jurisdiction.

No other deductions are allowed. The host institution is not permitted to deduct any additional charges from the fellowship such as institutional overheads or bench fees from any of the fellowship allowances. HFSP does not provide additional funds to cover health insurance costs, pension contributions or other benefits.

The living allowance takes into account the difference in living costs between countries. The offer of a fellowship will specify the relevant amounts.

### **6.2.2. Research and travel allowance, and relocation allowance**

The research and travel allowance is a small grant to the fellow that can be used, for instance, for reagents, equipment, and/or conference travel, in accord with HFSP regulations.

A relocation allowance may be provided as a fixed amount to assist with moving costs (see Appendix).

### **6.2.3. Child allowance and parental leave**

HFSP fellows with children are entitled to receive a child allowance, which is set at 10% of the applicable living allowance of year 1.

HFSP fellows are eligible to apply for up to 3 months paid parental leave for children born/adopted during the award period.

## **6.3. Concurrent fellowships/grants or other employment**

HFSP fellows cannot concurrently hold an HFSP Fellowship and another paid employment position (i.e., a position supported by a salary) or another paid fellowship from another organization. However, the HFSP living allowance can be supplemented from other sources (e.g., from a host supervisor's grant or from institutional funds), for instance to reach the salary requirements of the host institution.

HFSP fellows may apply for and hold additional research grants themselves to assist their conduct of the fellowship research project as presented in their successful HFSP application. However, those funds must not be used as the fellows' salary.

HFSP fellows must devote themselves entirely to their research project in the host institution and may not engage in any other paid activity without prior agreement by HFSP.

## **6.4. Deferral of the fellowship**

Fellows may interrupt ('defer') HFSP support for up to one year. Such deferral time can be taken after having completed *at least one year* of the HFSP fellowship in the proposed host laboratory. During a deferral period, fellows may spend up to one year in a different laboratory at the same or another university/institution, or up to six months in another research-driven, innovation environment, serving the successful completion of the HFSP project. In each case, the deferral period may be spent in the same or another country.

Any change in host laboratory and/or host supervisor needs prior approval by HFSP.

## **6.5. Third year of the fellowship**

In the third year of the fellowship, fellows may choose to continue to work in the host laboratory, to return to their or their spouse's/partner's home country, or to move to another HFSP member country. Fellows who move may continue their original research project or modify/change it. Please note that any modifications or changes require prior approval by HFSP.

Generally, it is not possible to change the host supervisor and/or the host laboratory (except during a deferral or if the third year of the fellowship is carried out in another host country) nor the research project (except during the third year of the fellowship).

## 7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Awardees must observe the highest ethical standards in conducting all research supported by the Program. They have to agree to conform strictly to the national and institutional codes of practice, regulations and laws, which govern the ethical conduct of scientific research in their institutions. Institutions must inform HFSP if national or institutional codes of practice, regulations, or laws have been infringed in the performance of the award. All awardees must also agree not to undertake any research jointly with scientists in another country where experimental procedures, which are forbidden in their own laboratories/institutions, are permissible. Examples of national guidelines can be found [HERE](#) or in the [HFSP Policy on Scientific Misconduct](#).

## 8. USE OF PRIVATE DATA IN YOUR PROPOSED RESEARCH

In case your HFSP funded research project involves the collection/processing of sensitive personal data (e.g.: health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction, etc.) or genetic information, please justify the need for their collection, discuss the possible ethical implications and how you will address them in the appropriate section of the HFSP Fellowship proposal.

In case your research involves observation of participants, please state whether any video or photo will be used publicly and describe the methods you will use to guarantee the privacy of the participants, including the informed consent provisions (if applicable). In case you are planning to use existing data, please specify if these originate from any available sources, and whether the use of the data has been authorized for secondary use (by the primary owner of the data who must also confirm that the informed consent included the possibility of a secondary use of data).

## 9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PUBLICATIONS

HFSP is fully committed to preserve the intellectual property rights of the applicants and is putting in place all necessary protective measures. It is engaged in the global discussion on strengthening research security. DOIs will be assigned to all awards, helping to enhance project visibility, accessibility and inclusivity.

HFSP will not claim any intellectual or commercial property rights that may be generated through the research it sponsors. HFSP will not become involved in any dispute which may arise about the ownership of such rights. The assignment of any such rights (and any income arising from them) is to be determined by the procedures and regulations which apply in the laboratory/institution in which the research is conducted. In considering the possible commercial importance of discoveries which arise from research sponsored by the Program, all awardees must agree that submission of manuscripts for publication of these discoveries in scientific journals will not be delayed for more than 45 working days after the manuscript is completed.

An acknowledgement (with fellowship number/DOI) of support by HFSP must be included in all publications resulting from work carried out under the fellowship. The open access policy of HFSP is available at [hfsp.org/Open-Access-Statement](https://hfsp.org/Open-Access-Statement).

## 10. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

HFSP is committed to safeguarding the applicants' personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) on data protection and privacy in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) and transfers of personal data outside the EU and EEA areas.

The [HFSP Privacy Policy](#) explains how, and on what legal basis, we collect, store, and use personal information about the applicant for the HFSP Fellowship program or as any other person that interacts with our Organization. This Policy also explains how we collect, store and use personal information of successful candidates.

## 11. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Where applicants use generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process, these technologies should only be used to improve readability and language of the application, not for creating content. Authors are requested to disclose their use of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the application. HFSP reserves the right to check the use of AI tools with appropriate software and to take the outcome into consideration in the evaluation of applications.

## 12. APPENDIX: HFSP TABLES OF ALLOWANCES

Note that these allowances are indicative and may be subject to change through the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees before a final offer of an HFSP Postdoctoral Fellowship is made to successful applicants.

### 12.1. HFSP Fellowships: Yearly living allowances, child allowances, and research & travel allowances

| Country        | Currency | Gross yearly living allowance Year 1 | Gross yearly living allowance Year 2 | Gross yearly living allowance Year 3 | Yearly child allowance (per child) | Yearly research and travel allowance |
|----------------|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Australia      | AUD      | 90,132                               | 91,644                               | 93,144                               | 9,013                              | 10,356                               |
| Austria        | EUR      | 57,192                               | 58,140                               | 59,088                               | 5,719                              | 6,432                                |
| Belgium        | EUR      | 53,592                               | 54,492                               | 55,380                               | 5,359                              | 6,432                                |
| Brazil         | BRL      | 231,576                              | 235,440                              | 239,292                              | 23,158                             | 28,380                               |
| Bulgaria       | BGN      | 64,992                               | 66,072                               | 67,152                               | 6,499                              | 12,576                               |
| Canada         | CAD      | 69,900                               | 71,064                               | 72,228                               | 6,990                              | 9,552                                |
| Chile          | CLP      | 26,206,176                           | 26,642,940                           | 27,079,704                           | 2,620,618                          | 5,339,124                            |
| China          | CNY      | 380,184                              | 386,520                              | 392,856                              | 38,018                             | 49,752                               |
| Colombia       | COP      | 158,541,816                          | 161,184,180                          | 163,826,544                          | 15,854,182                         | 24,422,364                           |
| Croatia        | HRK      | 333,564                              | 339,132                              | 344,688                              | 33,356                             | 47,712                               |
| Czech Republic | CZK      | 1,125,168                            | 1,143,924                            | 1,162,668                            | 112,517                            | 165,096                              |
| Denmark        | DKK      | 540,204                              | 549,216                              | 558,216                              | 54,020                             | 48,024                               |
| Finland        | EUR      | 64,740                               | 65,820                               | 66,900                               | 6,474                              | 6,432                                |
| France         | EUR      | 62,016                               | 63,048                               | 64,080                               | 6,202                              | 6,432                                |
| Germany        | EUR      | 51,984                               | 52,860                               | 53,724                               | 5,198                              | 6,432                                |
| Greece         | EUR      | 47,544                               | 48,336                               | 49,128                               | 4,754                              | 6,432                                |
| Hong Kong      | HKD      | 472,008                              | 479,868                              | 487,740                              | 47,201                             | 56,412                               |
| Hungary        | HUF      | 13,494,528                           | 13,719,432                           | 13,944,336                           | 1,349,453                          | 2,092,176                            |
| Iceland        | ISK      | 8,483,568                            | 8,624,952                            | 8,766,348                            | 848,357                            | 882,936                              |
| India          | INR      | 2,678,868                            | 2,723,520                            | 2,768,160                            | 267,887                            | 507,036                              |
| Ireland        | EUR      | 61,956                               | 62,988                               | 64,020                               | 6,196                              | 6,432                                |
| Israel         | ILS      | 227,208                              | 230,988                              | 234,780                              | 22,721                             | 25,692                               |
| Italy          | EUR      | 55,956                               | 56,892                               | 57,816                               | 5,596                              | 6,432                                |
| Japan          | JPY      | 6,898,740                            | 7,013,712                            | 7,128,696                            | 689,874                            | 784,692                              |
| Korea          | KRW      | 68,281,452                           | 69,419,484                           | 70,557,504                           | 6,828,145                          | 8,395,260                            |
| Luxembourg     | EUR      | 53,592                               | 54,492                               | 55,380                               | 5,359                              | 6,432                                |

| Country      | Currency | Gross yearly living allowance Year 1 | Gross yearly living allowance Year 2 | Gross yearly living allowance Year 3 | Yearly child allowance (per child) | Yearly research and travel allowance |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mexico       | MXN      | 775,248                              | 788,160                              | 801,084                              | 77,525                             | 138,648                              |
| Netherlands  | EUR      | 57,828                               | 58,800                               | 59,760                               | 5,783                              | 6,432                                |
| New Zealand  | NZD      | 90,564                               | 92,064                               | 93,576                               | 9,056                              | 10,932                               |
| Norway       | NOK      | 689,544                              | 701,040                              | 712,536                              | 68,954                             | 63,360                               |
| Poland       | PLN      | 173,904                              | 176,808                              | 179,700                              | 17,390                             | 27,636                               |
| Portugal     | EUR      | 45,132                               | 45,876                               | 46,632                               | 4,513                              | 6,432                                |
| Singapore    | SGD      | 92,496                               | 94,044                               | 95,580                               | 9,250                              | 9,828                                |
| South Africa | ZAR      | 440,412                              | 447,756                              | 455,100                              | 44,041                             | 104,040                              |
| Spain        | EUR      | 51,132                               | 51,984                               | 52,836                               | 5,113                              | 6,432                                |
| Sweden       | SEK      | 691,260                              | 702,780                              | 714,300                              | 69,126                             | 68,100                               |
| Switzerland  | CHF      | 76,800                               | 80,400                               | 84,000                               | 7,680                              | 6,744                                |
| Thailand     | THB      | 1,333,800                            | 1,356,036                            | 1,378,260                            | 133,380                            | 223,548                              |
| UK           | GBP      | 65,772                               | 66,864                               | 67,956                               | 6,577                              | 5,640                                |
| USA          | USD      | 59,460                               | 60,456                               | 61,440                               | 5,946                              | 7,200                                |

Contact [fellow@hfsp.org](mailto:fellow@hfsp.org) to request details of countries not listed here.

## 12.2. HFSP Fellowships: Relocation allowances (in USD)

| FROM:                   | TO:             |                 |        |             |       |         |        |                         |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|-------|---------|--------|-------------------------|
|                         | West USA/Canada | East USA/Canada | Europe | Middle-East | Asia  | Oceania | Africa | Central & South America |
| West USA/Canada         | 1,500           | 1,500           | 3,000  | 3,000       | 2,000 | 2,000   | 2,000  | 1,500                   |
| East USA/Canada         | 1,500           | 1,500           | 2,000  | 2,000       | 2,500 | 2,500   | 1,500  | 1,500                   |
| Europe                  | 3,000           | 2,000           | 1,000  | 1,000       | 4,000 | 4,000   | 1,000  | 3,000                   |
| Middle-East             | 3,000           | 2,000           | 1,000  | 1,500       | 3,800 | 3,800   | 1,600  | 3,000                   |
| Asia                    | 2,000           | 2,500           | 4,000  | 3,800       | 1,500 | 2,200   | 3,000  | 2,500                   |
| Oceania                 | 2,000           | 2,500           | 4,000  | 3,800       | 2,200 | 1,500   | 4,000  | 2,000                   |
| Africa                  | 2,000           | 1,500           | 1,000  | 1,600       | 3,000 | 4,000   | 1,500  | 3,000                   |
| Central & South America | 1,500           | 1,500           | 3,000  | 3,000       | 2,500 | 2,000   | 3,000  | 1,500                   |

Relocation allowances from/to other areas will be calculated on a case-by-case basis. Please note that relocations within the same country will not be covered.

Fellows are eligible to receive additional relocation allowances for their spouses/partners and/or their children, according to the following calculation:

| Relationship to Fellow       | Additional Relocation Allowance                  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Spouse/partner               | Equivalent to Fellow's relocation allowance      |
| Child between 2–12 years old | 50% of Fellow's relocation allowance (per child) |
| Child under 2 years old      | 10% of Fellow's relocation allowance (per child) |