



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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The Central Bohemian Innovation Center reserves the right to amend this call document.

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1. Key definitions

Central Bohemian Innovation Center	Central Bohemian Innovation Center, hereinafter SIC for its acronym in Czech, <i>Středočeské inovační centrum</i> , is the beneficiary of the COFUND grant and coordinator of the MERIT Programme.
Ethics Committee	A committee formed by Ethics experts in the different research areas who will perform the Ethics screening of the selected proposals (ranked list and reserve list).
Fellow	The person awarded with a MERIT fellowship.
Fellowship	The Central Bohemia Mobility Programme for Excellence in Research, Innovation and Technology, co-funded by Horizon Europe's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND).
Host organisation (HO)	Any MERIT Implementing Partner (research organisations) recruiting fellows.
Independent evaluator	Shall mean independent experts in different areas of specialisation of any nationality that will evaluate the research proposals and be part of the Interview Panel.
Management Board	Consists of 3 full-time employees of the Central Bohemian Innovation Center (SIC for its acronym in Czech). The Management Board will check for the eligibility of all submitted proposals, prepare the report to the Steering Committee to approve the distribution of proposals to evaluators, be part of the Interview Panel, prepare Panel Reports and coordinate the whole evaluation and selection process.
MERIT	Is the “Central Bohemia Mobility Programme for Excellence in Research, Innovation and Technology” co-funded by Horizon Europe's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions - Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND)
Research project	The research work proposed by the fellow in his/her MERIT application and approved by the MERIT Steering Committee.
Secondment	A mandatory temporary assignment of the fellow to another entity in any sector, anywhere in the world at any time during the action, typically to perform part of the research or to gain experience. Secondment can be taken as a continuous period of time or it can be broken into several shorter secondment periods. The secondment shall assure intersectoral, international or interdisciplinary experience for fellows, transfer of knowledge and technologies from research organisations to industry or to gather relevant inputs and industry needs to research organisations.
Secondment organisation	Any Associated Partner (secondment organisations) which offers training or mentoring without recruiting fellows.
Steering Committee	A committee of 5 people supervising and governing the programme. The committee approves the final list of proposals recommended for funding. It has the responsibility for reviewing the secondments by assessing the readiness of any industry/academic partnership specifically articulated in the proposal, and be part of the Interview Panel. The committee is also authorised to suspend or terminate a fellowship due to the unsatisfactory performance of the fellow and they provide feedback and propose adjustments to the running projects as well as the Programme in general.
Supervisor	The person employed by the host organisation as being responsible for supporting and mentoring the fellow, typically head of the research group to which the fellows will be affiliated.
Co-supervisor	The person employed by the secondment organization as being responsible for supporting and mentoring the fellow.
Time of recruitment	The period of time between when the fellow is notified of being selected to the time the fellow signs the contract with the corresponding host organization.

2. Introduction to the Coordinator of MERIT

The Coordinator of MERIT, the Central Bohemian Innovation Center (hereinafter SIC by its acronym in Czech: *Středočeské inovační centrum*) is an open and customer-oriented innovation agency that supports entrepreneurs in fulfilling their ambitions and expanding their companies. It develops the innovation ecosystem of the region and it is entrusted with the implementation of the Regional Innovation Strategy of the Central Bohemia Region (RIS3). SIC's mission is to help connect research institutions and ideas with businesses in order to bring state-of-the-art innovations and solutions to local and global challenges.

Through its interventions SIC aims at strengthening competitiveness and developing the knowledge economy in Central Bohemia Region. It focuses on supporting research, development and innovation; strengthening partnerships between industry and academia in order to bring cutting-edge innovations and solutions to challenges in society, and supporting the growth and development of innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular.

3. Description of the Fellowships

SIC was awarded by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) – COFUND to co-fund a postdoctoral fellowship programme based on the principles of international mobility, intersectorality, interdisciplinarity, and intersectionality/diversity.

The aim of the fellowships is to cultivate talent, helping the researchers to reach maturity and preparing the next scientific leaders to tackle global challenges imperative at regional, national and international level. In particular, MERIT fellowship will support researchers to:

- explore technologies with the biggest potential for the future,
- become more competitive and independent in future career steps, for example, create their own research groups, become research group leaders and apply for national/European or international grants,
- increase their attractiveness to international progressive industries and regional, national and international level,
- adopt an 'entrepreneurial' mindset and get a set of skills to create their own companies, and,
- enhance networking, communication and interpersonal capacities with scientific peers, as well as the general public and the private sector.

MERIT fellowships have a duration of minimum 24 months to a maximum of 30 months. In case of fellowships shorter than 30 months, unused fellow months will be offered to the rest of the fellows. Researchers awarded with a fellowship will be recruited by corresponding participating Host Organisation (HO) with a mandatory secondment of between 2 and 9 months. The total length of the secondment depends on the total duration of the fellowship, in any case it will be up to 30% of the project duration. The secondment can be carried out in one or more institutions in

a single period or divided into shorter periods. The secondments will be planned and implemented with a view towards the fellows' personal situation, e.g., considering family obligations with the possibility of splitting the secondments.

MERIT programme offers 30 fellowships in two calls. In this first call, approximately 15 fellowships will be awarded to successful candidates following a two-phase evaluation and selection process (written and oral interview), distributed among open research groups offering fellowships (see Annex 1 of the Guide for Applicants).

The HO will start the recruitment process once the selection is finished and approved by the Steering Committee and it will conclude with a signed contract between the HO and the fellow. The fellows will be employed under the relevant labour law with full social security and health security coverage. The preferable period for relocation will be the following four months after the selection process is completed, and no later than ten months after accepting the fellowship.

4. Fellows

Fellows will be selected through an international, open, merit-based, transparent, unbiased and equal opportunity process based on peer-review.

Eligibility conditions

All applicants must fulfil the following conditions:

- **Applicants must be in possession of a doctoral degree** at the date of MERIT's call deadline. There is no age limit. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as postdoctoral researchers and will be considered eligible to apply.
- A **mobility rule** will be applied to all categories of researchers. Fellows must relocate to the Czech Republic. **Researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the Czech Republic for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline.**

Categories of researchers:

- *Standard.* Researchers moving within Europe or coming in from other parts of the world.
- *Researchers at risk.* Researchers with the status of refugees or researchers at all stages of their careers who are experiencing threats to their life, liberty or research career, and those who are forced to flee or have been displaced because of such threats.
- *Career Restart.* Researchers who wish to restart their research after a career break (e.g., after parental leave, working outside research, etc.). The researchers must not

have been active in research for a continuous period of at least 12 months within the 18 months immediately prior to the deadline for submission of proposals.

- *Integration.* Czech nationals or long-term residents who wish to return and reintegrate in a longer-term research position in the Czech Republic.

Permanent employees (researchers or research staff having a contract for an indefinite period) from the participating HOs cannot apply for a MERIT fellowship in this HO.

For all fellowships, arrangements with respect to immigration and the entitlement to work in the Czech Republic will be a matter between the fellow and the HO.

SIC reserves the right to request documentary evidence as part of the eligibility check after the call deadline.

Where information provided by the applicants is found to be incorrect or cannot be verified, the Steering Committee reserves the right to withdraw the award.

In the case of unforeseen circumstances out of the control of the fellow unused fellow months will be offered to the rest of the fellows.

Fellowships are held subject to these terms and conditions. If any of these are breached by a fellow, the Steering Committee may suspend or terminate the fellowship.

5. Financial aspects of the fellowships

All work contracts will be concluded in English. The funding to fellows will be paid on a monthly basis. The HO will coordinate the payment of the award to the fellow.

- **Fellow allowance:** €3,980 euros per month. It covers the salary, social security, contributions, taxes and other costs included in the remuneration. This amount will be taxable according to the Czech national laws and regulations.
- **Mobility allowance:** €350 per month. It is provided to compensate for the cost of the required personal and household relocation of the fellow and his/her dependents. This amount will be taxable according to the Czech national laws and regulations.
- **Family allowance:** Up to €500 per month. This will be paid if the researcher has family obligations and will have two categories €250 for researchers with family obligations not including children; and €500 for researchers with family obligations including children. These amounts will be taxable according to the Czech national laws and regulations.

In terms of gross salary, the minimum gross salary (not including employer's social contributions) offered to the postdoctoral researchers is approximately:

- €3,188 per month for researchers without family obligations
- €3,372 per month for researchers with family obligations not including children (if the family is located in the Region)

- €3,556 per month for researchers with family obligation including children (if the family is located in the Region)

In addition to this gross salary, the researchers are entitled to travel and research cost of €700 per month based on reimbursement of expenses.

- **Travel costs:** €300 per month. It covers travel expenses for training/events, workshops, conferences, etc. This amount will not be taxable and will be based on reimbursement of expenses.
- **Research costs:** €400 per month. It covers research-related costs and materials and small equipment purchases. Based on reimbursement of expenses.
- Cost of the training in transferable and research skills is the cost spent by the Host Organisations and SIC for the training in research and transferable skills and coaching/mentoring.

Additionally, there will be a special extra one-time contribution of approximately €3,125 provided by the Central Bohemia region, in addition to the research and travel costs mentioned above. This contribution can be utilised for either research or travel costs, depending on researchers' specific needs.

SIC will apply for Special Needs Allowance in case of researchers with disabilities selected within MERIT.

The fellows will be recruited by the HO under the relevant employment law with full social security and health security coverage. In the Czech Republic, the employment contracts imply sickness, parental and unemployment benefits.

6. Conditions of the fellowship

Fellowships may not be held at any organisation other than the HO part of the MERIT consortium, except for the secondments.

The fellow shall have regular and sufficiently frequent contact with his/her supervisor and secondment supervisor (at least once a month).

Fellows must be fully devoted to the research and training activities of their fellowship. However, supplementary activities¹ are possible on the condition that they do not jeopardize the implementation of the project and are planned in advance in the plan of project activities. For instance, teaching is an essential means for the dissemination of knowledge and is considered a suitable activity. Hence, teaching activities in some of the Secondment Organisations (high schools and academic sector from the MERIT consortium or another secured by the fellow in the

¹ Refer to activities not funded by the fellowship, but that can be related to the research project.

academic sector) are applicable cases. Nevertheless, these activities shall be without additional remuneration.

Should the fellow intend to apply for further funding to another source they will notify their supervisor and the Steering Committee.

Tax issues which may arise from such awards are matter for the fellow and not the HO or the Steering Committee.

Other obligations

The fellow must:

- The successful applicants must inform SIC about the acceptance (or not) of the fellowship as soon as possible, and no later than **one month** after the results are communicated to the selected candidates. Otherwise, the fellowship offer might be withdrawn.
- The preferable period for relocation will be the following four months after the selection process is completed, and no later than ten months after accepting the fellowship.
- Sign within the first 20 days of the start of the fellowship a Researcher Declaration that will be provided and collected by SIC.
- Familiarise themselves with and respect the [European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#).
- Inform the HO immediately about any events or circumstances that could affect the implementation of the fellowship.
- Maintain confidentiality in connection with data, information or materials that were marked as confidential during the implementation of the fellowship.

7. Training and Career Development Plan

The fellow, the supervisor, and the secondment supervisor are required to create a Career Development Plan as a method for developing a comprehensive work plan for the duration of the fellowship and with a vision to developing a dynamic career beyond the fellowship period.

A record must be kept of training (compulsory activities too) and career development activities completed by the fellow and these must be reported in progress reports submitted to the Steering Committee every six months.

In addition to the career development in research and transferable skills (see point 2.1 in the Guide for Applicants), fellows will also benefit from individual coaching in three potential key areas of development:

1. **Life coaching for researchers** designed to support researchers to achieve their personal potential, sustainable careers, also in light of work-life balance, especially to balance mental health and overcome academic challenges, focused on time and stress management.

2. **Leadership/career mentoring/coaching** for those who want to focus on leadership skills and/or become principal investigators.
3. **Business mentoring/coaching** for those who want to create their own business or commercialise their research results.

Coaching will be provided by experienced counsellors, mentors, coaches and experts coming from industry who have already worked closely with SIC through other existing programmes. SIC will carefully choose the appropriate coaches for the fellows based on personal meetings with the fellows and after identifying their specific needs.

8. Knowledge transfer

The Central Bohemian Innovation Center (SIC) encourages the commercialisation of research results. SIC does not make any claim to intellectual property (IP) arising from the fellowships. The fellows are the authors of any IP derived from the fellowships; however, the HO is the owner of the IP.

The HO is the owner of the rights to the results of intellectual activity existing prior to the commencement of the fellowship (background IPR). The HO shall provide the fellow with Open Access to the background IPR for the purpose of the fellow's research, on a royalty free basis and for the duration of the project. The provision of access to background IPR does not affect the ownership of the background IPR, which remains the property of the HO. The rules and procedures of IP matters between fellows and HOs will be set in the work contract in accordance with the applicable national guidelines. Applications for protection of results derived from the fellowship including patents must include acknowledgment of funding from the European Commission and the Central Bohemia Region.

9. Dissemination, exploitation and communication of results and Open Access Policy

Unless it goes against the legitimate interests of the fellow and the HO, the fellow must disseminate results of their research by disclosing them to the public by appropriate means, including in scientific publications.

A Dissemination and Communication Plan must be part of the fellow's research proposal. The fellow will be required to report its implementation as part of their progress reports.

All publicity, including public lectures, interviews, email signatures, letterheads, office signs, publications, monographs, print materials, online materials, press releases, television and radio advertisements, websites, film, video and audio recordings associated with or arising from the research undertaken by the fellow while in receipt of a MERIT fellowship must contain acknowledgement of funding received from the European Commission and the Central Bohemia Region, and display the EU logo and the Central Bohemia Region logo.

The fellows are also required to notify SIC in advance of their participation in any significant events, including receipt of an award or medal, public dissemination of the fellow's research, or media coverage of the same.

Open Access

The fellows must ensure open access (free of charge online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results in line with Horizon Europe rules.

Immediate open access to scientific publications must be provided to a general repository or a trusted discipline-specific repository. Special attention will be paid to the copyright conditions set by the journals to ensure that the articles are published under open licence, such as Creative Commons Attribution licence international version 4 (CC-BY 4.0) or a similar license, in order to allow commercial use of the results.

Moreover, the metadata of the deposited publication must be open under Creative Commons 0 (CC0) license, or equivalent, at the latest upon publication, in line with the FAIR principles ('Findability', 'Accessibility', 'Interoperability' and 'Reusability') and provide information about the licensing terms. Digital research data generated during the fellowship must be managed in line with the FAIR principles. In this perspective, Horizon Europe requires that a Data Management Plan (DMP) is established and regularly updated duration by all projects generating, re-using or processing data.

Open access to research data (generated and/or re-used) is required as the default under the principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'. As an exception, fellows may or must keep certain data closed for justified reasons. In this case, the fellows must explain in the project's DMP the exceptions.

Dissemination and exploitation activities, including communication activities

All fellows are expected to disseminate their research results in at least 1-2 scientific high-level publications during the whole period of the fellowship (depending on the field and duration of the fellowship) and in at least 2 professional events per year.

Fellows will take part in at least 2 communication activities/events per year in order to communicate their research projects to the general public.

Up to four years after the end of the MERIT Programme, the HOs that recruited fellows and the fellows themselves will use their best efforts to exploit the results generated within MERIT directly or to have them exploited indirectly by another entity, in particular through transfers or licensing. If, despite their best efforts, the results are not exploited within one year after the end of the MERIT Programme, they must use the Horizon Results Platform to find interested parties to exploit the results.

Procedures for dissemination and exploitation towards different target audiences

Target Group	Measures
Research community	Regional, national, international conferences related to relevant research disciplines.
	Research articles and publications, Open Research Data (Open Access).
	Dissemination during international or interdisciplinary secondments (14 Associated partners from academia, mostly located in countries other than the Czech Republic).
	Market validation, product or service commercialisation licensing & patenting.
	Funding through regional or national (Technology Agency of the Czech Republic) schemes.
Industries, commercial actors	Speed dating events, hackathons with the participation of companies, organised by SIC.
	Business breakfasts, round tables, trade fairs and industry days organised by partners.
	Secondments in the industry.
Policy makers, including the Region and municipalities	Presentations of research results to regional authorities and municipalities facilitated by SIC.
	Presentations of research results to Local Action Groups and NGOs facilitated by SIC.
All target groups	MERIT Innovation Days (2 days of series of intersectoral/ interdisciplinary/ international meetings, seminars, conferences, thematic innovation platforms for different target audiences) organised by SIC.

Procedures of communication activities towards different target audiences

Target group	Measures
General public including families with children, seniors	European Researchers' Night, National Researchers' Night, Czech science festivals Week of Science and Technology, the largest annual events in innovation: The Innovation week and Future port Prague.
	Open days, Open Doors, excursions and guided tours, public visit of the fellow's host institution, other societal engagement, communication and science popularisation for the general public, schools and families such as Science Coffee.
	Press releases, articles on the websites of SIC, the partners, the Czech Academy of Sciences, the MERIT website and existing general public communication platforms. Social media posts on FB, LinkedIn, YouTube.
	Multimedia outputs - videos, podcasts, interviews related to fellows' projects and life in the Czech Republic distributed through social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube).
Schools, students	Secondments in high schools (2 Associated partners are local high schools).
	Excursions and guided tours, student visit to the research organisations e.g., LASER DAYS for schools organised by HiLASE and ELI Beamlines.
	Competitions for students organised by some Implementing partners (e.g., ELI Beamlines Talent Academy or Science Trek of the Institute of Botany).
	Scientists go to schools (current events within several Implementing partners).

Women/ female students	Engagement of partners and fellows in the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11 February (promoted in the Czech Republic by the Academy of Sciences).
	Visits in schools - female fellows' testimonies for Czech female students to encourage them in their scientific career path and for other female researchers to encourage them to apply for prestigious grants.
	Promotion of grants and conferences focused on women scientists such as L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Programme.
All target groups	Citizen Science practices.

10. Research ethics and gender dimension

SIC is not in a position to award funding for research activity under any of the following prohibited areas: human cloning for reproductive purposes; genetic modification of human beings that could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be funded); and creation of 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 applicants are required to consider carefully the ethical implications of their research proposals. Therefore, an Ethics Issues Table must be completed. If the proposal raises one or more of the issues listed in the ethics issues table, the applicant must also complete an ethics self-assessment.

If the ethics self-assessment is applicable, the applicant must write an overview of local/national licenses/approvals for the proposed research necessary. A list of the relevant local, national and international standards and regulations must be described along with the respective approvals/guideline, as well as how the approvals from the relevant authorities will be delivered for ethical clearance once the project will have been accepted for funding.

All successful proposals (ranked list and reserve list) will be subject to an Ethics screening. Ethics experts will determine whether there are any relevant ethical aspects of the projects selected for funding that have not been adequately addressed. The Ethics experts can issue a binding report with the changes to be made to the ethical aspects described in the projects of which the selected fellow will be notified. The fellow will have a maximum period of a month from the date of notification to make these changes and present them to the Ethics experts.

For those research proposals involving the use of Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs) or human embryos (hE) will automatically proceed to the Research Executive Agency (REA) of the European Commission for an Ethics Review. Such research may not start without approval of the European ethics review and of the MERIT Programme Ethics Committee completed by the communication of the explicit approval in writing from REA to the fellow. If the fellow branches any of its obligations regarding selected research proposals involving the use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) or human embryos (hE), the grant may be reduced or terminated.

Before the beginning of any fellowship that has raised an ethical issue, the fellow must have obtained all approvals for implementing the task/s from any (national or local) ethics committee or other bodies such as data protection authorities.

Gender dimension

Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation is an added value in terms of excellence, creativity, and business opportunities. The fellows are encouraged to use the [Toolkit Gender in EU-funded research](#), which aims to give the research community practical tools to integrate gender aspects into their research at all stages (ideas and hypothesis, project design and methodology, research implementation, data analysis, and dissemination of research result).

11. Research integrity

The HOs ensure that there are formal, fair and effective processes in place for the investigation of allegations of research misconduct (for example, plagiarism, falsification or fabrication of data, improper data selection, misuse of research funds) when they arise. These processes, together with the agreed procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct, must be transparent and clearly communicated to the fellow.

The HO will report to SIC all findings of any proven case of research misconduct arising from a funded research project.

On the other hand, HOs have the responsibility to provide an environment free from any form of harassment, victimisation, or bullying. HOs have the responsibility to deal with any complaints or issues speedily.

SIC also nominated an Ombudsperson for the MERIT Programme who will individually address any issues raised by fellows that haven't been resolved by their employer, the Host Organisation, or after having contacted the Management Board. These issues can be connected to work conditions not met or equal opportunities not met. The contact details of the Ombudsperson are available on the MERIT website.

Overall, all HOs and SIC staff are entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. SIC reserves the right to report any abusive or inappropriate behaviour to the relevant personnel in the HO connected with the fellow.

12. Review of progress

The fellows together with the supervisors will be required to submit a progress report every 6 months. Such a report will combine the progress and the final results of the reviewed Career Development Plan (including the Dissemination and Communication Plan) and the corresponding Data Management Plan, if applicable. Such reports are a condition of the continuation of funding.

The format of the report will be provided by SIC.

The Steering Committee will evaluate the progress reports to date in accordance with the deliverables outlined in the original proposal (including the research plan, proposed outputs, and the career development and training plan).

The Steering Committee will provide feedback to the fellow indicating either the report is satisfactory in all respects and continuation of fellowship is confirmed; or the report is deficient in some areas and specific actions are indicated within a defined time period. If the report continues indicating evidence of unsatisfactory progress the fellowship may be suspended or terminated.

It is the responsibility of the fellow to inform the MERIT Management Board of any change of address, telephone, or email within two weeks of such a change. For ease of contact, fellows are requested to use a single email address for all correspondence from application to award and for the duration of the fellowship.

Fellows are required to provide follow-up contact details for the purpose of researcher career tracking in their final report or as otherwise requested by SIC and for the Research Executive Agency's purposes (REA). SIC will carry out a survey of those who have received and completed fellowships two years later, and the fellow shall agree to cooperate in responding. Where a fellow's contact details change post-completion of their award, the fellow is asked to provide updated details to SIC.

13. Deferral, suspension and termination

Fellowships may not be deferred or suspended other than for eligible career breaks. Eligible career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, prolonged sick leave and career's leave. Provision of documented evidence of an eligible career break will be required if a deferral or suspension is to be granted. The decision is at the discretion of the Steering Committee whose decision on the matter will be final.

Where there is an agreed suspension of the fellowship, the fellowship will be suspended for the relevant period of time and a new award end date will be calculated. The expected restart date must be informed to SIC in writing at least four weeks in advance.

Should a fellow be unable for any reason (including medical reasons) to pursue their fellowship in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and with the approved fellowship application, the fellow and supervisor must, as soon as possible, inform SIC and the Project Office (or equivalent) in the HO. Where an early termination is to occur before or during the fellow's mandatory secondment, the fellow must also communicate with their secondment supervisor. The fellow must do this no later than two weeks of such a situation coming to their attention. Given the basis on which fellowships are awarded, the Steering Committee reserves the right to withdraw the fellowship.

If a breach of work contract should happen from the side of the fellow, the HO has the right to terminate the labour relationship with the fellow and inform the MERIT Management Board.

14. Responsibilities of Host Organisations (HOs)

The HO will appoint the primary supervisor to the selected fellow, who together with the fellow will be required to submit a progress report every 6 months to the Steering Committee.

The HO shall assist the fellow in the administrative procedures related to their recruitment.

The HO will conclude a work contract with the fellow for the entire duration of the fellowship, including the period of the secondment. The work contracts will contain information determining the conditions for implementing the fellowship in accordance with the Czech Labor Code. The contract will include information about the employer's duties, employee's duties, the amount and the method of payment of salary (and taxes applicable), and further allowances, intellectual property rights, open access, and other provisions.

15. Data protection

SIC will follow good practice on management, security and data protection of all fellows' information.

16. Conflict of interests

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties between his/her private interests and official responsibilities. Competing interests can make it difficult to fulfil one's duties impartially. The conflict can be real, apparent, or potential. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical or improper act actually results from it.

A disqualifying conflict of interest exists for the applicant if:

- The future supervisor or co-supervisor was involved in the development of the content of the research proposals (an acceptable involvement will be only for the framing of the research topic and confirming the applicability/feasibility of the project within the research group).
- The applicant has close family relationship with the future supervisor or co-supervisor.

Where the applicant fails to disclose a conflict of interests which will become apparent after the application deadline, the Steering Committee reserves the right to deem the application ineligible and withdraw the award.