

## Human Technopole Early Career Fellowship Programme

Human Technopole (HT)'s overarching mission is to promote and contribute to improving human health and wellbeing, including healthy ageing. It pursues these aims by carrying out frontier research (mix of fundamental and translational) in the life sciences, particularly focussing on developing novel approaches for personalised and preventive medicine. The HT operating model represents a combination of creating an internationally competitive research institute and being a contributor to the Italian research community by broad academic and translational collaboration.

### Aim of funding scheme

The purpose of the Early Career Fellowship (ECF) Programme is to help talented researchers start their own independent research at Italian universities or research institutes.

With this programme, HT together with the patronage of the Ministry of University and Research aims to foster the development of young, independent, talented early-career scientists who have achieved significant results and recognition and who wish to carry out their research activity at an Italian institution (research centre or university) in the field of life sciences, contributing to the advancement of fundamental knowledge. At the same time, the ECF Programme will facilitate collaborative relationships between HT and the Italian research system.

### Guidelines

The research activity proposed in the application should be in line with HT's overall research programme and, in particular, consistent with the activities of one of the [five HT Research Centres](#) in the areas of: Genomics, Neurogenomics, Computational Biology, Structural Biology, and Analysis, Decision and Society. The ECF researchers will have access to HT's research infrastructure at the same costs as internal researchers and will be expected to participate in internal meetings and/or events with HT Research Group Leaders.

Applications for the HT-ECF Programme must be submitted by an individual researcher (PI - Principal Investigator) together with a Letter of Intent from an Italian host institution (HI - Host Institution). The HI must undertake to provide the researcher with all the necessary facilities, equipment, and infrastructure to carry out the HT-ECF research proposed in the application, while ensuring agile and autonomous access to the awarded funds by the PI.

Prior to the start of the PI at the Host Institution, an agreement between HT and HI will be signed, with the specific purpose of ensuring and guaranteeing the independence of the PI. PIs are entitled to change HI during the period of the ECF Programme, giving an adequate notice period to the original HI; in such a case an agreement between the old and the new HI will need to be put in place.

PIs are expected to submit an annual report commenting on scientific achievements, usage of resources and impact of the ECF Programme on their career development.

### Funding

Early Career Fellows will receive a total "research and remuneration package" of 200,000.00 euros per year for a period of five years. The award of up to five ECF grants is envisioned for the current call. The initial ECF package is intended to cover the salary of the PI, as well as junior researchers and/or other research related costs including publication, travel and workshop costs. The PI's employment contract will be concluded directly by HT and/or by the HI. The research funds will be managed by the Host Institution and dedicated

exclusively to junior staff and/or research costs of the PI. The funds may also cover specialised equipment not normally available at the HI. In this case, with the consent of the PI, the equipment may remain in the possession of the HI at the end of the five-year research programme.

A candidate who receives the ECF award may not hold it concurrently with another grant designed to assist in establishing the scientist at a host institution in Italy and to pursue the same line of research. Exceptions to this will be made only under exceptional circumstances, which must be communicated promptly to HT for consideration. Co-funding from the host institution, on the other hand, would be positively considered.

### Requirements and eligibility criteria

The Human Technopole Early Career Fellowship Programme (HT-ECF) is aimed at researchers of all nationalities who have completed a PhD. Candidates must:

1. **not have more than 8 years** of experience from the date of receipt of the doctoral degree. The calculation of this period is made by comparing the date the degree was awarded to the ECF application deadline (i.e. January 31, 2021). This limit may be extended in the case of maternity or paternity leave, serious and documented illness and for national service (military or civil) for a period corresponding to the leave granted by the research organisation for the reasons mentioned above (in these cases, appropriate documentation must be provided);
2. demonstrate significant **mobility** and independence between current and future host institution, i.e. must have carried out their latest research activities independently of their PhD supervisor and, in any case, at a different institution than that attended during the doctorate. The Host Institution of the ECF must be different from the institution where the applicant is currently working;
3. have identified a **Host Institution in Italy** willing to provide the necessary facilities, equipment, and infrastructure to carry out the research proposed in the ECF application. The Host Institution demonstrates its commitment to act as a host by signing the Letter of Intent (see below “Structure of the application”);
4. develop a research plan that is in line with one of the [focus areas of HT](#), i.e. Genomics, Neurogenomics, Computational Biology, Structural Biology, and Analysis, Decisions and Society.
5. be willing to **start within 2021** in agreement with the Host Institution and HT. Earliest expected starting date is July 2021.

### Structure of the application

**All documents must be submitted in English and in pdf format. Please include your name in the title of each pdf document (e.g. MillerL CV.pdf, MillerL Publications.pdf, etc.) and the document title in the header of each separate document.**

Applications must include:

1. CV of the candidate, up to 2 pages ([please download and fill in the template provided below](#));
2. list of scientific publications of the applicant with specific indication of those produced independently of the PhD supervisor;
3. scientific research proposal – (please see below for a detailed description of the structure);
4. the corresponding financial plan of the research proposal, broken down by year with an indication of costs for staff, equipment, travel, supplies, meeting expenses and overheads, if relevant ([please download and fill in the template provided below](#));

5. two letters of reference: These letters should be on institute letterhead, signed and scanned and contain the name of the applicant and referee in the file title (e.g. MillerL\_from\_SmithC.pdf). They must be sent directly from the referee via e-mail to [earlycareerfellows@fht.org](mailto:earlycareerfellows@fht.org) only (without cc to the candidate) by the submission deadline (i.e. January 31, 2021). It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that both letters are received on time. Applications lacking reference letters shall not be considered;
6. a Letter of Intent (LoI) signed by the legal representative – or their delegate (e.g. Head of Department) – of the Host Institution confirming the full support and encouragement of the institution towards the independent scientific research of the candidate and indicating the willingness to provide space and facilities for the implementation of the project, as well as agile modalities and procedures for access to the dedicated funding transferred by HT and exclusively dedicated to the PI's research project – ([a list of all aspects to be included in the LoI can be downloaded below](#));
7. if applicable, certification by a previous host institution/employer of the period of maternity or paternity leave granted, serious and documented sick leave or national service (military or civil).

**The scientific project proposal** must be sufficiently detailed to enable its evaluation by a panel of experts in the relevant field. The proposal should be in line with HT's scientific programme and should specifically indicate which of HT's Research Centres it is aligned with. The proposal, not exceeding ten pages in length (1.15 spacing; minimum font size 11) excluding bibliography, should allow for the evaluation of the quality of the candidate as well as of the originality and feasibility of the proposed research.

It must include the following sections:

- a. introduction, with a description of the preliminary work and background information;
- b. objectives to be achieved during the five years of the programme, including a description of the novel contribution of the proposed research to the relevant scientific area, highlighting its innovativeness and originality within the international scientific landscape;
- c. methods to be used and experimental programme;
- d. description of the reasons why the particular Host Institution has been selected and justification of its suitability to support the proposed research programme;
- e. bibliography (not included in the ten-page count).

### **How to apply**

Please apply online by uploading all required documents apart from the reference letters in English by **January 31, 2021, 23:59 CET**. Please make sure that you inform your referees to send their confidential recommendation letters to [earlycareerfellows@fht.org](mailto:earlycareerfellows@fht.org) by the above-mentioned deadline. Questions concerning the scope of the call should be sent to [earlycareerfellows@fht.org](mailto:earlycareerfellows@fht.org).

**Appendix 1 - CV of applicant**

*Please fill in the following template and do not exceed 2 pages in length*

[NAME, SURNAME OF APPLICANT]

**Personal information**

Phone number	
Email	
Current Affiliation	
Host Institution for ECF proposal	

**Research interests**

*(please up to max 3 keywords to describe your main research interests)*

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**Education**

*(please list all relevant academic degrees in reverse chronological order. An example is provided below)*

Date	Degree and University
	PhD in --- University of --- Grade: Thesis title: Name of advisor:

**Research Experience**

*(please list all relevant research experience in reverse chronological order. An example is provided below)*

Date	Project Information
	Postdoctoral researcher at (Affiliation): Research field: Name of advisor:

### Scholarships, Funding Acquisition, and other Awards

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### Invited Contributions to Scientific Meetings

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### Other Information

## Appendix 2 - Letter of Intent from Host Institution

The Letter of Intent (LoI) should confirm the Host Institution (HI)'s full support and encouragement of independent scientific research in general, and of the applicant in particular, and should express the HI's commitment to the applicant's future career development.

The Letter of Intent should be submitted in the form of a signed copy on the institute letterhead, and the surname of the applicant and name of the Host Institution should be included in the file title. The applicant is responsible for receiving and submitting the LoI via the recruitment portal by January 31, 2021. It is paramount that the applicant and Department Head are in complete agreement regarding all aspects of the position before submitting the application. Similarly, the applicant should be fully familiar and in agreement with the contents of the Letter, which should include the following information at minimum:

1. An indication of why the Host Institution/Department Head wishes to have the applicant work in their institute or department.
2. A description of how the applicant's research, while remaining completely independent, complements other work carried out at the Host Institution.
3. A description of how the Host Institution will ensure and promote the applicant's scientific independence, as well as of the mentoring programme available to the applicant at the Institute.
4. An explicit statement that the Host Institution will do its best to support and foster the applicant's career progression, and an indication of whether the applicant would be eligible for academic positions at the Host Institution.
5. A clear statement that the Host Institution is accepting an engagement of the applicant within its organisation, through a secondment contract or other alternative possible forms (such as a direct employment contract) and offers all of the facilities, equipment and infrastructure required to enable the applicant to carry out their research project, as well as a description of these, including both shared and dedicated lab space (sqm, bench space, number of cages for animal work, etc.), administrative/research support available, etc.
6. A statement that the Department is willing to take on the administrative responsibilities involved in accepting the grant. If any administrative costs are associated with the implementation of the applicant's research programme in the Host Institution/Department (i.e. overhead), it should be clearly stated, along with the relevant percentage they amount to. This should in any case not exceed 10% of the funds awarded as part of the ECF grant and dedicated to consumables and/or equipment.
7. A statement that the Host Institution agrees to ensure that the applicant: 1) is provided with general health and safety measures and specific risk protection and prevention measures and 2) has adequate insurance coverage and appropriate training about the risks and all prevention measures.
8. A statement acknowledging that the applicant will list both the Host Institution and the HT/ECF author affiliation on the relevant scientific outputs (e.g. publications, conference proceedings, abstracts, etc.)
9. A clear statement that the applicant will be granted the possibility (also in terms of the relevant working time) to attend meetings, retreats and other events organised by Human Technopole, and that in general collaborative endeavours between the Host Institution and HT will be encouraged.
10. An indication of any potential additional support or benefits (if any) that will be provided to the applicant by the Host Institution/Department, in addition to his/her salary as set out in the relevant engagement contract.
11. A statement confirming that the Host Institute and the applicant are in complete agreement as to the terms under which the applicant would take up a position at the Host Institution, including

responsibilities, mentoring, and the possibilities of obtaining a permanent position, and the terms and timing to access the key facilities and equipment.

12. A statement confirming that the Host Institution will enter an agreement with HT in order to ensure and guarantee the independence of the PI and avoid, with all necessary precautions, that the HI may in any way influence the PI's judgement and decisions related to the performing of their research programme.
13. A statement acknowledging that the PI is entitled to change HI during the period of the ECF, without penalties or charges, giving an adequate notice period to the original HI, and the obligation to enter into an agreement with the new HI in such a case (see point 2 below).

### IMPORTANT CONDITIONS OF THE AWARD

1. Please note that HT considers the letter of intent a binding document and integral to the granting of the HT-ECF grant. Therefore:
  - The actual conditions offered to the candidate by the Host Institution should reflect the same (or greater) terms and conditions represented in the submitted Letter of Intent. Any difference between these and the Letter of Intent should be notified promptly to HT and could result in the original grant being forfeited and a new application having to be submitted for review.  
***ANY DIFFERENCE EMERGING AFTER THE HT-ECF GRANT IS RECEIVED, SHOULD BE PROMPTLY COMMUNICATED TO HT AND TO THE ECF RECIPIENT, PROVIDING JUSTIFICATIONS. LACKING THIS, HT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVOKE THE ECF FUNDING AND TO ENFORCE THE REIMBURSEMENT IN FULL OF THE FUNDS ALREADY RECEIVED FROM HT. THIS MAY BE INVOKED AT ANY TIME. BY SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION YOU ACCEPT THE CONDITIONS ABOVE.***
  - Any difference in the terms and conditions and/or delay in making the facilities and equipment available to the HT-ECF awardee may result in a delay in the transfer of the HT-ECF grant to the Host Institution. In that case, the Host Institution will be responsible for covering the research costs and salary of their lab members until the facilities are made available under the conditions specified in the Letter of Intent. Only then can the HT-ECF grant be disbursed.
2. Please note that the applicant is granted the right to change their Host Institution over the period of the ECF programme, giving an adequate prior notice; in such a case the grant shall be transferred by HT to the proposed new Host Institution upon the submission by said Institute of a Letter of Intent, as per the description/template above, reflecting similar (or improved) terms and conditions to those described in the original Letter of Intent submitted with the original ECF application.

**Appendix 3 – Financial Plan**

Name of applicant	
Project title	
Provisional preferred starting date (not before July 2021)	

Cost category	Short description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Personnel						
Own position <sup>1</sup>						
... <sup>2</sup>						
Direct costs						
Consumables						
Instrumentation						
Travel costs						
Publication costs						
Workshops						
...						
Overhead costs (if applicable) <sup>3</sup>						

<b>Annual total</b>		€	€	€	€	€
		-	-	-	-	-

<b>Total</b>	€
	-

<sup>1</sup> Please get in touch with [earlycareerfellows@fht.org](mailto:earlycareerfellows@fht.org) for the precise amount

<sup>2</sup> Personnel rates for junior members of the group shall be calculated according to the corresponding rates of the host institution

<sup>3</sup> Overhead costs may not exceed 10% of the funds awarded as part of the HT-ECF grant and dedicated to consumables and/or equipment.