

LAURIK

Launch Armenia Research Fellowship

Information for Applicants

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SCIENCE COMMITTEE (SC) OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

About

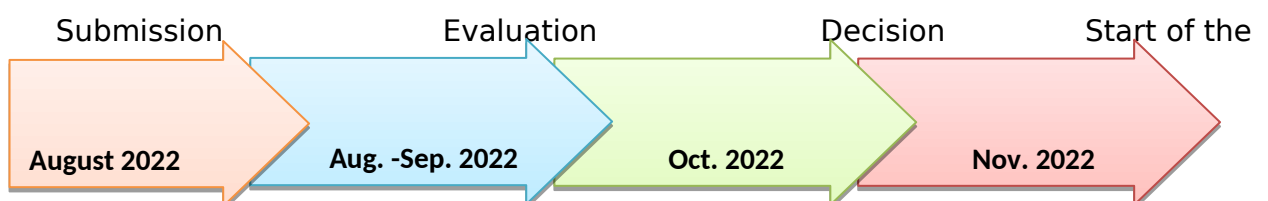
LAURIK fellowship is addressed to talented early-career scientists who hold a PhD degree and are ready to work independently and launch their own research program. A successful Principal Investigator (PI) must have already shown a promising scientific track record of achievements initiating an excellent research proposal. **LAURIK** fellowship aims to empower excellent individual researchers as leaders of research groups by providing autonomy and own budget to perform research programs within the simulating environment of research institutions of the Republic of Armenia.

Research fields

Applications can be made in any field of fundamental and applied research.

Within the *Zabel Yesayan* excellence program a fixed number of positions are especially designated for female scientists.

Timeline



Thematic areas

NS – Natural Sciences	ET – Engineering and Technology	SS – Social Sciences
Mathematics	Urban planning and architecture	Psychology
Computer sciences and informatics	Mechanics	Pedagogical sciences
Physics and astronomy	Electrical engineering and information technology	Economics and business
Chemistry	Mechanical engineering and machine building	Sociology
Earth and environmental sciences	Chemical technology	Law
Biological sciences	Material science	Political sciences
	Biotechnology	Socio-economic geography
	Medical devices	Mass media and communication
	Nanotechnology	
	Ecology	

MS – Medical Sciences	AS – Agricultural Sciences	AH – Armenology and Humanities
General medicine	Cattle breeding, veterinary medicine	History, Archaeology
Clinical medicine	Crop production	Linguistics, Literary studies
Medical biotechnology	Soil science, agro-chemistry, plant protection	Philosophy, ethics
	Agricultural biotechnology	Geology
		Arts

Eligibility

Eligible Principal Investigator

LAURIK fellowship are open to researchers of any nationality, who intend to conduct the research program in a research institution in the Republic of Armenia, and who meet the following admissibility and eligibility criteria:

- An applicant must be born on or after January 1st of 1972.
- An applicant should hold a PhD or equivalent doctoral degrees. The first PhD shall have been awarded ≤ 7 years prior to the call launch:

Cut-off dates: PhD awarded from January 1st of 2015 (inclusive)

- A competitive PI must have already demonstrated research independence with a promising track record of early achievements, appropriate to their research field, for example by having produced at least one publication in international peer-reviewed scientific journals of the respective field.
- An applicant must move from any country to Republic of Armenia for the duration of the grant and must not have resided, studied or been employed in Armenia for more than 12 months in the 4 years immediately before the date of call launch.

Eligible Host Institutions

LAURIK open-topic research fellowship program should be conducted at a state-funded research or educational institution in the Republic of Armenia.

- The host institution employs the PI at least for the entire duration of the **LAURIK** fellowship in accordance with a full-time contract for the implementation of the research tasks and the training activities.
- The host institution provides the researcher with full access to infrastructure, facilities of the institution.
- The host institution appoints an administrative contact person for the duration of the grant, who will help the PI with the relocation and with financial and administrative issues.

Eligible Consultants

- A **LAURIK** fellowship project must have a consultant, who can be an external researcher or a scientist who is already among the staff of the proposed host institution.
- An applicant is free to choose a consultant. It is the responsibility of each applicant to identify a suitable consultant.
- The consultant should have an adequate expertise in the field of the project.
- Consultants of the funded **LAURIK** fellows are obliged to conduct regular meetings with them, visit the project, critically review the progress and development of the project and individual goals of the fellow.
- An external consultant must visit the host institution in Armenia for at least 15 days for the entire duration of the **LAURIK** fellowship and must host the group members for at least 15 days for the entire duration of the **LAURIK** fellowship.

Eligible Research Groups

- **LAURIK** research program requires at least three team members for NS, ET, MS and AS thematic areas and at least two team members for SS and AH (including the PI).
- At least two of the group members (including the PI) must be born on or after January 1st of 1987, and be at least second year Bachelor students (the eligibility can be extended for certain properly documented circumstances such as for maternity and paternity leave or national service).
- The PIs are free to select the research group members. The research team may be of national or international character.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to identify suitable group members. The host institution provides support for recruitment and retention of group members. The SC is not in a position to recommend group members, however, the SC will support with advertising the vacancies for the team members on the job portals and within the research and educational institutions in Armenia.
- **LAURIK** research program requires a foreign collaborator.
 - A collaborator is a person with expertise and experience on the research topic of the project proposal employed by a foreign research institution.
 - A collaborator must have an H-index (Scopus) at least 10 for NS, ET, MS and AS thematic areas and at least 3 for SS and AH.

- A collaborator must visit the host institution in Armenia for at least 15 days for the entire duration of the **LAURIK** fellowship and must host the group members for at least 15 days for the entire duration of the **LAURIK** fellowship.
- The PI is given possibility to expand the research group by adding two new under 35 members after the initial period of 12 months subject to approval by the SC.

Submission restrictions

The following general restrictions for **LAURIK** fellowship apply:

- Researchers who were funded as **LAURIK** fellows in any of the previous calls may not apply.
- Researchers who applied as PI in any other proposal submitted to the SC may not apply.
- Group members (including the PI) may not be involved as group members in more than one **CARIN**, **LAURIK** or **ARPI** research programs or Starting, Consolidating or Advanced research grants by the SC.

Funding

LAURIK fellowship includes the remuneration of the PI, the allocation of eligible direct and indirect research costs.

In the proposal submission the budget should be prepared in the Armenian currency (AMD). The project costs are to be calculated based on the exchange rate of €1 = AMD500.

LAURIK fellowship can be up to a maximum of €289,800 (ca. AMD144,900,000) for a period of 5 years.

A single lump amount of €6,000 (ca. AMD3,000,000) can be requested in the proposal to cover the following eligible costs when these are necessary to carry out the proposed work:

- Start-up costs for PIs moving Armenia
- Purchase of major research equipment, which constitute host institution's fixed assets
- Access to large facilities

The budget is composed of the following elements:

- Remuneration of the PI with the monthly salary consisting of the following elements
 - Living allowance of €800 (ca. AMD400,000 gross)
 - Family allowance of up to €300 (ca. AMD150,000 gross), for researchers whose families (partners and dependent children) will stay in Armenia during the funding periodLiving allowance will be paid to all fellows. Family allowance will be paid only to eligible researchers.
- Direct research costs
 - Costs of personnel assigned to the project (PostDocs, PhD, Master and Bachelor students, technicians, up to 5 members including the PI), where the average monthly salary of personnel excluding the PI should not exceed €500 (ca. AMD250,000 gross)
 - Other research costs of up to €6,000 (ca. AMD3,000,000) in each year including

- Research supplies and consumables
- Costs of research equipment
- Travel and subsistence costs for group members
- Travel and subsistence costs for the external collaborator and the consultant
- Open Access publication and dissemination costs, monograph publication costs with prior approval from the SC.
- Additional funding up to €40,000 (ca. AMD20,000,000) can be requested in the **LAURIK** proposals, which include experimental investigations to cover the following eligible costs when these are necessary to carry out the proposed research:
 - Research equipment and supplies
 - Access to large facilities
- The external collaborator and the consultant are not considered as team members, and are not entitled to receive salary under **LAURIK** fellowship.
- After the initial period of 12 months the personnel costs are increased by €300 (ca. AMD150,000) per month in the case of every additional under 35 team member approved by the SC.
- Total indirect costs of up to €5,000 (ca. AMD2,500,000) for **LAURIK** fellowship to be used to provide the PI with a working space. Indirect costs are managed by the host institution.

The PI is given budgetary flexibility for proper management of the project. A reallocation requires an amendment to the grant agreement subject to approval by the SC before the date the modification should take place. Note, budgetary flexibility is not applicable to the PI's allowance and the indirect costs, which cannot be changed.

LAURIK fellowship may be temporarily suspended during PI's maternity, paternity, parental leave or long-term sickness.

Expected results and outcome

- Strengthen independence of talented researchers by establishing a research group to develop a success career in a host institution in Armenia.
- Peer-reviewed scientific publications with international outreach.
- Initiate national and international collaborations and partnerships.
- Increasing the potential of the PI and the host institution to succeed in applications for international and national funding.
- Training of young researchers and PhD students; Implementation of projects involving Master and Bachelor students; Organization and participation in summer schools and scientific conferences and workshop in Armenia; Create new learning opportunities at local universities.
- **Zabel Yesayan** excellence program is aimed to attract increasing numbers of women to a career in science and provide them with equal opportunities for all stages of their career.
- After the initial 35 months at least 3 scientific publications in peer-reviewed, international publishing venues (at least in Q3 quarter of "Scimago Journal & Country Ranking"¹) or at least 3

¹ <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>

book chapters in publications included in WOS Book citation Index for NS, ET, MS, AS and SS thematic areas and at least 2 scientific publications in peer-reviewed, international publishing venues indexed in SJR or 1 monograph indexed in WOS Book Citation Index for AH will be required.

- At the stage of final report at least 10 scientific publications in peer-reviewed, international publishing venues (from which at least 2 in Q1 and 2 in Q2 quarters of “Scimago Journal & Country Ranking”) for NS, ET, MS, AS and SS thematic areas and at least 6 scientific publications in peer-reviewed, international publishing venues or one monograph for AH will be required.
- Meeting the afore-mentioned conditions as well as the failure to do so will add/subtract 5 percentage points of final results of future project proposals of the PI or team members submitted to the SC.
- At least one submitted grant application to an international funding agency for at least €50,000 (ca. AMD25,000,000).
- During the implementation of the project, the team members ensure the outreach, public engagement, including creation and dissemination of popular science materials on the topic, promoting public awareness and understanding of science (public talks, publications in popular science journals, participating in science fairs, making science resources accessible to the general public).

Application Process

The application submission deadline for **LAURIK** fellowship is **August 5th 2022, at 18:00 Armenia time (UTC +4)**. Please keep in mind that it is not possible to make any changes in the proposal once it is submitted.

Proposals are submitted by the applicant via a web-based online proposal submission system at <http://irf-armenia.scs.am/>.

LAURIK proposal should include an abstract, a summary for the general public, full project descriptions outlining research methodology, PI's research track record including a copy of PhD diploma and requested budget. The language of the proposal is English. Supporting documents by the host institution, the foreign collaborator and the consultant must be provided.

The following elements need to be included in the fellowship application:

- Project title
- Abstract (up to 2000 symbols with spaces)
- PI's CV, including academic research track and publications
- A copy of PI's PhD Diploma
- Project description ([template](#))
- Budget ([template](#))
- Host institution capacity form (up to 2 pages) signed by an authorized representative of the host; the form should include host institution assessment on ambition, feasibility of the proposal, correspondence and suitability of the applicant and the host institution for the successful implementation of the research and career development goals.
- Project foreign collaborator's CV, including academic research track, list of publications, experience of supervising research

- Project foreign collaborator signed declaration, stating that he/she is familiar with the project description, and is aware of the scope of his / her functions as to the planned joint events (scientific experiments, discussions, seminars, etc.).
- Project consultant's CV, including academic research track, list of publications, experience of supervising research
- Project consultant signed declaration, stating that he / she has read the project description and agrees to consult the PI
- Abstract for general public (up to 2 pages including figures and references)

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria of the **LAURIK** fellowship are:

1. **Scientific quality of the project:** originality and innovative nature of the project; scientific impact; relationship to the state of the art of research in the field; scientific methods and techniques, research tools, equipment and devices to be used; expected results, potential for high quality research outputs; sufficiency of the infrastructure and budget.
2. **Qualification of the applicant:** the capacity to implement the project; scientific achievements of the applicant; important contributions to the field; research performance and research output including number of research publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals; research experience gained abroad including number and type of stays.
3. **Assessment of the host institution and impact of the project:** quality and suitability of institutional environment, equipment; mutual gain from transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise between the applicant and the host institution; the quality of mentor's supervision based on their research track record and previous supervision experience.

Evaluation

The SC makes every effort to guarantee the ethics and transparency of the criteria-based selection process of the best researchers and projects.

Initially, all applications are screened by the SC office in order to ensure that the eligibility requirements are met. After that the proposal evaluation is divided into two steps.

Step 1 - Remote Expert Evaluation

For the first step of the evaluation, the proposals are referred to at least two external reviewers, who may be members of the panel committee. The reviewers carry out their evaluation based on the complete data included in the proposal.

Step 2 - Panel Evaluation

After the external reviews are submitted, the panel committee discusses the individual reviews and conducts interviews with the applicants. The interview can be conducted online. The interview provides the input to further clarify the proposal and, in particular, to provide explanations to questions and criticisms submitted by the external reviewers. The panel committee evaluates the applications and provides a final evaluation and score for each application based on the opinions and scores of the

external reviewers, panel experts and interviews. Both scores of the external reviewers and the panel experts account for 50% of the final score.

Evaluation process

The panel committee compiles a single ranking list for all applications based on the final scores. The compliant applications will be granted in the order of ranking until depletion of the funds allocated for this call for applications.

In the final evaluation, the panel committee may prescribe certain conditions that the host institution and the applicant are required to fulfill upon receiving the grant.

The formal funding decisions or rejections are issued by the head of the SC. Each applicant receives the evaluation summary report that reflects the final score for the proposal. The comments and marks must give sufficient and clear reasons for the score and should the project be retained for contracting, if appropriate, recommendations for modifications.

Contracting of grants

Allocation of program

Based on the final proposal and evaluation received from the panel committee, the SC makes a granting or rejecting decision.

A decision on rejecting the application may be made in the following cases:

- Based on the results of the evaluation and the threshold score
- The proposal cannot be funded due the limited budget for the particular call
- If the certain conditions prescribed by the expert panel are not consented by the applicant or the host institution

Implementation of the **LAURIK** fellowship should commence within 6 months after the decision to grant the application.

For each funded proposal, a Tripartite Agreement between the SC, the host institution and the PI is concluded for the funding term. The Agreement is concluded for the initial period of 3 years, and can be extended by the SC on the basis of the triennial report.

The Agreement entails the rights and responsibilities of the parties within the scope of the **LAURIK** fellowship. The group members involved in the program enter into a Supplementary Agreement with the PI, that specifies the duties and obligations of members. The Agreement is concluded for the initial period of 3 years, and can be extended by the SC on the basis of the triennial report.

Reporting

The PI in cooperation with the host institution is required to submit a launch, intermediate and final reports to the SC.

- **Intermediate report** should be submitted within the 12th, 24th and 48th months of fellowship implementation and should include the following:
 - the results in accordance with the objectives of the program
 - a list of published articles as a result of implementation of the program
 - a list of conference, workshop, seminar presentations of the project results, teaching and public outreach activities
 - a report on the usage of funding

- **Triennial report** should be submitted upon 35 months of the project implementation and should include the following:
 - the results in accordance with the objectives of the program
 - a list of published articles as a result of implementation of the program
 - a list of conference, workshop, seminar presentations of the project results, teaching and public outreach activities
 - a report on the usage of funding
 - a report on the international recognition of the research group, impact on the research field
 - The extension of the project duration is possible based on the report and the Board decision.

- **Final report** should be submitted no later than 3 months after the end of the program and should include the following:
 - the results in accordance with the objectives of the program
 - a list of published articles as a result of implementation of the program
 - a list of conference, workshop, seminar presentations of the project results, teaching and public outreach activities
 - a report on the usage of funding
 - a report on the potential applicability of the results for Armenian research and economy
 - a report on the international recognition of the research group, impact on the research field and possible directions of future research

Research integrity

Cases of evident intentional false information, fraudulent activities and scientific misconduct such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or misrepresentation of data may result in the rejection of proposals and in a possible restriction on participation of the researcher to any of the programs funded by the SC.

Disclaimer

The English version of this call is intended for guidance and information purposes. It does not constitute a certified translation of the legal source. In case of any doubts as to the interpretation of the call's provisions, the Armenian version should prevail.

FAQ

1. When is it possible to apply for LAURIK fellowship?

Applications for **LAURIK** fellowship are only possible if they have been advertised.

2. On which target groups does LAURIK fellowship focus?

This program is particularly suitable for young applicants who have already completed an excellent PhD, who are at the beginning of an independent research carrier and who would like to now head a group to elaborate own research ideas in one of the research institutions in Armenia.

3. What resources are available for LAURIK fellows?

LAURIK fellowship offers competitive packages for personnel, start-up money, and yearly operating costs. The PI's salary is similar to that of junior professorships in Armenia. The PI is employed at one of the research or educational institutions in Armenia, where together with the research group they can make use of the infrastructure, resources and excellent research environment. Moreover, the PIs are bestowed a great deal of individual flexibility, and if necessary, can employ additional funds from other programs of the SC according to need and progress.

4. What are the career prospects afterwards?

The positions for **LAURIK** fellowship are limited in time. A permanent position at the host institution can be offered afterwards.

5. Is a participation in teaching activities expected?

A participation is not in the list of the formal requirements. However, a PI is free to get involved in the training of young scientists at a local university.

6. Is there any age limit?

Yes, **LAURIK** fellowship is aimed at talented young scientists. Applicants should be born on or after January 1st of 1972 and have completed their PhD on or after January 1st of 2002. Applicants should have completed their PhD no more than 7 years prior to the call launch.

7. How do family breaks affect the postdoctoral period?

The SC also expressly welcomes applications from young female scientists whose PhD was awarded more than 7 years ago due to family interruptions.

8. Is it possible to apply for a LAURIK fellowship with a host institution where the applicant is/was already employed?

Yes. However, an applicant must not have been employed in Armenia for more than 12 months in the last 4 years.

9. Which publication status must the submitted publications have reached?

In general only published papers or papers that are in press are counted. Papers that to date carry the status of submitted must be clearly marked as such and attached to the application.

10. Should the applicant contact the preferred host Institution prior to an official application?

Yes, in any case. In this way, common research areas of interest can be identified with the institute and it can be determined whether an institute is fundamentally interested and able to provide necessary premises and resources.

11. What is the composition of the expert panel?

Each panel consists of experts, leading scientists of the particular research field. These panels are responsible for the pre-selection of applicants as well as for the final recommendation based on the evaluations of the external experts.