

## Call Opening Notice

### Awarding of PhD Research Grants

Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (cE3c) calls for the award of 1 (one) research grant, hereinafter referred to as PhD Research Grant, in the area of Biological Sciences and related areas, under the FCT Research Grants Regulation (RBI) and the Statute Research Fellow (EBI)

The scholarships will be financed by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) under the Collaboration Protocol for Financing the Multiannual Plan for Research Scholarships for PhD Students, signed between FCT and the R&D Unit Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (cE3c), (UIDP/00329/2020 cE3c).

#### 1. APPLICATION PRESENTATION

The call is open between 14 May of 2021 and until 23h50 (Lisbon time) of 14 June of 2021.

Applications and supporting documents for the application provided for in this Call for Proposals must be submitted by email to [paulo.av.borges@uac.pt](mailto:paulo.av.borges@uac.pt) with knowledge to [silvia.f.martinho@uac.pt](mailto:silvia.f.martinho@uac.pt) with the subject Biology PhD Scholarship Contest (3CBIO).

The provision of false statements or the performance of plagiarism by the candidates is grounds for canceling the application without prejudice to the adoption of other measures of a sanctioning nature.

#### 2. TYPE AND DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS

Research grants for doctorates are intended to finance research activities, by the fellow, leading to obtain the academic degree of doctor at Portuguese Universities.

The research activities leading to the academic degree of doctor will take place at the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, which will be the host institution for the scholarship holders, without prejudice to the work that can be carried out in collaboration between more than one institution.

The research activities leading to obtaining the academic degree of doctor of the selected scholarship holders must be framed in the activity plan and strategy of the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, and must be developed under the PhD Program in Biology (3CBIO) of the Faculty of Sciences and Technology of the University of the Azores.

The work plan may take place entirely or partially in a national institution (scholarship in the country or mixed scholarship, respectively).

The duration of the scholarships is, as a rule, annual, renewable up to a maximum of four years (48 months), and a scholarship cannot be awarded for a period of less than 3 consecutive months.

In the case of a mixed grant, the period of the work plan that takes place in a foreign institution cannot exceed 24 months.

### 3. Recipient holders

The PhD Research Grants are intended for registered candidates or candidates who meet the necessary conditions to enroll in the PhD Program in Biology (3CBIO) of the Faculty of Sciences and Technology of the University of the Azores and who intend to develop research activities leading to obtain academic degree at the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes, or at host institutions associated with it.

### 4. ADMISSIBILITY

#### 4.1 Applicant's Admissibility Requirements

Can apply for this contest:

- National citizens or citizens of other member states of the European Union;
- Citizens of third States;
- Stateless persons;
- Citizens benefiting from political refugee status.

To apply for the PhD Research Grant, it is necessary to:

- Have a MSc. in the areas of Biological Sciences or in areas considered similar;
- Live in Portugal permanently and habitually, if the work plan associated with the scholarship is partially carried out by foreign institutions (mixed scholarships), a requirement applicable to both nationals and foreigners.
- Not having benefited from a PhD scholarship or PhD in companies directly funded by FCT, regardless of its duration.

#### 4.2 Admissibility Requirements

It is essential, under penalty of not being admitted to the Contest, to attach to the application the following documents:

- Elements of the identity card / citizen card / passport;
- *Curriculum vitae* of the candidate;
- Certificates of qualification of the academic degrees held, specifying the final classification and, if possible, the classifications obtained in all subjects taken, or, alternatively, the candidate's declaration of honor on how he / she completed the bachelor's or master's degree until the end of the application period;
- Registration of recognition of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions and registration of the conversion of the respective final classification to the Portuguese

classification scale;

- Letter of motivation with indication of the scholarship to which the candidate is applying;
- Letters of Recommendation (at least one) with the contacts of those who recommend;
- If the candidate has publications, send the PDFs of them.

The application and all documents associated with it, including letters of motivation and recommendation, must be written in Portuguese or in English. Regarding the above mentioned admissibility requirements, the following should be noted:

- In the case of academic degrees awarded by foreign higher education institutions, and in order to guarantee the application of the principle of equal treatment to candidates who hold foreign and national academic degrees, the recognition of these degrees and the conversion of the respective final classification is mandatory for the Portuguese classification scale.

The recognition of foreign academic degrees and diplomas as well as the conversion of the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale can be required in any public higher education institution, or in the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES, only in the case of automatic recognition ). Regarding this matter, it is suggested to consult the DGES portal through the following address: <http://www.dges.gov.pt>.

- Only candidates who have completed the cycle of studies leading to a master's degree will be admitted by the end of the application period. If they do not yet have the certificate of completion of the course, a declaration of honor from the candidates will be accepted as they completed the necessary qualifications for the purposes of the competition by the end of the application period. The design of the scholarship is always dependent on the presentation of proof of ownership of the academic qualifications required to grant the scholarship.

## 5. SCHOLARSHIP WORK PLAN

The work plan of the scholarship will be framed by the activities plan and strategy of the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes /Azorean Biodiversity Group, within the scope of Thematic Line LT1 of the cE3c strategic project "Development of integrated biodiversity assessments to monitor the impacts of global changes on biodiversity "coordinated by Paulo AV Borges. Global conservation targets are needed to halt biodiversity loss by 2020 (UN Convention on Biological diversity, CBD, Aichi Target 12; UN Sustainable Development Goal 15), but existing indicators of global biodiversity (Living Planet Index, Red List Index, GEOBON-Species Protection Index) are limited by data availability. It is therefore crucial to both streamline and strengthen resources that will facilitate additional IUCN Red List assessments, to collect more data, and to make the existing information available as efficiently as possible (UN CBD Aichi Target 19).

**Scholarship -Bryophytes.** This project will target the bryophytes endemic to Macaronesia, and will aim to: (i)

Analyze the sensitivity of the target species to environmental changes using species distribution models (SDMs) and compare the projections of potential species distributions between two standard periods (periods to be chosen according to the IPCC); (ii) Analyze the sensitivity of the target species to changes in land use, comparing the potential distribution of the species in different habitats in different standard periods; (iii) Analyze the effects of land use intensity on the surrounding matrix of different habitats important for bryophytes (e.g. coastal areas, mountainous areas, forests, pastures, etc.).

## 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND BONUS

### 6.1 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation takes into account the candidate's merit.

Applications considered admissible will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5 in each of the following evaluation criteria:

- Criterion A - Academic qualifications, weighing 30%;
- Criterion B – Research experience (e.g. publications, research projects) and / or professional career (e.g. working in public or private institutions or NGOs with relevance to the work plan), weighing 30%;
- Criterion C – Motivation letter for developing the work plan, weighing 10%;
- Criterion D – Adequacy of the candidate's profile for the development of the work plan 20%.

The weighted average of these criteria,  $X_1$ , will be used to order the candidates for each work plan and to select a maximum of 4 candidates for each plan to proceed to the second phase of the evaluation process which will involve an interview (aimed at obtaining clarifications and / or explanation of the curricular elements presented and additional information) that will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5 (criterion E, weighing 10%).

For the purposes of deciding on the granting of scholarships for each work plan, the respective candidates will be ranked according to the weighted average of the classification obtained in the two evaluation phases, translated by the following formula:

$$\textit{Final Classification} = (0.3 \times A) + (0.3 \times B) + (0.1 \times C) + (0.2 \times D) + (0.1 \times E)$$

For tie-breaking purposes, candidates will be ranked according to the ratings assigned to each of the evaluation criteria in the following order of precedence: Criterion A, Criterion B, Criterion E, Criterion D, Criterion C.

**Important notice for candidates with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions:**

- Candidates with diplomas issued by foreign higher education institutions can apply and will be evaluated using the same criteria as candidates with diplomas issued by Portuguese institutions, provided that they present, in their application, proof of recognition of academic degrees and the conversion of final classification for the Portuguese classification scale under the terms of the applicable legislation.
- Candidates with foreign degrees who do not show proof of conversion from the final classification to the Portuguese classification scale will be evaluated with the minimum classification (1 point) in criterion A.
- In any case, scholarship contracts with candidates with diplomas issued by foreign institutions will only be concluded upon presentation of proof of recognition of academic degrees and conversion of the final classification, as indicated above.

Applicants whose application is evaluated with a final classification below 3 (three) points are not eligible for the scholarship.

## 7. Evaluation

The candidates' evaluation panel consists of the following five elements from the University of the Azores:

- Paulo Alexandre Vieira Borges, Universidade dos Açores (FAA), (President of the Panel)
- Maria Manuela Medeiros Lima, Universidade dos Açores (FCT)
- António Onofre Soares, Universidade dos Açores (FCT)
- Artur Gil, Universidade dos Açores (FCT)
- Rui Bento Elias, Universidade dos Açores (FAA)

The evaluation panel will assess applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria contained in this Call for Proposals, considering the elements of evaluation.

All panel members, including the coordinator, make a commitment to respect a set of responsibilities essential to the evaluation process, such as the duties of impartiality, the declaration of any potential conflict of interest situations and confidentiality. At all times during the evaluation process, confidentiality is fully protected and ensured in order to guarantee the independence of all opinions produced.

Panel members, including the president, cannot be advisors or co-supervisors of candidates with applications submitted to the call in which they participated in their evaluation.

For each application, a final evaluation form will be produced by the panel in which the arguments that led to the ratings attributed to each of the evaluation criteria are presented in a clear, coherent and consistent manner.

Minutes of the responsibility of all its members will be produced from the meetings of the evaluation panel. The minutes and its annexes must include, necessarily, the following information:

- Name and affiliation of all members of the evaluation panel;
- Identification of all excluded applications and respective grounds, if applicable;
- Methodology adopted by the panel for cases considered private, if applicable;
- Final Evaluation Sheets for each candidate;
- Provisional list of classification and ranking of candidates, in descending order of the final classification, of all applications evaluated by the panel;
- CDI (conflict of interest) statements from all panel members;
- Possible delegations of votes and powers due to justified absence, if applicable.

## 8. DISCLOSURE OF RESULTS

The results of the evaluation are communicated via email to the email address used by the applicant to send the application / indicated in the application.

## 9. DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRIOR HEARING, CLAIM AND APPEAL

After communicating the provisional list of evaluation results, candidates have a period of 10 working days to, if they wish, make a statement at the prior hearing of interested parties, under the terms of articles 121 and following of the Code of Administrative Procedure.

The final decision will be rendered after the analysis of the pronouncements presented at the previous hearing of interested parties. The final decision may be lodged within 15 working days, or, alternatively, an appeal may be filled within 30 working days, both counted from the respective notification. Candidates who choose to submit a complaint must address their pronouncement to the member of the FCT Board of Directors with delegated competence. Candidates who choose to submit an appeal must address the same to the FCT Board of Directors.

## 10. GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Research scholarship contracts are signed directly with FCT.

The following documents must be sent, when the grant is awarded, for the purposes of contracting:

- a) Copy of the civil, tax and, where applicable, social security identification document(s) <sup>1</sup>;
- b) Copy of certificates of qualifications of academic degrees held;
- c) Presentation of the registration record for the recognition of foreign academic degrees and conversion of the respective final classifications to the Portuguese classification scale, if applicable;
- d) Document proving enrollment in the PhD Program in Biology (3CBIO) of the Faculty of Sciences and Technology of the University of the Azores;

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<sup>1</sup> The availability of these documents can be replaced, at the option of the candidate, by the presence in person at the financing entity, which will keep the elements contained therein that are relevant for the validity and execution of the contract, including the civil, tax and security identification numbers as well as the validity of the respective documents.

- e) Work Plan;
- f) Statement by the supervisor (s) assuming responsibility for supervising the work plan, pursuant to Article 5-A of the Research Fellow's Statute (template declaration to be made available by FCT);
- g) Document proving the candidate's acceptance by the institution where the research activities will take place, guaranteeing the conditions necessary for its good development, as well as the fulfillment of the duties provided for in article 13 of the Research Fellow's Statute (template declaration to be made available by FCT);
- h) Updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime (template declaration to be made available by FCT).

The granting of the scholarship is still dependent on:

- compliance with the requirements provided for in this Opening Notice;
- the result of the scientific evaluation;
- the absence of unjustified non-compliance with the grantee's duties under a previous scholarship contract financed, directly or indirectly, by FCT;
- FCT budget availability.

Failure to deliver any of the documents required to complete the scholarship contracting process, within 6 months from the date of communication of the conditional grant decision, implies the expiration of the referred grant and the termination of the process.

## 11. FINANCING

Payment of scholarships will begin after the applicants have returned the duly signed scholarship contract, which should take place within a maximum period of 15 working days from the date of receipt.

The grants awarded under this call will be financed by FCT with funds from the State Budget and, when eligible, with funds from the European Social Fund, to be made available under PORTUGAL2020, through, inter alia, the Northern Regional Operational Program (NORTE 2020 ), The Regional Operational Program of the Center (Centro 2020) and the Regional Operational Program of the Alentejo (Alentejo 2020), in accordance with the regulatory provisions established for that purpose.

## 12. COMPONENTS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship recipients receive a monthly maintenance allowance in accordance with the table in Annex I of the RBI.

The grant may also include other components, under the terms set out in article 18 of the RBI and at the amounts provided for in its Annex II.

All scholarship holders benefit from personal accident insurance for research activities, supported by FCT.

All scholarship holders who are not covered by any social protection regime can ensure the exercise of the right to social security through adherence to the voluntary social insurance regime, under the terms



of the Contributory Schemes of the Social Security Social Security System, ensuring the FCT charges resulting from contributions under the terms and with the limits provided for in article 10 of the EBI.

### **13. PAYMENTS OF SCHOLARSHIP COMPONENTS**

Payments due to the grantee are made by bank transfer to the account identified by the grantee. Payment of the monthly maintenance allowance is made on the first business day of each month.

Payments for the registration, enrollment or tuition components are made by FCT directly to the national institution where the fellow is enrolled or enrolled in the PhD.

### **14. SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The renewal of the scholarship always depends on an application submitted by the fellow, within 60 working days prior to the renewal start date, accompanied by the following documents:

- a) opinions issued by the supervisor (s) and by the host entity (ies) on the monitoring of the grantee's work and the evaluation of his activities;
- b) updated document proving compliance with the exclusive dedication regime;
- c) document proving renewal of enrollment in the cycle of studies leading to the degree of doctor.

### **15. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY OF FINANCING GRANTED**

In all R&D activities directly or indirectly financed by the scholarship, namely, in all communications, publications and scientific creations, as well as theses, carried out with the support provided for in the scholarship, it is required to mention the financial support from FCT and the European Social Program, namely through the Northern Regional Operational Program (NORTE 2020), the Regional Operational Program of the Center (Centro 2020) and the Regional Operational Program of Alentejo (Alentejo 2020). For this purpose, the FCT, MCTES, ESF and EU insignia must be inscribed in the documents referring to these actions, according to the graphic rules of each operational program.

The dissemination of results of research funded under the RBI must comply with the rules for open access to data, publications and other research results in force at FCT.

In all exchanges, and in particular in the case of actions supported by European Community financing, namely from the ESF, monitoring and control actions may be carried out by national and community bodies in accordance with the applicable legislation in this matter, with mandatory support from scholarship holders of collaboration and provision of the requested information, which includes carrying out surveys and evaluation studies in this area, even when the scholarship has already ceased.

### **16. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL ACCESS POLICY**

FCT promotes a policy of non-discrimination and equal access, so that no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempt from any duty due, namely, to ancestry, age, sex,



sexual orientation, marital status, family status, economic status, education, origin or social status, genetic heritage, reduced work capacity, disability, chronic illness, nationality, ethnic or race origin, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs and affiliation union.

## 17. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

The Call is governed by this Opening Notice, by the FCT Research Scholarship Regulation, approved by Regulation No. 950/2019, published in the II Series of the DR of December 16, 2019, by the Research Scholarship Statute approved by the Law 40/2004, of 18 August, in the current wording, and by other applicable national and community legislation.

**Number of positions:** 1 (one)

**Type of contract:** Other

**Country:** Portugal

**Locality:** Angra do Heroísmo

**Host institutio:** Universidade dos Açores (cE3c)

**Application date limit:** 14th June of 2021

*(The application deadline must be confirmed in the text of the call)*