Post-award guidelines for HFSP Fellowships granted in 2020

These post award guidelines are for awardees of the HFSP Long-Term and Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship Programs. They describe the general conditions of the fellowship award, the financial support, and give specific details about administrative procedures.

The guidelines are also for the institutional administrators responsible for the management of the award. Fellows/institutions must keep copies of these guidelines and of the completed forms for their personal record.

In case of any questions, fellowship awardees and institutional administrators should contact the HFSP Fellowship Office (fellow@hfsp.org).

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KEY RESPONSIBILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES AND REPORTS

- How to activate the award (Section II.1)
- Awardees Annual Meeting (Section II.5)
- Annual scientific report (Section IV.1)
- Financial report on the use of the Research and Travel Allowance (Sections I.6 & III.3 & IV.2)
  
  **NOTE:** receipts for all expenses must be retained.

- Reimbursement of unspent funds (Section I.4)
- Funding during the final fellowship year (Section II.4)
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I THE HFSP FELLOWSHIP

I.1 THE ORGANIZATION

The International Human Frontier Science Program Organization (HFSPO) is an international not for profit organization with headquarters in Strasbourg, France. HFSPO promotes global research collaboration in the life sciences and was established in 1989 by the Economic Summit Countries. The current Member States of the Organization include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, the UK, the USA and the European Union. HFSP programs are highly competitive, supporting the top applicants. HFSP Fellowships are recognized internationally as prestigious awards and fellows have been highly successful in their subsequent research careers.

I.2 OBJECTIVES

Fellowships are awarded to individuals, in recognition of research excellence, innovative research proposals and important scientific achievements during their Ph.D./postdoctoral work. The overall goal of the Fellowship program is to support a global network of talented young scientists by enabling postdoctoral fellows to obtain training abroad, in a new research field, and in an outstanding host laboratory.

HFSP Long-Term and Cross-Disciplinary Fellowships also facilitate the transition to independent researcher by enabling fellows to repatriate to their home country or move to another country in the final year. The first 24 months of the fellowship must be carried out in a foreign country; however fellows are able to use the final period (up to 12 months) to return to their country of origin or to transfer to another HFSP member country.

I.3 ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDS

HFSP fellows receive an annual “living allowance” to help defray the costs of living during the period of research training abroad. In addition, an annual research and travel allowance is provided. Fellows with children may also be granted a child allowance.

Depending on host country or institution, postdoctoral researchers may have a variety of different employment statuses (e.g. regular employee, postdoc, research associate, etc.). Fellows are strongly encouraged to discuss the options, work conditions, and requirements (including health insurance) with their host institution before activating the award.

HFSPO is not the employer of the fellow and therefore the fellowship award does not entail a work contract between the HFSPO and the fellow.

The fellowship allowances must be administered through the host institution.

The awardee may not hold another fellowship concurrently with the HFSP fellowship. However, the HFSP Fellowship can be supplemented from other sources (e.g. from a host supervisor’s grant or from institutional funds). Awardees must devote their time entirely to the approved research project, as outlined in the original application. Exceptions can only be granted by prior approval of the Fellowship Office.
I.4 UNSPENT FELLOWSHIP FUNDS

At the end of the second year, if...

- **the fellow moves to another country within the next six months**, any remaining funds from the research and travel budget can be transferred directly from the host institution to the fellow’s future host institution. Some institutions require reimbursement of the remaining funds to HFSPO. In this case, the funds are transferred back to the fellow through the HFSPO accounts.

- **the third year is deferred for more than six months**, a maximum of 5% of the research and travel allowance can be kept by the host institution or the fellow. Amounts exceeding 5% of the research and travel allowance must be refunded to HFSPO and will be provided again to the fellow when the fellowship is reactivated.

Unspent funds:

Any amount of unspent funds reimbursed to the HFSPO will be registered in the currency it was refunded. When the fellow reactivates their fellowship, this amount will be converted into the local currency (if necessary) and will be included in the next payment.

At the end of the third year, any unspent research and travel funds must be reimbursed to HFSPO immediately, except if a no-cost extension has been requested.

At the end of a no-cost extension, any unspent research and travel funds must be reimbursed to HFSPO immediately.

Remaining funds cannot be kept by the host supervisor or the host institution.

The HFSPO may require reimbursement of all or part of the award if ineligible expenses have been submitted, if receipts cannot be provided (when requested), or if scientific or financial reports have not been prepared.

I.5 INTEREST EARNINGS ON FELLOWSHIP FUNDS

Any interest earned on HFSPO payments should be administered according to the financial regulations of the host institution/country. HFSPO will not become involved in how interest earnings are treated.

I.6 ACCOUNTABILITY AND RECORDS OF FELLOWSHIP FUNDS

At the end of the fellowship, a final financial report including all allowances has to be submitted. In some specific cases, an interim financial report has to be provided in addition. During the period of the fellowship, the fellow and/or their host institute must keep receipts of all expenditures related to research and travel and use them to complete the financial report. These receipts must be kept for two years after the end of the fellowship as they can be requested for financial audit. The Fellowship Office does not routinely request originals or copies of receipts however may request them for internal or financial audit purposes.
I.7 BENEFITS AND CHARGES

The HFSP Fellowship living allowance is gross. The host institution agrees to pay the fellow the full living allowance, child allowance and parental leave allowance, if applicable, minus any legally compulsory deductions. Examples for legally compulsory deductions are social security charges, health insurance or pension contributions. Apart from these, no other deductions are allowed. For example, the host institution is not permitted to deduct employer’s charges from the fellowship nor to take out institutional overheads or bench fees from any of the fellowship allowances (see Section III).

The fellow can spend the research and travel allowance at his/her discretion.

The final confirmation of a Long-Term or Cross-Disciplinary Fellowship award is contingent upon formal acceptance of the above conditions by the host supervisor of the fellow and an authorized administrative representative of the host institution who is responsible for the financial management of the award.

I.8 PROVISIONS FOR RETIREMENT

There is no pension scheme associated with HFSP postdoctoral fellowships. It is not possible for HFSPO fellows who already have a pension scheme to operate it through the HFSP fellowship. Fellows must manage their pension scheme independently from their HFSP fellowship, and may use part of their living allowance to pay monthly pension contributions.

I.9 WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION ON TAXATION AND BENEFITS?

HFSP cannot give advice on taxation. Each host country has its own income tax regulations and may have agreements with the fellow’s home country. In some host countries postdoctoral fellows are required to report postdoctoral stipend payments as gross income.

The taxability of stipends in no way alters the relationship between HFSP fellows and their host institutions. The interpretation and implementation of tax law is the domain of the revenue and tax authorities in the host country. Fellows are strongly advised to consult a local tax office or the legal counsel of the host institution concerning the applicability of the tax law to their situation and for information on their tax obligations.

Most research institutions have established offices for researchers from abroad (e.g. International Office) that provide advice for new arrivals. Local or regional postdoctoral associations or scientific organizations can also be a valuable source of information.
II AWARD PROVISIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELLOWS

II.1 ACTIVATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Fellows may begin their fellowship at the earliest on 1 April of the award year and not later than January 1 of the subsequent year. The following documents are required to activate the fellowship and can be sent to HFSP together:

II.1.1 From the Fellow:
- the "AGREEMENT FORM HFSP FELLOWSHIPS – Awardee"
- the "Child allowance" and “Spouse’s/partner’s situation” form;
- the "Relocation allowance" form;
- the "Address at the host institution" form;
- a copy of the Ph.D. certificate (or of statement/letter confirming that the Ph.D. has been conferred);
- a copy of the passport(s) or of official document(s) showing the fellow’s nationality/nationalities (in case of dual nationality).

Fellows who are accompanied by a spouse/partner and/or dependents in the host country and wish to claim relocation and/or child allowance should also provide a copy of their marriage certificate (or equivalent legal partnership document) and a copy of the birth certificate(s) or an official document showing the date(s) of birth of the child(ren), as appropriate.

II.1.2 From the Host Institution:
- the "AGREEMENT FORM HFSP FELLOWSHIPS – Host Institution"
- the "Banking instructions" form;
- an official bank document with account details.

A paper copy of all requested documents must be received at the Fellowship Office before the activation date of the fellowship, or upon arrival at the host institute. Fellows starting in April or May can exceptionally send scanned copies to avoid a delay in the first payment, however the originals must be mailed to the Fellowship Office afterwards.

No payment can be initiated unless all of the requested documents have been received.

In case a stipend sheet is revised (e.g. because of a change in family status), the fellow should forward an updated copy of the stipend sheet to the administration.

II.2 DURATION

HFSP fellowships are for a duration of three years and cannot be renewed or extended. The payment period can be interrupted under certain circumstances, such as the deferral of the fellowship after the second year (up to 2 extra years) and/or for time away from research (e.g. parental leave, extended sick leave, etc.). Payments will only be made while the fellowship is active.
II.3 PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES

Payments are made twice a year at the beginning of each six-month period.

It is not possible to predict the exact date on which the funds will arrive in the host institution's account. The bank transfer usually takes place in the first half of the month and it generally takes a few days for the funds to arrive in the account. However delays during the international transfer cannot be ruled out.

Whenever possible, the stipend will be paid in the currency of the host country. However, HFSP reserves the right to pay in a different currency if necessary and the fellow may receive a different amount than the one stated on the stipend sheet. Fellows who notice a significant loss due to variations in currency exchange rates should contact the Fellowship Office.

For each transfer, the bank may charge some fees. These are “acceptable expenses” and can be included in the final financial report.

II.4 FUNDING DURING THE FINAL YEAR OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The HFSP Fellowship provides flexibility in the third year of the award to facilitate research career planning. Fellows are encouraged to consider the options of taking up the third year of the award in their own country or in a different country and/or deferring the funding for the final fellowship year.

Third year funds must be used for postdoctoral research and cannot be used to supplement the fellow’s salary in a new research position.

II.4.1 Where to take up the third year

HFSP fellows may hold the third year (final period) of the fellowship in:

- the current host laboratory;
- an institute in their home country;
- an institute in their spouse’s/partner’s home country or
- an institute in any HFSPO supporting country, regardless of the fellow’s nationality.

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

Note that the final year of funding cannot be used in another laboratory in the same host country.

II.4.2 Deferral

Fellows may delay the third year of funding for up to two years. During the deferral period fellows must remain in the same host laboratory with the same supervisor; they cannot use this period to carry out research in another laboratory. Host supervisors must provide financial support during the deferral. At the end of the deferral period the fellowship may then be reactivated in 1) the same host laboratory; 2) the fellow’s home country; 3) the fellow’s spouse’s/partner’s home country or 4) another HFSPO member country (see list above).
II.4.3 Options for the third year

II.4.3.1 Option 1 - Remain in the original host laboratory

Fellows who remain in the host laboratory for the third year (with or without a deferral) will continue to be paid as originally agreed upon.

A scientific report is required within two months of the end of the second year. Fellows who defer will be asked in addition to complete an interim financial report on all allowances, including a list of the research/travel expenses incurred during the first two years of the fellowship.

II.4.3.2 Option 2 - Move to an institution in another country

The fellowship can be transferred to the fellow’s home country, the spouse’s/partner’s home country or to another HFSP member country. The home country is the country of which the fellow or his/her spouse/partner is a national (holds citizenship). Fellows with dual nationalities can return to either country. For those moving to an institution that is classified as non-territorial (e.g. EMBL), the country is the one in which the laboratory is located.

Fellows who wish to take up their third year of funding at an institution in another country

- can only move if they have completed at least two full years of HFSP Fellowship in the initial host laboratory.

- have to prepare a second year progress report and an interim financial report on all allowances, including a list of the research/travel expenses incurred during the first two years of the fellowship.

- have to complete and return the relevant HFSP forms (which will be provided by the Fellowship Office) together with a one-page abstract of the research project that will be carried out during the final year.

There is no obligation to continue the work the fellow was doing in the original host country nor to change research direction.
II.5 Awardees Meeting

HFSP awardees will be invited to participate in the HFSP Awardees Meeting. The location of this meeting rotates among the supporting member countries and thus changes every year. The meeting is an excellent venue for the exchange of scientific ideas, to meet the HFSPO staff, and to liaise with other awardees in an informal setting, as a “community of scholars”. Fellows are encouraged to attend at least one Awardees Meeting during the tenure of their award, and will be invited for the first time in the year following their award year.

If a fellow wishes to attend the meeting during a deferral in order to present research carried out during the initial period of the fellowship, expenses related to this meeting may be included in the final financial report. In case the Awardees Meeting takes place shortly after the end of a fellowship, the fellow may request a six-month no-cost extension of the fellowship.

Expenses for attending the meeting can be paid out of the fellowship research and travel allowance.

II.6 Change in Research Project or Host

Changes of the research plan are only granted under exceptional circumstances and must receive prior approval by HFSPO, except as outlined in section II.4.3. Equally, a change of host institute and/or host supervisor is only granted under exceptional circumstances. The fellowship is awarded based on the candidate’s accomplishments, the quality of the proposed research project and the suitability of the host laboratory in providing the fellow with the training they will need to achieve the outlined career objectives. A request to change the host laboratory and/or project requires the re-evaluation of the application to ensure that the research project and host institution meet the quality standards and expectations of the program.

A change in research project or host institution/host supervisor without prior approval of the Fellowship Office will automatically lead to the termination of the fellowship.

If the fellow’s host supervisor moves their laboratory to another location, fellows must inform the Fellowship Office of their plans prior to the move. An interim financial report must be submitted in cases where a change of host supervisor and/or a transfer to another institution occurs. Information concerning administrative procedures will be provided by the Fellowship Office.

II.7 Termination of the Fellowship

If, for any reason, the fellowship is terminated earlier than scheduled, the Fellowship Office must be informed immediately. As HFSP payments cover 6-month periods, the fellow may have received funds for a period beyond the actual termination date of their fellowship. All unspent funds must be returned to HFSPO. The fellow must also provide a final financial and a final progress report within two months of the end of the fellowship.

If the fellowship is terminated as scheduled, the fellow must provide a final financial and a final progress report within two months of the end of the fellowship. Any unspent research and travel funds must be returned to HFSPO.
III   HFSP FELLOWSHIP ALLOWANCES

The financial support for an HFSP Fellowship is made in the form of a stipend.

As stated above (I.7), the host institution agrees to pay the fellow the full living allowance, child allowance, research/travel allowance and parental leave allowance, if applicable, minus any legally compulsory deductions.

The allowances that the fellow is entitled to receive due to his/her personal situation together with the payment schedule are listed on a “stipend sheet” that is prepared at the beginning of the fellowship. Fellows should forward a copy of the stipend sheet to the responsible institution official in their department.

Fellows may receive the following allowances, as appropriate:

- living allowance
- child allowance
- research and travel allowance
- relocation allowance
- parental leave allowance

III.1 LIVING ALLOWANCE

The living allowance is an allowance meant to cover the cost of living expenses while conducting postdoctoral research at the host institution. It is paid according to the rate of the country where the fellowship is carried out. Should the fellow repatriate to the home country, or move to the spouse’s/partner’s country or to another HFSP member country in the final year of the fellowship, the rate of the new host country will be applied.

III.2 CHILD ALLOWANCE

HFSP fellows with children are entitled to receive a child allowance. The allowance is paid per child. The child allowance will be paid automatically if the child has already been born when the fellowship is activated. For children born after the start of the fellowship, please let us know as soon as possible if and when you want to claim this allowance. Should you or your spouse/partner receive a child allowance from another source, the HFSP allowance will be reduced by this amount and any positive balance will be paid.

III.3 RESEARCH AND TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

The research and travel allowance is a contribution towards the costs of carrying out the research project and to enable career development.

- **Research**: the allowance may be used to cover the expenses for materials and supplies which are directly related to the fellow’s research project. Any equipment purchased using fellowship funds remains the property of the host institution at the end of the fellowship, unless the host supervisor releases the equipment to the fellow.
• **Travel:** costs associated with participating in scientific/academic meetings; costs associated with meetings with collaborators in different institutions; and costs associated with disseminating research results (e.g. invited talks). Travel expenses should be reimbursed on accrued costs and not on per diem rates. Costs exclusively associated with job interviews or with visits to family members are not eligible.

The research and travel budget is at the discretion of the fellow, in accordance with HFSP regulations. The host institution must return any unspent funds to HFSP at the end of the fellowship.

Unused research and travel funds are automatically carried over from award years 1 and 2. A negative balance can also be carried over from award years 1 and 2, for example if the fellow overspent the amount granted in the previous year.

Only expenses incurred during the period of the fellowship can be paid out of the research and travel allowance, unless a no-cost extension has been granted.

Expenses incurred during a deferral period (possible after the second year) cannot be paid through the research and travel allowance. The only exception to this rule is if a fellow attends the HFSP Awardees Meeting during the interruption period.

### III.3.1 Eligible research and travel costs

The list below is not exhaustive, however it gives examples of standard categories or items that can be purchased with the funds from the research and travel allowance. If you are uncertain about the eligibility of an expense, please contact the Fellowship Office in advance of the purchase.

- Bank fees due to the transfer of the stipend.
- Fees and other costs related to obtaining/renewing work permits, temporary residence permits or visa renewals during the period of the fellowship, including travel costs related to the visa renewal.
- Membership fees for scientific and professional organizations.
- Publication costs (e.g. page charges) for scientific articles or other costs associated with the dissemination of research results.
- Open access fees for publications arising from HFSP projects.
- Purchase of **two** computers (including laptops and tablets) during the period of the fellowship.
- Software.
- Subscriptions to scientific journals and purchase of scientific textbooks.
- Reagents, laboratory consumables and small equipment items specifically needed for the research.
- Office supplies (if not supplied by the host laboratory).
- Travel, food, accommodation, visa and registration fees for attending scientific meetings and research-related workshops and training courses.
- Visiting other laboratories or institutions in order to conduct work connected with the fellowship research project, to establish collaborations or to give invited lectures (these may be combined with job interviews).
- Public transportation costs for the daily commute to the laboratory.
- Language training materials (e.g. dictionaries, language training textbooks, electronic training materials, etc.) and language courses for the fellow (the “language” being an official language of the host country).
- Editing/improving of English language of a manuscript or a grant proposal through third party providers.
III.3.2 Excluded expenditures

The research and travel allowance cannot be used to cover a fellow’s health insurance costs, employer’s charges, to pay taxes or institutional overhead costs.

The list below is not exhaustive, however it gives some examples of items that are not eligible to be paid through the research and travel allowance:

- Personal subscription to health insurance or payment of income taxes.
- For dependents: fees for visa or work permits, flight tickets for visa renewals.
- Fees associated with seeking permanent residency (e.g. Green Card in USA).
- Electronic equipment for entertainment purposes or private use (e.g. Digital Audio Players, Personal Digital Assistants, e-book readers).
- Office equipment (e.g. chairs, tables, filing cabinets, etc).
- Fees for private internet access.
- Costs related exclusively to job interviews and family visits.
- Travel of other laboratory members or invited guest speakers.
- Supplements to the fellow’s living allowance.
- Purchase of non-scientific literature or information (e.g. novels, subscriptions for daily newspapers, cable/satellite TV).
- Attendance at cultural events.
- Purchase of bicycles or other means of transportation.
- Petrol costs for the daily commute to the laboratory.

III.4 RELOCATION ALLOWANCE

The relocation allowance offsets some of the costs incurred by fellows and their family members associated with the move to and from the host country. These funds may be used for expenses such as travel, shipping of personal belongings, or as security deposit to rent an apartment. The relocation allowance can be paid to the fellow directly.

The relocation allowance is paid in the following situations:

- **At the start of the fellowship**: fellows are entitled to receive the relocation allowance only if the move to the host country was no more than 3 months prior to the start of the fellowship.

- **At the beginning or during the third fellowship year**: fellows automatically qualify for the relocation allowance if they repatriate, move to their spouse’s home country or to another HFSPO member country for the third year, even after a deferral period.

- **At the end of the fellowship**: fellows remaining at the host institution beyond their third year may request the relocation allowance if their move takes place within six months of the end of the fellowship. The allowance has to be requested by the fellow when sending the final scientific and financial reports. The Fellowship Office will transfer the relocation allowance once both reports have been approved.
A relocation allowance is not paid in cases where the host laboratory moves during the fellowship. Should the fellow receive funds from other source(s) for his/her move, HFSPO will top up these funds to a maximum of the amount corresponding to the total HFSP relocation allowance. It is not acceptable that the HFSP relocation allowance be topped up by other sources. The fellow has to formally state that this condition is fulfilled before receiving the relocation allowance.

The relocation allowance is a flat rate and is paid to the fellow in full, without any deductions, as calculated on the stipend sheet. It is not contingent upon any further condition and does not have to be accounted for in a financial report (no receipts will be requested).

III.5 PARENTAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE

HFSP fellows may apply for up to 3 months of paid parental leave for each child born/adopted during the course of their fellowship (for twins, the parental leave will be 3 months in total). The parental leave must be taken within 6 months of the birth/adoption of the child, and may only be taken during the period of the fellowship. The fellowship will be extended for the period of the parental leave, during which the fellow will also be entitled to receive the living and the child allowance.

The HFSP parental leave allowance cannot be granted during the deferral period of the fellowship.

If both parents are HFSP fellows, each parent is entitled to receive up to 3 months paid parental leave for each child born/adopted during the course of the fellowship.

Additional time necessary for child care beyond the 3 months of paid leave, for example compulsory parental leave, will count as an interruption of the fellowship (without pay by the HFSPO).

Fellows should inform the Fellowship Office and their host supervisors/host institutions of their intention of taking a parental leave prior to the interruption.

III.6 NO-COST EXTENSION

Upon request, a six-month no-cost extension of the fellowship can be granted to fellows who remain at the host institution at the end of their fellowship. During the no-cost extension period, the fellow will be able to continue using the research and travel funds in the same way as during the fellowship. The research and travel funds can only be used for eligible expenses as outlined in section III.3.1 of these guidelines, and not to cover the costs of living.

The final financial report will be due within one month of the end of the no-cost extension. Any unspent funds left at the end of the no-cost extension must be refunded to HFSPO.

NOTE: The final progress report is due within two months of the end of the fellowship (and not at the end of the no-cost extension).
IV REPORTS

IV.1 SCIENTIFIC REPORT
A detailed scientific progress report must be submitted within two months of the end of each fellowship year. The template as well as instructions will be emailed in due time.

IV.2 FINANCIAL REPORT
A final financial report must be submitted within two months after termination of the fellowship using an Excel template that will be provided, which contains all relevant instructions and guidelines.

An interim financial report is requested within two months of the end of the second year in case the fellow defers the third year of support, returns to his/her home country or moves to another HFSP member country in the third year.

V ANNEXES

V.1 2020 RELOCATION ALLOWANCE

The amounts are stated in USD.

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● Relocation allowances from/to other areas will be calculated on a case-by-case basis.

For a family, the following calculations will be used:

Spouse: same allowance
Child 2-12 years: 50% of allowance
Child under 2 years: 10% of allowance
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Gross monthly living allowance Year 1</th>
<th>Gross monthly living allowance Year 2</th>
<th>Gross monthly living allowance Year 3</th>
<th>Monthly child allowance (per child)</th>
<th>Monthly research &amp; travel allowance</th>
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HFSPO reserves the right to review the fellowship stipend levels.

Please contact the Fellowship Office for information concerning the allowances in other countries or in case of discrepancies.