

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

FORTHEM Research stays for postdoctoral researchers

Training and career development for Early-Stage-Researchers (ESRs)

Call II 2024, for research stays in 2025

1. Introduction

FORTHEM is an Alliance of European universities composed of nine multidisciplinary public research universities with a strong regional anchoring in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Spain. The FORTHEM Alliance brings together a new generation of creative Europeans able to cooperate across languages, borders, and disciplines to address the societal challenges and skills shortages Europe faces.

This call for funding is part of a series of target activities to **empower and support postdoctoral researchers** from FORTHEM partner universities, with the purpose of strengthening their networks with non-academic hosting institutions and favouring the setting up their own future research projects. As part of the *FORTHEM Academy for Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs)* and based on the aim to design attractive training and career development actions for ESRs, FORTHEM is funding postdoctoral research stays in one of our nine FORTHEM countries.

FORTHEM offers postdoctoral researchers (up to 8 years after completing their PhD), **3 financial aids to do a research stay in 2025 in a FORTHEM country non-academic hosting institution for up to 3 months**. The proposal must be **linked to a concrete prospective research project** in which the host will be involved (e.g., MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship, ERC Starting Grants, any bilateral funding scheme, etc.).

2. Eligible applicants, requirements and application

To be a beneficiary of this aid, the applicant must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Postdoctoral researcher - any area of knowledge
- ✓ PhD obtained 8 years ago or less at the moment of the application submission
- ✓ Linked to one of the FORTHEM universities (working contract or official stipend/fellowship)
- ✓ Linked to a concrete prospective research project

Research stays would preferably take place in one of the nine FORTHEM countries. In some cases, research stays in other EU Members States or Associated Countries may also be

accepted, but before submission of such proposals, applicants must contact the FORTHEM Academy for Early-Stage-Researchers at A4ESR@forthem-alliance.eu for confirmation.

The main goal of this action is to empower and support postdoctoral researchers. The research stay should lead to a project together with the host institution. The postdoctoral researchers will act as a FORTHEM ambassador, and they will set up new networks and evaluate prospects of cooperation between sending and hosting institutions, e.g., by giving a lecture/talk at their host institution, a public environment etc.

FORTHEM can only co-fund the research stays; when submitting their proposal, applicants must have an informal agreement with one non-academic hosting institution. A simple letter of confirmation would be sufficient.

If applicants do not have a partner yet, they may contact the FORTHEM Research Services and Policy office (research-support@forthem-alliance.eu) or the local FORTHEM offices (see chapter 6 below) to get some help with the partner search, or support with contacting FORTHEM associated partners for a cooperation request.

Researchers who stay in their own home country are in general not eligible unless they would be for example still be eligible to apply for an MSCA together with them (should be carefully explained in the proposal).

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2.1. Application submission and assessment

Applications must be made via the following registration page:

<https://forschung.uni-mainz.de/forthem-research-stays/>

Only proposals submitted via this website will be accepted. Documents listed below must be written in English and uploaded together with the registration form (either in 5 separate documents or as one pdf):

- Proposal (3 pages maximum). The document must include different sections relating to description of the planned activity, effectiveness, impact, and implementation (plus a short outlook on planned follow-up activities, e.g., grant application).
- Document proving the applicant's postdoctoral researcher status
- Document proving the applicant being working for a FORTHEM partner university (fellows may also be accepted after verification of their status, provided they can demonstrate that they will return to the sending university upon completion of the stay).
- Letter of commitment from the host institution/organization and confirmation of the planned dates for the research stay.
- A rough estimation of the costs (travel, accommodation, other major costs).
- A schedule of the travel plans.

2.2. Specific obligations, expected results and reporting

2.2.1. During the research stay

The beneficiary must join the research stay on the planned dates, stay for the planned period, and carry out the activities specified in the application.

The beneficiary shall be provided with adequate insurance cover to ensure his or her personal safety and security during his or her stay abroad.

2.2.2. At the end of the research stay

After the research stay beneficiaries must submit the following documents:

- A short-written report on their research (max. 3 pages) at the latest 60 days after the end of the stay period including:
 - A summary of the work performed and the results
 - An overview of the costs in terms of travel, accommodation, and any other major costs.
 - Eventual follow-up projects which are expected from the cooperation.
- As FORTHEM ambassadors, a proof of new networks and possible prospects for cooperation between home and host institutions. The document must show what was the benefit of the research stay as a researcher as well as some ideas on how the Alliance may also benefit from the exchange.

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3. Submission deadline

Application website will be open from: **15 /09/2024 to 15/11/2024**

The applications not meeting yet the requirements, including data proven to be false, or not submitting them as instructed, will be excluded from the selection process. In case they submit early in advance, the proposal might be returned for improvement if possible.

Applications will be reviewed between November and December 2024, and results will be published in January 2025.

A total of 3 applicants will be selected to carry out their research stays in 2025 (stays must take place between 03/02/2025 and 31/12/2025). The decision will include a prioritised waiting list. Persons on the waiting list will be notified individually as vacancies arise due to resignation. Under no circumstances may the stay begin before the date of this notification and, where appropriate, acceptance of the grant.

Tampering with or falsification of the documents and accreditations submitted may give rise to the corresponding criminal, civil or administrative liabilities, as well as, if applicable, the

invalidity of the application submitted. The interested parties may be required at any time to interested parties to submit the original documents.

4. Evaluation of proposals and communication of results

The procedure for awarding grants will be carried out on a competitive basis, by comparing the applications submitted, to establish a priority within the budgetary limit of the call for applications. Participants who were already funded are not eligible.

Applications will be prioritised according to the following questions:

- Originality and novelty of the project/project idea.
- Short summary of how the postdoctoral researcher chose the host, and description of the synergies between researcher and the host and well as first ideas for a two-way-knowledge exchange.
- Clear understanding what larger joint research project research stay may lead to (e.g., MSCA Postdoctoral fellowship, ERC Starting grant, other grants for postdoctoral researchers on a national level).
- Concrete description of what new methods/procedures/skills the beneficiary can learn/acquire from the host and other hosting arrangements (if selected a simple hosting agreement will be signed between the sending and hosting institution, as well as the ESR).
- Importance of the proposed research stay for a potential career development of the postdoctoral researcher.
- First ideas of the applicant on how to act as an ambassador for FORTHEM during their stay (e.g., given a group lecture on FORTHEM actions).
- Applications with FORTHEM Universities external/associated partners as destination will be prioritized.

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The review board will be formed by the key officials within the “FORTHEM Academy for Early-Stage Researchers” and confirmed by the FORTHEM Research, Innovation and Transfer (RI&T) Mission Board. All 9 FORTHEM Alliance universities will be represented in the review board to ensure that the proposed projects are in line with the goals of FORTHEM.

Grants will be awarded by the RI&T Mission Board and the results of the call will be published on the FORTHEM website: www.forthem-alliance.eu.

Beneficiaries will be contacted by email once the RI&T Mission Board confirmed the selection process.

5. Funding and management body

The total funding will be up to 3000 €, paid in two instalments 70 % of the funding will be transferred before the activities start (2100 €). The rest of the funding will be transferred after completion the research stay and submission of the report.

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (JGU) will be the management university responsible for payments to the beneficiaries. Each research stay will be co-funded with a maximum of 3000 €. On an individual basis it may be decided if the total amount for each will be paid as an extra top-up to the salary, directly to cover the travel and accommodation costs, or as a stipend going directly to the postdoctoral researcher. This depends on the status of the applicant.

6. FORTHEM local offices contact details

FORTHEM local Offices:

- Johannes-Gutenberg Universität Mainz: forthem@uni-mainz.de / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)
- Jyväskylän yliopisto: forthem@juu.fi / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)
- Latvijas Universitāte: forthem@lu.lv / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)
- Università degli Studi di Palermo: forthem.office@unipa.it / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)
- Universitat de València: forthem@uv.es / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)
- Universitetet i Agder: Forthem@uia.no
- Université de Bourgogne: forthem@u-bourgogne.fr / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)
- Uniwersytet Opolski: forthem@uni.opole.pl / [local FORTHEM website](#)
- Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu: forthem@ulbsibiu.ro / [local FORTHEM webpage](#)

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For partner search you may also contact:

- research-support@forthem-alliance.eu
- A4ESR@forthem-alliance.eu

For any clarification on Alliance level:

- info@forthem-alliance.eu

7. GDPR of personal data

By submitting the form, you consent to the processing of your personal data by FORTHEM. The Link to FORTHEM GDPR notice can be found [here](#).