



European Respiratory
Society

ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships 2010 (RESPIRE Programme)

Rules & Regulations

1. Aims and expectations

The ERS is co-funding a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship programme (RESPIRE) jointly with the European Commission Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) - Marie Curie Actions, with the aims of:

- Promoting advanced science, research and training techniques in research, in the field of respiratory medicine and science in Europe;
- Supporting the exchange in Europe of outstanding scientists/investigators as well as clinicians with promising careers, actively involved in respiratory medicine;
- Contributing to the diffusion and implementation of new techniques in Europe and internationally.
- Highlighting and stimulating postdoctoral career opportunities in the respiratory research area in Europe.

ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are established to advance respiratory medicine and science by **helping PhD holders and postgraduate scientists/clinicians holding 4 years full-time research experience to visit another research laboratory or clinical unit in Europe with a view to applying an advanced research technique not available in the Home unit.** ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are intended to foster **advanced and innovative research** and do as well support applications which are presented as a training component of a research project (e.g. apply advanced research, research in order to innovate a clinical technique).

The ERS does not apply an upper age-limit on candidates as an eligibility criterion but **applicants will be accepted only if they are in the possession of a doctoral degree (PhD holders) at the time of application or have at least the equivalent of 4 years full-time research experience at the time of application (after graduating with an MD, MSc).**

As a minimum, applicants must have at least 1 first author publication being or having been published in an international peer-reviewed journal at the time of application.

The programme is open to both Europeans and non-Europeans, but Host institutes must be located in Europe.

Agreement with Host supervisor must be present when applying; unfortunately the ERS is not yet in a position to propose Host institutes. ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are not awarded for exchanges between 2 units within the same country. Indeed the aim of the ERS is to promote international research, it follows that mobility is a crucial element in deciding the eligibility of an application.

The return of the Fellow to the Home institution at the end of the Fellowship is encouraged; the goal being to apply the acquired skills. Such knowledge transfer as well as availability of appropriate facilities and resources in the Home institute to apply and implement the newly acquired skills will increase priority.

All applications must involve a Home institute of origin and a receiving Host institute. **The applications must already involve an agreement with the hosting/receiving institute in Europe where the fellowship will be carried out. The allocation of the fellowship grant is based on a complete and detailed project description (including work protocol and timelines) to be submitted by the candidate and carrying the endorsement of the Host supervisor.**

The start date of the Fellowship can not be set earlier than July 2010 since a granting decision can only be expected on May 2010. The Fellowships are not granted in retrospect for already fully or partly carried out projects. The research project should be realistic and possible to complete within the given time period.

The ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships last exactly 12 months and their duration may not be reduced. The research project outlined in the Fellowship is to be carried out in a continuous time period and may not be split. The Fellowship is to be carried out in a full time basis (100%) and the Fellows may not be engaged in any paid or salaried activities during the course of their Fellowships. Fellowships are not granted for basic training, workshops, courses, lectures, meetings, conferences, congresses, etc. or for visiting institutions.

The ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are intended to provide a reasonable salary adapted to the Fellow's personal situation and to the Host country. The Fellowships cover the Fellow's travel only, plus subsistence of the Fellow and dependents below 16 years. The ERS does not recognize recipients of its fellowships as agents or employees of the ERS and accepts no liability in respect of any of their actions or activities or in respect to the health or safety of their persons. Therefore it is the Fellow's and Host supervisor's responsibility to find a mutual agreement on the nature, in terms of status, of the fellow's appointment during the Fellowship at the Host unit. **The Fellowship is not intended to cover any expenses other than the ones related to the living expenses in the Host country during the stay.**

The Fellowships may not be financially supplemented by agencies other than the Home or Host institutes, or the Fellows personally. Therefore they may not run concurrently with other awards, funds, grants, fellowships, etc. during the same time period and project.

The only financial supplements that are permitted to the Fellow, to be supplied with by Home and/or Host institutes without deduction on the ERS grant amount; are financial aid to cover the Fellow's obligatory health and safety insurances, legal and social security insurances, pension schemes and child support in Home and Host country.

The implementation of the Fellowship (duration, research project, supervision, location, etc.) should be carried out exclusively as outlined in the submitted Fellowship application and may not be amended.

Any event or circumstance which might affect the implementation of the Fellowship or are likely to have an effect on the performance of the Fellowship need to be notified to the ERS at the earliest. Fellowships that are terminated prematurely, must be notified promptly to ERS and appropriate funds reimbursed.

This funding programme is under the responsibility of the Scientific Committee and final decision is the responsibility of the Executive Committee following the recommendations of the Scientific Committee. In order to keep a very high standard of applications, the ERS will strictly enforce the rules for the management of the Fellowships and will ensure the high quality of the work supported. Successful candidates will be recognised through the Association of ERS Fellows (www.ersnet.org/Association-Fellows).

Publication of results in the official journals of the society, in particular in the ERJ, is encouraged.

2. ERS Fellowship programmes 2009

2.1 ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (ERS/MC)

- a. The Fellowships are funded by the ERS with the objectives of enabling scientists, investigators and clinicians **with advanced research records**, to carry out basic or clinical research projects and to develop, acquire, and apply advanced research procedures and techniques in the area of respiratory medicine through a 12-month work period in a foreign country in Europe. Around 10 grants for 12 months will be selected in 2010.
- b. The proposal should elaborate on how the partnership between the Host and the candidate would take full advantage of the unique facilities, resources, and materials available in their respective Host and Home countries. It should also indicate how the new techniques will be relevant to the curriculum of the applicant and to the current medical status in the candidate's country. The initiation or development of collaborative projects between the Host and Home institutes are encouraged.
- c. Candidates should be actively engaged in respiratory research, with appropriate scientific or medical qualifications. Applicants must be holders of a doctoral degree in the field of respiratory medicine/science (PhD) or possess a minimum of 4 years full-time research experience or equivalent (after graduating with an MD, MSc) at the time of application.
- d. As a minimum, applicants must have at least 1 first author publication being or having been published in an international peer-reviewed journal at the time of application.
- e. The ERS does not apply an upper age-limit on candidates as an eligibility criterion but younger applicants will be prioritized.
- f. Awards are conditional on the availability of appropriate facilities and resources to apply the newly acquired skills. The return of the Fellow to the Home institution at the end of the Fellowship is encouraged. Therefore preference will be given to Fellows who will be able to apply their skill back in their Home institute.
- g. Application for continuation of a second year Fellowship can be submitted and will be considered as new application on the basis of scientific merit. They will undergo a new selection procedure and no guarantee for funding is available. Applications will be submitted by the official Fellowship deadlines.
- h. The ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships can also be used as an extension of previous support from other sources. Candidates who are already in the Host institution at the time of application will also be considered as long as the Fellowship is intended to support exchange, by going back to the Home institute.
- i. Priority will be given to candidates, Home supervisor and/or Host supervisors who are members of the ERS.

3. General Conditions

3.1 The ERS/MC Fellowships

ERS/MC Fellowships:

- a. The ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowships last 12 months, this duration may not be split nor reduced;
- b. require the Host supervisor to be located in Europe and are not awarded for exchanges between 2 units within the same country;
- c. are granted subject to adequate funds being available;
- d. are not granted for basic training, workshops, courses, lectures, meetings, conferences, congresses, etc. or for visiting institutions;

- e. require an interim (or mid-term) report from the Fellow (signed by the Host supervisor) 6 months after beginning of the project. This report will include scientific progress, as well as administrative and other issues. **At this time also a copy of approval of the research project by the local ethical review board needs to be submitted.**
- f. require a short administrative end-of-project report in English within 2 months of the end of the project. 6 months after conclusion of the Fellowship a full scientific report should be submitted by the Fellow. The reports will be posted on the ERS Website. Following this condition, Fellows will automatically become members of the Association of ERS Fellows and are encouraged to attend the Fellows Lunch Session organized at the ERS Annual Congress;
- g. **are not intended to run concurrently with other awards, even those funded by other agencies;**
- h. **are not granted in retrospect for already fully or partly carried out projects;**
- i. **may not be financially supplemented by agencies other than the Home or Host institutions, or the Fellows personally;**
- j. do not guarantee any tax issue that may arise either in the Home or in the Host country and any taxes have to come out of the Fellowship award;
- k. that are interrupted or affected by any event or circumstance which may amend their implementation or performance as foreseen in the application files, need to be notified to the ERS at the earliest.
- l. that are terminated prematurely, must be notified promptly to ERS and appropriate funds reimbursed.

3.2 Applications

Applications:

- a. **and all supporting documents must be submitted online (www.ersnet.org/Fellowships) and in English;**
- b. **must be received by the ERS office by the application closing dates of 15th January 2010;** they are accepted and processed once a year;
- c. will be acknowledged in due time and candidates advised if items are missing;
- d. that have undergone a review and selection process cannot be resubmitted. The fact that an applicant has previously held Fellowship does not prevent further applications for a Fellowship for a **new project**;
- e. should not be too closely similar to previously submitted ones; the new benefits to be gained through a seemingly related application should be clearly highlighted in the project description;
- f. for continuation of a second year Fellowship or a Short-Term Fellowship, as well as for an extension of previous support from other sources, should briefly inform about the success of the earlier Fellowship and should clearly mention the new skills/techniques/results to be acquired and should focus on the new benefits to be achieved;
- g. should normally specify only 1 institute as Host unit and only 1 project title. It is the responsibility of the Fellow to find a Host supervisor willing to Host him/her and to find an adequate project description (ERS does not prospect for these).

3.3 Candidates

Candidates:

- a. must possess appropriate professional qualifications and experience according to the specific Fellowship applied for;
- b. must be currently engaged in pulmonary research or clinical pulmonary practice;
- c. being on the staff payroll of a university, research laboratory or institute, hospital to where they will return at the end of the Fellowship will be prioritized. There is no requirement to be employed by the Host institute; having a link through previous employment, scholarship, studentship or other, is a sufficiently qualifying application criterion. The return of the Fellow to the Home institute at the end of the Fellowship is nevertheless encouraged;

- d. must select a Host laboratory in Europe
- e. must have adequate fluency in a language that permits effective communication at the Host institution;
- f. may submit applications for only 1 ERS Fellowship proposal at any application round;
- g. who have already carried out an ERS Fellowship in the past may apply for any further ERS Fellowship only if they are members of the Association of ERS Fellows (subject to the compulsory requirement that fellows have provided the ERS with a report at the end of their fellowship).

3.4 Selection

- a. The selection of candidates for an ERS/Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellowship will focus on the scientific excellence of the researcher/clinician and is made on the basis of scientific and expert evaluation of the application and the proposed work as set out by the candidates in the project description.
- b. The candidate application will be graded by at least 3 external reviewers who are selected by the Scientific Committee as being of highest international ranking in their respective fields and none of whom have any conflict of interest.
- c. The expert reviewers are asked to grade the application according to the following 7 criteria:
 1. **Relevance of the topic and Hypothesis**
(in relation to advancing knowledge in the broad field of respiratory medicine - including intensive care, sleep medicine and any disciplines related to respiratory health - with regard to disease understanding, mechanisms, pathology of disease and prevention or treatment)
 2. **Methodology (including ethical considerations)**
 3. **Likelihood of project completion**
(Achievable results which takes into account where the applicant comes from and hence the degree of development of research in the applicant's home environment, and realism of the research project)
 4. **Adequacy of the Host institute for this project**
 5. **Added value of travelling**
 6. **News value and originality**
 7. **Quality of candidate**

The evaluation form will ask expert reviewers to comment on ethical issues in each application. The ethical considerations are to be either: Existing, not existing, or doubtful and applications are not considered further if ethical issues are considered to be existing or if there is a doubt. **To get a quick understanding on which topics these fundamental rules include, please visit the Ethics Check List on Cordis:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=129>

- d. The expert reviewers are asked to grade each individual criterion of the candidate application using the following grading and their meanings:
 - 5 – Excellent, should be funded with highest priority
 - 4 – Very good, should be funded
 - 3 – Good, could be funded with lesser priority
 - 2 – Average, probably not funded
 - 1 – Poor, should not be funded.

An average grade is then calculated and will provide the overall score.

- e. The Executive Committee of the ERS makes the final decision on the selection of investigators/clinicians to be awarded an ERS Fellowship. The Scientific Committee of the ERS is involved in the preparatory work, and puts forward the recommendation to the Executive Committee for final approval. The recommendation on individual candidates is in turn based upon the average overall score and comments of the expert reviewers. The final decision on candidate selection for a Fellowship is based foremost on the external reviewer comments and the calculated overall average score and is taken by the ERS Executive Committee following the recommendation of the ERS Scientific Committee. The decisions are final and appeals are not considered (excepted exceptional circumstances).
- f. **The reviewers are asked to judge the quality of the candidate, the research project, the receiving laboratory and the projected benefit to the Home laboratory of the applicant.** Therefore those who have career plans which include a return to their current Home laboratory for a reasonable period after the Fellowship will be prioritized.
- g. Upon receipt of a written request from the candidate to the ERS Scientific Department, the “anonymised” scores and comments of the 3 expert reviewers can be made available to the candidate including a clear statement of the reasons for declining the proposal, but are otherwise confidential and cannot be divulged outside the ERS.
- h. No distinction will be made between candidates on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles:

The ERS acknowledges the importance of adhering to the EU Commission’s ethical principles of FP7. Therefore, several measures are implemented in the programme to ensure adherence to these principles.

- a. As indicated above, reviewers will be asked to include ethical considerations in their assessments; these will also be considered by the Scientific Committee, with help from a representative of the ERS Ethical Committee, before granting a fellowship. In case of doubt, the fellowship will not be granted. Main ethics issues that must be addressed in each accepted Fellowship project are: informed consent, human embryonic stem cells, privacy and data protection, use of human biological samples and data, research on animals, research in developing countries, and dual use;
- b. **Furthermore, in line with national and international legislation each research programme in an accepted Fellowship application must be approved by an ethical review board at the Host-institution, before it is commenced.** A copy of the approval by the ethical review board will be requested by the ERS, and must be submitted at the latest at the time of the interim report, which is 6 months after the start of the Fellowship. Documentation of approval of the research by the Host's institution ethical review board will have to be provided with the interim report. **Failure to provide this will result in termination of the grant.** Any evidence or suspicion of breaches of ethical conduct and/or scientific integrity during (or after) the Fellowship will result in a rapid and thorough assessment by the ERS Ethical Committee. If necessary, this may result in termination of the Fellowship and/or other appropriate actions towards the Host institution and its authorities.
- c. **A signed statement from the Host institution will be requested before start of the Fellowship and before making the first payment. The statement must include the following points:**
 - 1) **Certification that there is an ethical review board for research at the Host institution;**
 - 2) **The research conducted at the laboratory of the Host institution is in compliance with local, national and international legislation and guidelines on research in humans and/or animals;**

- 3) **All necessary steps will be undertaken to ensure that the specific research project for which the application is made, will be in compliance with these legislation and guidelines, including the FP7 Ethical Principles, as specified above;**
- 4) **Documentation of ethical approval of the proposed research will be provided to the ERS as part of the interim report;**

Specifically, the following fields of research will not be financed in this programme:

- Research activity aiming at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- Research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

3.6 Requirements for Host Institutes & ERS/MC Fellows

Host Institutes:

Will be requested to ensure the fulfillment of both practical and scientific aspects which are relevant in the beginning (housing, safety), during the completion (regular meetings, evaluations) and at the end/ during the follow-up of the Fellowship.

- a. The Host supervisor will be required, before the beginning of the project, to confirm in writing that he/she is prepared to receive the Fellow and to provide the necessary facilities to carry out the research. The written confirmation by the Host should include a starting date of the Fellowship, and a confirmation of the Host institute's responsibilities which include availability of laboratory and office space; ability to conduct the projected research; and verification that health & safety issues are taken care of. The Host will also be asked to assist the Fellow in housing and other practical issues (e.g. he/she will be directed to the university's housing department). **Moreover, a signed ethics statement must be submitted by the Host at this stage (see also above, section 3.5 c).**
- b. An important aspect of this written confirmation will be that the Host will be requested to assign named persons as scientific and administrative mentors for the Fellow. The first one being responsible for the scientific part of the Fellow's project, whereas the second mentor will be responsible for coaching the Fellow in all matters related to visa requirements, registration with the university, opening a bank account, housing, finding appropriate schools for the Fellow's children, etc.
- c. The ERS expects from the Host supervisor a brief report on what has been done and achieved at the end of the Fellowship.

ERS/MC Fellows:

- a. The ERS will at the beginning of the Fellowship write to the Fellow to ensure that all practical matters have been taken care of, and that the Fellow has optimal starting conditions. If there are any problems, the Fellow has the possibility to report these to the ERS, who in such cases will contact the Host in order to try to solve the problems.
- b. The mid-term and the end-of-project report include sections where the Fellow will be asked to evaluate and score the Host in terms of scientific and administrative support and supervision. If in the mid-term report the Fellow indicates unsatisfactory support with regard to supervision, the ERS will contact the Fellow and Host directly to see what may need to be improved, and follow-up 2 months later with the Fellow and the Host, and ask for written confirmation that the matter has been resolved. In extreme circumstances the ERS may decide to prematurely terminate the Fellowship.

3.7 Grant amounts

- a. Grants are funded according to the personal (number of children under 16 years of age) and professional circumstances of the Fellow and the Host country. The ERS subsistence rates are based on those published by the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) www.embo.org. (see Table 1)

The Fellowship does not provide the travel costs for the Fellow's family. **The grant amounts are indicated per month in EURO (depending on the Host country) for a Fellow not receiving any other sources of income (salary, funding, travel grant, etc.).**

If the applicant is already at the receiving institute or in the Host country the travel flat rate is not granted. A one off travel flat rate of €200 will be granted for distances between Host and Home unit below 5000km. For distances above 5000km the one off travel flat rate will be €700.

Please note that the total ERS grant amount should cover travel and accommodation costs and provide with enough money to live on during the Fellowship. Therefore only subsistence rates are supported by the ERS grant. **The ERS/MC Fellowship is not intended to cover any expenses other than the ones related to the living expenses in the Host country during the stay.**

The standard calculation foresees deducting from the ERS monthly subsistence rate the monthly salary of the Fellow should he/she still be receiving income from the Home/Host Institutes during his/her Fellowship. Whether the amount is transferrable to the Host country or not, is not determining in the calculation. When a salary is provided during the Fellowship, the ERS considers that the Fellow already has a source of funding while completing the Fellowship. Most Fellows do not receive any salary during their leave from the Home unit and it is their responsibility to manage expenses in their Home country (rent, etc.). **The grant amount is set in order to enable the stay in the Host country only.**

A fixed amount per Fellow is calculated for their fellowship and is set as an ERS Grant amount at the beginning of the research project. The Fellowship provides the recipient with a subsistence allowance to cover the Fellow's living costs and a flat rate for travelling expenses to the host institute. The ERS does not provide the Fellows with bench fees, any other contribution to the costs of the research or any other financial support to the social security and safety schemes during the Fellowship.

Table 1

	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Ireland
fellow	2890	2545	2900	2500	2530	2840	2900
for each dependent	275	234	272	239	243	272	244
currency	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO

	Italy	Netherlands	Norway	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Other
fellow	2820	2650	2829	2526	3524	2900	Approx. 2400
for each dependent	264	253	288	257	358	297	Approx. 220
currency	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO

- b. **In order to avoid duplication of expenditure**, particularly with national sources, it is a condition of any award by the ERS that a full declaration be made to the organization of all other grants, awards and contributions applied for towards the same travel and subsistence expenditures. **Continuation in whole or part of existing salary and income** must also be declared. It will be separately considered by the ERS in the light of any explanations furnished by the fellow of the necessity of continuing expenses not connected with the ERS fellowship. **The ERS will usually reduce its normal financial intervention by a corresponding sum or, where appropriate, annul it entirely.**
- c. The financial supplements that are permitted to Fellows, to be supplied with by Home and/or Host institutes without deduction on the ERS grant amount; are financial aid to cover the Fellows' obligatory health and safety insurances, legal and social security insurances, pension schemes and child support in Home and Host country.
- d. ERS/MC Fellows are encouraged to engage in teaching, discussion and similar activities of the institution they visit. **They may not, however, engage in any paid or salaried activities during the course of their fellowships.**
- e. **The Fellowships may not be financially supplemented by agencies other than the Home or Host institutions, or the Fellows personally. Therefore they may not run concurrently with other awards, funds, grants, fellowships, etc. during the same time period and project.**
- f. ERS/MC Fellows are not insured by the ERS against medical expenses for themselves or their families; neither are they insured for accidents during their travel to and from the host institution. **The ERS does not recognize recipients of its Fellowships as agents or employees of the ERS and accepts no liability in respect of any of their actions or activities or in respect to the health or safety of their persons.** In their own interest, recipients of the Fellowships are, therefore, urged to make sure that they, their families and the institutions which receive them are fully covered by the necessary insurances. **It is the sole responsibility of the recipient of an award to ensure that he/she is covered under a social security scheme providing protection at least equivalent to those of local researchers holding a similar position.**
- g. The ERS is a non-governmental international organization whose awards are not automatically endowed with any particular tax privileges. It is the sole responsibility of the recipient of an award to pay any tax which may be levied upon him/her by the appropriate national authority. The ERS is not responsible for any tax issue that may arise either in the Home or in the Host country and any taxes have to come out of the Fellowship award.
- h. **The subsistence rates mentioned under point 3.7 (Table 1) are indicative and subject to change.** The subsistence rates depend on the available yearly ERS Fellowship budget and are also subject to variable inflation, exchange rates and the cost of living in the Host country.

3.8 ERS follow-up reports

- a. The Fellow and the Host supervisor will be requested to submit a mid-term review report and completed questionnaire (including certification of ethical approval by local ethics board at host unit) in order to assess the progress of the Fellow's activities six months after start of the Fellowship.
- b. The Fellow and the Host supervisor will be requested to submit two final activity reports and completed questionnaires two and six months (administrative & scientific report, report on the fellowship experience to be posted online) after the end of the Fellowship.
- c. The Fellow and the Host supervisor will be requested to provide two years and five years after the end of the Fellowship a completed questionnaire and report on any outcomes related to the Fellowship (career opportunities, papers published, grants & awards received, etc.)
- d. The Fellow and Host supervisor will make sure that any publication or outcome related to the Fellowship will acknowledge the ERS support and EU Community support.
- e. The Fellow and Host supervisor will record and update the ERS, for at least five years after the end of the Fellowship, of any publication activity and other outcome resulting of the Fellowship and within two months of the said publication being made public.

3.9 Association of ERS Fellows

- a. Upon submission of a satisfactory end-of-project report, which must carry the endorsement of the Host supervisors, Fellows are eligible to join the Association of ERS Fellows. This Association brings together the exclusive group of ERS Fellows who, after an international evaluation process, were selected from a large number of candidates to receive ERS Fellowships.
- b. The Association of ERS Fellows directory provides a unique and invaluable resource of addresses, current professional activities, Fellowship subjects and Host institutes. It permits members to identify and contact colleagues. It may also serve as a useful recruitment pool. New Fellows who work in developing countries or in Eastern Europe may benefit from a 1-year ERS full membership.
- c. The end-of-project report will be posted on the ERS website (please refer to point 3.1, e). Fellows will automatically become members of the Association of ERS Fellows. ERS office will contact Fellows on a regular basis in order to update their profile on the website.
- d. ERS Fellows are encouraged to attend the Fellows Lunch Session organised at the ERS Annual Congress.

Any infringement of these conditions will result in the withdrawal of an application from the selection process or the cancellation of an award already made.

4. Guidelines for completing an ERS Fellowship application

4.1 Proposed start and finish dates of your project

- a. These dates should fall within the specified duration of the Fellowship you applied for. They should allow sufficient time after the expected date of the funding decision for you to complete travel, visa and passport formalities. Start dates should be set as from July 2010 and within 1 year of the notification dates at the latest.
- b. You can expect a decision within four months of the application deadline.
- c. Fellowships are not granted in retrospect for already fully or partly carried out projects.

4.2 Project description

This is the most important component of your application. It should be prepared by yourself and have the approval of your Home and Host supervisors. The description must not exceed 4 pages. It must address in sufficient scientific, medical and/or technical detail all of the following points:

- a. objectives and underlying hypothesis;
- b. material, methods, procedures;
- c. relevance to respiratory medicine;
- d. relevance and potential benefits to activities in the Home institute and for patients;
- e. relationship to your past, current and future professional activities;
- f. reason(s) for choice of Host institution (particularly the availability of facilities and expertise);
- g. reference to recent publications in the project field from the Host and others, where applicable;
- h. justification of project duration (schedule of planned work with detailed activities);
- i. facilities available upon return to continue the work and to apply and disseminate the newly acquired skills.

4.3 Supervisors

- a. Your Home supervisor's Release Form should authorize your leave of absence during the planned project period, indicate that, if successful, a position will be open to you on completion of the Fellowship, and confirm the relevance of and support of your proposed work. It should attest to your proficiency in the working language at the proposed Host institute.
- b. Your Host supervisor needs to provide to the ERS a signed Host Acceptance Form, which can be downloaded from the online application, section 6. You should pre-complete it as necessary and send on to your Host for signature.
- c. Home Release and Host acceptance Forms need to be completed, signed by Supervisors and originals need to be sent by post mail to the ERS office. These two forms may additionally be sent in electronic format (scanned copy with signature) by email to fellowships@ersnet.org or by fax in order to be received by the ERS office by the application closing dates.

4.4 References

- a. Two references are required (forms can be downloaded from the online application, section 6).
- b. You should choose as referees independent professional colleagues who are familiar with your work. Your current Home or Host supervisors cannot act in this capacity.
- c. The Reference Form should be pre-completed by the applicant and returned by the referees directly to the ERS. References must be received by the application closing date.
- d. All references are confidential.
- e. Reference Forms need to be completed, signed by Referees and originals need to be sent by post mail to the ERS office. These two forms may additionally be sent in electronic format (scanned copy with signature) by email to fellowships@ersnet.org or by fax in order to be received by the ERS office by the application closing dates.