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Towards climate-smart sustainable management of agricultural soils

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is to specify jointly the visiting scientist support (task 5.4) and access to infrastructure (task 7.4) scheme to benefit scientists working in the EJP SOIL consortium. These visiting fellowship grants are complementary to activities enabling the researchers to exploit the European soil research infrastructure, and contribute to work undertaken in other EJP SOIL work packages. It provides information on the opportunities offered for researchers at each stage of their scientific career as well as to non-research technical laboratory staff who want to enhance collaboration and exchange of expertise in facilities of EJP SOIL partners as well as in leading non-EJP SOIL institutions. This document

provides the general overview on the visiting scientists' programmes provided by task 5.4 and task 7.4, the requirements for grant application, the rules of the evaluation process carried out by the Scientific Committee and the reporting needs.

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1. INVITATION

The EJP SOIL programme considers mobility between organizations to be an asset for the personal and career development of researchers. Such mobility strengthens inter-institutional collaboration and promotes the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, thereby contributing to increased research creativity, efficacy and performance.

WP 5 “Education, training and capacity building” is taking an approach to build, among the EJP SOIL partners, capacity in soil science education and training in short and medium term, both at individual and institutional level.

Task 5.4 “Visiting scientists support” aims to strengthen institutional partnerships and network to advance scientific joint work on climate-smart agricultural soils, in line with the EJP SOIL Impact pathway *EIA 3 “Strengthening scientific capacities and cooperation across Europe including training of young soil scientists”*.

WP 7 “Synthesis on knowledge integration. Access to infrastructures” synthesizes research activities for scientists as well as policy makers in particular regarding the development of a framework for climate-smart sustainable agricultural soil management.

Task 7.4 “Access to infrastructure” aims to facilitate the access to agricultural soil research infrastructures (long term experiments and analytical resources) for researchers.

The visiting scientist application scheme and reporting requirements were developed to enable researchers at each stage of their scientific career and non-research staff to contribute in the EJP SOIL consortium, in order to carry out research visits and improve their skills in facilities of EJP SOIL partners as well as in leading non-EJP SOIL institutions.

The EJP SOIL financial support will provide means for expenses for a visiting scientists’ stay at the host institution, undertaking collaborative work aligned to the EJP SOIL activities in any work package. These visiting grants will be complementary to activities aiming to facilitate the access of researchers to the European soil research infrastructure, and to activities developed in other work packages.

The calls for visiting scientist support will be announced at least twice a year on the EJP SOIL website (www.ejpsoil.eu), as well as on social media (e.g. LinkedIn), and will enable visits during programme year 2, 3 and 4 for institutions that are involved in the EJP SOIL programme, as money has been allocated for both WP5 and WP7 by each partner. This budget should be used for e.g. training of young scientists, usage of infrastructure, device support, and soil analyses. Application forms will be reviewed by a Scientific Committee composed of three members, led by IUNG, including one member from the partner institutions and one member of the task 7.4 leading team.

2. VISITING SCIENTISTS PROGRAMME

- 2.1 All visiting grants involve a host institution located in a member state of the European Union, as well as non-EU EJP SOIL partners (Switzerland, Norway and Turkey). A recipient of the grant can be an employee or a student of EJP SOIL partner as well as their linked third parties.
- 2.2 Activities proposed by task 5.4 for the visiting grants could be dedicated to (but not limited to): i) developing and learning, e.g. acquiring new expertise in soil data, methodology, analysis, ii) developing joint teaching and learning elements in higher education, iii) developing joint scientific publications, iv) participation in the workshops, seminars, conferences relevant for the EJP SOIL aims and scope, v) planning and developing of joint proposals within the scope of EJP SOIL programme.
- 2.3 The task 5.4 visiting grants programme provides financial support to young (master, PhD students, postdocs), mid and senior level scientists but also non-research laboratory technical staff only from the EJP SOIL institutions undertaking international mobility to other EJP SOIL partner institutions or non-EJP SOIL partner institutions within the EU if the training stay contributes to EJP SOIL Expected impacts (see Annex C).
- 2.4 Activities proposed by task 7.4 for the visiting grants can be i) visiting a laboratory, in order to analyse soil samples using a method that is not implemented at the home institution, and ii) visiting a long-term experiment, in order to take soil samples or get access to soil data that expand and upgrade the own dataset and lead to additional knowledge and new perspectives in the respective research topic.
- 2.5 In task 7.4, a limited number of visits will be reserved for applicants from non-European countries, which will enable the dissemination of the EJP SOIL knowledge beyond EJP SOIL partner institutions.
- 2.6 Calls for task 5.4 and task 7.4 will be announced regularly at the end of March and September of years 2021, 2022 and 2023. The first call for applications within the scope of WP 5.4 will be in March 2021, while the first call for applications within the scope of WP 7.4 will be announced in September 2021.
- 2.7 All necessary application documents and other detailed data will be posted on the EJP SOIL programme website (www.ejpsoil.eu) no later than 15 days before the call launch.
- 2.8 Applications for visiting grants will be opened for 1 month and start on the 1st of April and September and close at the end of April and October at years 2021, 2022 and 2023.

2.9 The selection process will take about two weeks from closure of the application process. After that, the decision of the Scientific Committee will be announced.

2.10 Each member of the Scientific Committee will independently evaluate the applications concerning the following criteria, scoring from 1 up to 5 points (see Annex A):

- scientific value of the visit;
- compatibility with EJP SOIL aims and scope;
- relevance to EJP SOIL expected impacts.

Applications getting score at minimum of 9,0 points will be granted.

3. WHAT IS COVERED

3.1 Task 5.4: Visiting scientists may apply for financing support for a visiting period of several days up to two weeks at maximum. The duration time of the visit and their amounts depend on the home institution's financial abilities allocated to the WP5 budget.

3.2 Task 5.4: Travel, accommodation and daily subsistence allowance corresponding to the visit will be calculated based on national regulations made by home institution.

3.3 Co-financing rate of 44% would apply to task 5.4 activities destined for EJP SOIL partners.

3.4 Task 5.4: The financial support pertains to the applicant only.

3.5 Task 7.4: Funding for the staff from EJP SOIL partners will be covered by the home institution and will include travel and accommodation. For staff from non-EJP SOIL partners, costs for travel, accommodation and analytical costs for subcontracted sites will be covered by support to third parties at a maximum of 5000 € for a maximum of 20 days. The costs incurred will be reimbursed after the visit and after the approval of a final visit report, describing the analysis and scientific outcomes of the visit.

3.6 Task 7.4 consortium beneficiaries will be co-financed at 44% and at 100% for external visitors.

3.7 Task 7.4: Travel and accommodation and daily subsistence allowance corresponding to the visit will be calculated based on national regulations by home institution in case of EJP SOIL partner and non-EJP SOIL institutions. Reimbursement of costs will be evaluated during the review of the application.

- 3.8 Costs pertaining to administrative processing such as medical coverage, all types of insurance and costs arising from certain circumstances are part of participant's own expenses.
- 3.9 Equipment operation costs or other special costs of the host institution are not covered for EJP SOIL members by the EJP SOIL programme.

5. HOW TO PROCEED

5.1 Applicants must complete the application form (see Annex A) accompanied by:

- the consent to participate in the EJP SOIL programme;
- name and surname of the applicant;
- position;
- home institution address;
- curriculum vitae;
- short description of scientific background (max. 100 words);
- listed up to 5 main publications no older than 10 years (this requirement does not apply to young researchers at the beginning of their research careers and non-research technical laboratory staff);
- description of the purpose and rationale of the visit in the host institution or participation in the workshops and scientific conferences and their complementarity with the EJP SOIL aims and scope (max. 300 words);
- contribution to EJP SOIL Expected impacts;
- planned output/outcome useful for EJP SOIL;
- a letter of invitation from the host institution confirming the outreach and/or training agenda in the projected dates of the visit or the title, dates and place as well as scientific programme in case of workshops, seminars and scientific conferences;
- confirmation of the financing ability from home institution to cover the costs within the projected dates of the visit including budget (according to format) outlining costs shared between home institution and EJP SOIL, and, if relevant, third party co-funding.

5.2 The applicants are required to send all necessary documents within the prescribed timeline.

5.3 The application form and attached documents have to be uploaded in the web application tool in a portable document format (.pdf) no later than on the day of closing the call.

5.4 If the application form is considered as incomplete, it will be declared inadmissible and will not be considered by the Scientific Committee.

5.5 The receipt of the application form and attached documents will be confirmed by a reply to the applicant's e-mail address.

5.6 Admission decisions will be communicated electronically. Once the decisions have been made, the applicant will be notified.

6. Reporting of the visiting grants

6.1 At the conclusion of the research programme, the applicant must submit the summary report in English (see Annex B) including:

- name and surname of the grantee;
- position;
- home institution name and address;
- host institution name and address;
- host institution supervisor and her/his position in case of workshop or conference, please describe the title, place, country and duration;
- duration of the visit;
- actual budget allocation;
- brief description of the activity and achievements of the short stay or granted visit (max. 500 words);
- main output/outcome of the visit. Please, provide the references and insert links, if available;
- main expected or unexpected benefits from the visit;
- suggestions to improve this staff exchange for EJP SOIL.

6.2 The report must be approved by the host supervisor and uploaded in the web application tool no later than 1 month after the end of the visiting period.

6.3 Publications, reports or other outputs arising wholly or in part through the WP5 or WP7 programme for visiting scientists should include an acknowledgment of EJP SOIL support, as follows: *“This project has received funding from the European Unions’ Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 862695 EJP SOIL”* They should be also available/published on the EJP SOIL website: www.ejpsoil.eu.

ANNEX A. APPLICATION FORM

Consent to participate in the EJP SOIL programme

You have been invited to take part in the European Joint Programme “Towards climate-smart sustainable management of agricultural soils” (hereinafter also referred to as “EJP SOIL”). Your participation in this research will contribute to the creation of a sustainable European integrated research community on agricultural soils and to the development and deployment of a roadmap on climate-smart sustainable agricultural soil management. Please, find more information at www.ejpsoil.eu.

Before taking a decision on whether you wish to participate or not, please read this document carefully. Please, feel free to ask all the questions you may have to ensure that you have full understanding of the purpose and proceedings of the research project, including the risks and benefits.

Please contact: task 5.4; Bożena Smreczak (IUNG) e-mail: bozenas@iung.pulawy.pl, phone +48 4786918, task 7.4 Katharina Meurer (SLU, katharina.meurer@slu.se, phone +46 18672463) for any upcoming questions.

Compliance with legal and ethical regulations

At all times, we assure full compliance with relevant national and EU legislation on data protection and ethical standards.

Involvement

You are asked to participate in a visiting scientist programme carried out as part of Work Package 5 or WP 7 of the EJP SOIL. The visiting scientist programme is jointly organised by task 5.4 (Bożena Smreczak, Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – State Research Institute, Poland) and task 7.4 (Katharina Meurer, Department of Soil & Environment, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden). This programme aims to strengthen institutional partnerships and network to advance scientific joint work on climate smart agricultural soils.

Risks

There are no risks associated with your participation in this programme.

The information that you will provide for your participation in the visiting scientist programme will only be used internally, and in a secured way, by the members of the task 5.4 and task 7.4 teams carrying out the research project, and only for the objectives explained above. In particular, no use for commercial purpose will be made with your information, and your information will not be shared with any third party.

Privacy and confidentiality

Responses you give will be recorded and stored digitally on the server of the involved research institutes: IUNG and SLU. Information provided as a part of the visiting grant report will be used for the duration of the project and will be processed in line with GDPR during the phase of data

analysis. It will be included in project reports, deliverables and promotional materials. These will be accessible through the project website and publication services of the European Commission in the scope of Horizon 2020. The results of the research could also be published in the relevant scientific journals or conferences and used in additional research studies.

Security

Your personal data will be stored in the best security and confidentiality conditions during the duration of the research project and one year after the project has ended, that is to say until January 31, 2026. After this date, the information will be archived according to national laws.

Your rights

In accordance with the European Union's regulation on personal data protection (GDPR 2016/679) you have the right to access, modify, object, and erase your personal data. If you want to exercise this right, or to obtain your personal data, please contact for task 5.4 Bożena Smreczak (bozenas@iung.pulawy.pl, phone +48 4786918) and for task 7.4 Katharina Meurer (katharina.meurer@slu.se, phone +46 18672463).

You are free to accept or refuse to take part in this visiting scientist programme. If you accept to take part, you have the right to decline to answer any question, or to withdraw from the visiting scientist programme at any moment without providing a reason for it.

Consent

By signing this document, you agree to participate in the visiting scientist programme and to processing of personal data. Please make sure that questions you have about the programme have been all answered and that you have full understanding of what you are being asked to do.

Due to the current CoVID regulations, we kindly ask you to sign the document and send a scanned copy for task 5.4 to Bożena Smreczak (bozenas@iung.pulawy.pl) and for task 7.4 to Katharina Meurer (katharina.meurer@slu.se). The researcher will keep this copy together with the relevant research records. Please keep the document for your own records.

This consent form is made pursuant to the relevant national, European and international data protection laws and regulations as well as personal data treatment obligations. Specifically, this consent form complies with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

Name and surname of the applicant
Place, date and signature of the applicant

Template for the staff visiting grants

Part 1	
Name and surname of the applicant	
Position	
Home institution name and address	
Visit contributed to:	
Task 5.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Task 7.4 <input type="checkbox"/> EJP SOIL partner <input type="checkbox"/> non-EJP SOIL partner <input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Please mark the correct answer with "x"</i>	
CV (can be attached as a separate PDF file)	
Scientific background (max. 100 words)	
up to 5 publications no older than 10 years related to the aim of the visit <i>(this requirement does not apply to young researchers at the beginning of their research careers and non-research technical laboratory staff)</i>	
The purpose, rationale and activity during the visit (max. 300 words)	
Contribution to EJP SOIL Expected impacts	
<i>Please mark the correct answer with "x".</i>	
E11. Fostering understanding of soil management and its influence on climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainable agricultural production and environment.	
E12. Understanding how soil carbon sequestration can contribute to climate change mitigation at regional level including carbon accounting	
E13. Strengthening scientific capacities and cooperation across Europe including training of young soil scientists.	
E14. Supporting harmonized European soil information, including for international reporting.	
E15. Fostering the uptake of soil management practices which are conducive to climate change adaptation and mitigation.	
E16. Developing region-specific fertilization practices considering the local soil, water and pedo-climatic conditions.	
Planned output/outcome useful for EJP SOIL	
<i>Please mark the correct answer with "x".</i>	
- planning of joint research activity	
- developing proposal	
- developing HE contributions	
- developing joint publication	
- getting acquainted with new methods applied in EJP SOIL programme	
- presenting the results from EJP SOIL implementation	

- other (<i>specify</i>)		
Projected dates of the visit:	start	end
A letter of invitation form the host institution (<i>can be attached as a separate PDF file</i>). In case of workshop and scientific conference, please, attach the information.		
Invitation letter must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the name and surname of the applicant, – the name of her/his home institution, – the name of the host institution, – the aim and the scope of the visit, – the duration of the visit, – the name, surname and signature of the host person. 		
Place, date and signature of the applicant*		
Part 2 Cost details (EUR)		
Staff type (researcher, post doc, PhD student, technician)		
Direct personal costs		
Travel and subsistence		
Total costs		
Date, Place, Full name Signature of the EJP SOIL partner Financing Officer or EJP SOIL National Coordinator, or signature of non-EJP SOIL partner institution Financing Officer		

*I certify that the above information is correct and I authorize the verification of all the information provided in this form. I also understand that my inclusion of incomplete or inaccurate information in this form may result in a delay of the approval process as well as revocation of the support for visiting scientists.

NOTE: Co-financing rate of 44% would apply to task 5.4 and 7.4 activities destined for EJP SOIL partners while 100% co-financing is designated in task 7.4 for external visitors.

Summary of the Scientific Committee evaluation process

Name and surname of Scientific Committee member	scientific value	compatibility with EJP SOIL aims and scope	relevance to EJP SOIL programme expected impacts	Total
	Score (1-5 points max.)			
Total				

The minimum score for grant funding is 9,0 points.

ANNEX B. REPORTING FORM

Template summarizing the visiting grants

Name and surname of the grantee
Position
Home institution name and address
Host institution name and address
Host institution main person and her/his position in case of workshop or conference, please describe the title, place, country and duration
Duration of the visit
Actual budget allocation
Brief description of the activity and achievements of the short stay or granted visit (max. 500 words)
Define the main output of the visit. Please, provide the references and insert links, if available
Define main expected or unexpected benefit from the visit
Please, provide any suggestions to improve this staff exchange for EJP SOIL Partners regarding: - process of application and reporting; - duration of the stay; - funding;
Place, date and signature of the applicant*

*I certify that the above information is correct and I authorize the verification of all the information provided in this form. I also understand that my inclusion of incomplete or inaccurate information in this form may result in a delay of the approval process as well as revocation of the support for visiting scientists.

ANNEX C. TASKS 5.4 AND 7.4 DEDICATED VISITS AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

TASK 5.4 Visiting scientists support is dedicated only to employees (e.g. researchers and non-research laboratory technical staff) from EJP SOIL partner institutions undertaking international mobility to other EJP SOIL and non EJP SOIL partner institutions.

Examples of activities within task 5.4:

- developing and learning /acquiring new expertise in soil data, methodology, analysis,
- planning and development of joint proposals within the scope of EJP SOIL programme,
- developing joint teaching and learning elements in higher education,
- participation in the workshops, seminars, conferences relevant for the EJP SOIL aims and scope,
- developing joint scientific publications,
- other activity within the scope of EJP SOIL programme.

TASK 7.4 Access to infrastructure is predominantly dedicated to employees from EJP SOIL partner institutions but limited number of visits are reserved for non- EJP SOIL institutions enabling the dissemination of the EJP SOIL knowledge beyond EJP SOIL consortium.

Task 7.4 proposed activities:

- visiting a laboratory, in order to analyse soil samples using a method that is not possible at the home institution,
- visiting a long-term experiment, in order to take soil samples that expand and upgrade the own dataset and lead to additional knowledge/new perspectives in the respective research topic.