

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE COMMITTEE

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

POSTDOC-ARMENIA 2024

Program for Foreign Researchers in Scientific
Organizations of the Republic of Armenia



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CALL FOR PROPOSALS “PROGRAM FOR FOREIGN RESEARCHERS IN SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (POSTDOC-ARMENIA 2024)”

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Call for Proposals

- 1.1. The Call for Proposals “Program for Foreign Researchers in Scientific Organizations of the Republic of Armenia (PostDoc-Armenia 2024)”, (hereinafter ‘**Call for Proposals**’) is carried out in accordance with the Order № 2369-U/2 dated November 14, 2023, issued by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter ‘**Minister**’).
- 1.2. The **Call for Proposals** is organized by the Higher Education and Science Committee of the Ministry of Science, Education, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter ‘**Committee**’), being guided by the Order for Contractual (Thematic) Funding of Scientific and Technical Activity established by the RA Government Decision №1122 dated November 17, 2001.
- 1.3. The **Call for Proposals** aims to create new prospective and competitive areas of research with the involvement of foreign researchers under the umbrella of the organizations carrying out a program within the framework of basic funding for scientific and technical activities from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter ‘**Organization**’).
- 1.4. The **Call for Proposals** covers all research fields of scientific and technical activities (listed in Annex №2.1).
- 1.5. The procedure of the **present Call** implies submitting an application (hereinafter ‘**Application**’), which shall include the description of the scientific project (hereinafter ‘**Project**’) and other supporting documents/data.
- 1.6. The submitted **Project** (Annex №2.2) shall be ambitious, promising, and feasible.
- 1.7. The publications presented within the current **Call for Proposals** shall be indexed in international scientific databases (“Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE)”, “Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)”, “Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI)”, “Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI)”), **or** published as a book chapter/paper in a scientific periodical issued by a publisher indexed in the Web of Science Book Citation Index, **or** published in periodicals listed in the portal “SCImago Journal & Country Ranking” with an at least Q4 index, and an equivalent of an at least Q2 SJR (SCImago Journal Rank) indicator (hereinafter ‘**International Scientific Database**’ or ‘**ISD**’) for conference proceedings. As for the **Monograph/Collective Monograph/ Scientific Work**

(hereinafter ‘**Monograph**’), it shall consist of at least 5 author's sheets and be issued by one of the publishers included in the “Web of Science Book Citation Index”.

- 1.8. The terms of the **Call for Proposals** shall define the application procedure, the stages, and criteria of **Application** evaluation, as well as funding and reporting procedures for the selected **Projects**.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purposes of the present Call for Proposals are as follows:

- Foster international collaboration in the field of science;
- Increase the capacity of the respective hosting Organization;
- Involve researchers from overseas;
- Consolidate the capacity of researchers from the Diaspora;
- Promote the integration of young scientists into the international research area;
- Improve the scientific environment;
- Pave the ground for the creation of innovative, competitive, and prospective areas of research.

3. Timeframes

- 3.1. The **Projects** approved for funding shall be carried out within 24 months.
- 3.2. The submission deadline for the **Call for Proposals** via the Online **Application** System is **January 12, 2024, 18:00**, Yerevan time (GMT+4).
- 3.3. The deadline for the submission of the paper-based documents to the **Committee** is **January 19, 2024**.
- 3.4. **Contracts** shall be signed within 10 days after the announcement of the results of the **Call**.
- 3.5. Implementation **Reports** shall be submitted by the last working day of every 12th month since the commencement of the **Project**.
- 3.6. The **Project** shall commence and be implemented within the timeframes specified in the **Contract**.

4. The Applicant

- 4.1. The **Application** shall be submitted by the **Applicant**.
- 4.2. The **Project** is developed and implemented by the **Applicant**, who shall be either a citizen or resident of the Republic of Armenia and reside in Armenia during the whole implementation of the **Project**.
- 4.3. The **Applicant** shall:
 - be born after January 1, 1984;
 - have received a scientific degree after January 1, 2010;
 - neither have studied nor worked in the Republic of Armenia for a cumulative period of 12 months during the last 4 years by the announcement of the **Call**.
- 4.4. The age threshold which is established in Subparagraph 4.3. can be extended in the following cases:

- in the case of military service - for 2 years;
 - in the case of parental leave - for 1 year for each child.
- 4.5. The **Applicant** cannot submit more than one **Application** to the present **Call**.
- 4.6. The publications of the **Applicant** published during the last 5 years (2019-2024) shall meet the following criteria:
- For research fields #1-5 (NS, ET, MS, AS, and SS) listed in Annex 2.1:*
- 4 **ISD-indexed** publications;
- For research field #6 (AH) listed in Annex 2.1:*
- 2 **ISD-indexed** publications;
 - or 1 **Monograph**.
- For the specialties included in Research Field #6, 1 Monograph is tantamount to 4 ISD-indexed publications.**
- 4.7. If any of the submitted publications are included in Beall's list (<https://beallslist.net/>) of predatory and fraud publications or journals, the Professional Expertise Board established for the evaluation of the **Applications** (hereinafter '**Board**') shall decide on further admissibility of the **Application** for scientific expertise.
- 4.8. During the implementation of the **Project**, the **Applicant** shall be assisted by an employee of the Organization (hereinafter '**Mentor**') in research and organizational matters.

5. The Mentor

- 5.1. The **Mentor** shall:
- hold a scientific degree;
 - be employed at the Organization under an employment contract.
- 5.2. No remuneration shall be envisaged for the **Mentor's** activities.
- 5.3. The **Mentor** shall provide the **Applicant** with their academic CV and a Confirmation Letter restating their awareness of the **Project** content, the scope of their responsibilities, as well as the requirements envisaged under the "Expected Results" of the **Call**.

6. Organization Eligibility

- 6.1. The **Organization** shall be among those implementing the program funded within the basic funding of scientific and technical activities from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia.
- 6.2. The **Organization** shall provide access to its infrastructure and equipment.
- 6.3. The **Organization** shall support the implementation of the **Project**.
- 6.4. The **Organization** must provide the **Applicant** with the scientific board conclusion of the **Organization** (or, in the case of higher education institutions, that of a particular department) regarding the **Project's** relevance, importance, and correspondence to the **Organization's** scope of activities.
- 6.5. By the 6^h month of the implementation of the **Project**, the **Organization** shall include the **Applicant** in a program of basic funding of scientific and technical activities, and the CI shall remain included in such program at least till the end of the **Project**.

- 6.6. The Head of the **Organization** provides the **Applicant** with a reference letter confirming their awareness of the conditions of the **Call**, non-objection to the involvement of the **Mentor** therein, and expressing their readiness to allocate the financial resources from the basic funding of the **Organization** to comply with the provisions specified in Subparagraph 6.5. of the present **Call**.
- 6.7. The Head of the **Organization** covers the expenses aimed at creating necessary conditions for the implementation of the **Project** at the expense of financial resources envisaged in the “Overhead Costs” subsection of the “Other Expenses” section of the Financial Estimate (hereinafter ‘**Estimate**’).
- 6.8. The equipment, materials, and services necessary for the implementation of the **Project** shall be purchased in the manner prescribed by the RA Law “On Procurements” in conformity with the regulations of public-needs-oriented procurements.
- 6.9. The right of disposal of the equipment and devices purchased shall belong to the **Organization**, including **the right of** subsequent use thereof for statutory purposes, i.e., for carrying out research activities.
- 6.10. A **Contract** shall be signed between the **Organization**, the **Committee**, and the selected **Applicant** receiving the grant, on the use of the amounts of financial assistance provided by the state in the form of a grant for the implementation of contractual projects of scientific and technical activities (hereinafter ‘**Contract**’).

7. **Expected Results**

- 7.1. After the completion of the **Project**, the **Applicant** shall present the following publications:
 - A minimum of 2 **scientific** publications in journals having an equivalent of at least Q2 SJR (SCImago Journal Rank) indicator. At least one of the publications shall involve the **Mentor** as a co-author.
- 7.2. All publications produced as an output of the **Project** shall contain an indication of the **Organization** as the author's affiliation and an acknowledgment statement mentioning that the funding was received from the **Committee**:

This work was supported by the Higher Education and Science Committee of RA (Research Project № _____)

Attention: Without the aforementioned notes, the publication shall not be considered as a Project Output and, therefore, shall not be included in the report.
- 7.3. Within the frames of the **Project's** implementation, the **Applicant** is expected to ensure the creation and dissemination of popular science materials about the **Project** or their particular field of science (interviews, publications in popular science journals, creation, and distribution of video materials, organization of discussions for general audience, etc.). The **Board** shall consider these dissemination efforts when evaluating and accepting the **Project's** final report.
- 7.4. Both successful compliance and noncompliance with the provisions of Subparagraph 7.1., shall respectively affect the evaluation score of the future applications with the participation of the

Applicant and the **Mentor** to the upcoming **Call for Proposals** announced by the **Committee**. Particularly, the amount of 5 percent of the final evaluation score shall be subtracted from (in the case of noncompliance) or added to (in the case of compliance) the evaluation score of the future applications. The reduction of the final expertise score of the applications submitted to the future **Calls for Proposals** shall cease to apply once the **Committee** is duly notified about the compliance with the provisions of Subparagraph 7.1.

II. PROCEDURE FOR COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

8. Submission of the Application and Supporting Documents

- 8.1. The **Application** shall be filled in and submitted by the **Applicant** via the Online **Application** System <https://postdoc-armenia-2024.hesc.am/>. The Application deadline for the Call for Proposals is **January 12, 2024, 18:00**, Yerevan time (GMT+4).
- 8.2. The following paper-based documents shall be presented to the **Organization** after online submission thereof via the Online **Application** System:
 - **Applicant's** application letter (Annex 2.3);
 - **Estimate**;
 - the scientific board's conclusion of the host **Organization** (or the university faculty), which shall contain information regarding the **Project's** relevance, importance, feasibility and correspondence to the **Organization's** scope of activities;
 - a letter by the Head of the host **Organization** envisaged under Subparagraph 6.5. of the present **Call**;
 - the academic CVs of the **Applicant**.
- 8.3. Other documents may be required if necessary.
- 8.4. By January 19, 2024, a representative of the **Organization** (Scientific Secretary or another authorized person) shall submit all the required paper-based documents of their **Organization** to the **Committee** in one package (22 Orbeli Brothers St., 7th floor, 706 room).
- 8.5. Should there be any further inquiries regarding the **Call for Proposals**, please contact the relevant department of the **Committee** at scexpert@hesc.am or by dialing +37410210140-108.

Attention: The Committee shall consider only those applications that are submitted via the online system. The applications that have not been submitted in accordance with the aforementioned procedure or deadlines shall not be considered.

9. Estimate

- 9.1. The **Estimate** consists of two sections: "Remuneration" and "Other Costs". The "Other Costs" section includes "Equipment, Materials and Services", "Travels", and "Overhead Costs" subsections.

- For the “Remuneration” section of the **Estimate**, the maximum monthly salary for the **Applicant** shall be AMD 400,000 gross, and in the case of their relocation to the Republic of Armenia with family member(s) - AMD 550,000 gross;
- 9.2. If the total remuneration is less than the above-mentioned amount, the surplus can be used in the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate**.
 - 9.3. No remuneration is envisaged for the **Collaborator** of the **Group**.
 - 9.4. For the “Equipment, Materials, and Services”, “Travels”, and “Overhead Costs” subsections of the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate**, an amount of AMD 3,000,000 may be envisaged for a total of 24 months. The amount of funding envisaged for those costs can be increased at the expense of the surplus mentioned in Subparagraph 9.3.
 - 9.5. The expenses for purchasing scientific equipment, materials, and services necessary for the research may be envisaged under the “Equipment, Materials, and Services” subsection of the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate**. A contract for services may be signed only with legal entities upon the consent of the **Committee**.
 - 9.6. The costs for the implementation process and presentation of the proceedings of the **Project** at international conferences and mutual visits of the **Collaborator** and the **Group Members** may be envisaged under the “Travel” subsection of the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate**.
 - 9.7. Up to AMD 200,000 may be requested under the “Overhead Costs” subsection of the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate**.
 - 9.8. When calculating daily and accommodation costs of the study visits, it is necessary to be guided by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia №2335-Ն dated December 29, 2005.
 - 9.9. All of the subsections of the **Estimate** shall be justified in the **Budget Estimate Narrative**.
 - 9.10. Justification and distribution of the **Estimate** may be amended upon the recommendation of the **Board** and the consent of the **Applicant**.

III. APPLICATION CONSIDERATION AND EVALUATION

10. Conformity of Applications to the Terms of the Call

- 10.1. The **Committee** shall consider the following circumstances:
 - Compliance of the submitted **Applications** with the terms of the **Call**;
 - Whether the **Application** contains publications included in Beall’s list (<https://beallist.net/>) of fake and predatory publishers or journals.
- 10.2. The **Application** shall not be considered if:
 - it does not contain all the required documentation;
 - it does not meet the **Call’s** criteria;
 - its content is identical to one of the research projects funded, currently or previously, from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia.
- 10.3. The results of the examination shall be provided to the **Board** members.
- 10.4. The **Board** shall consider and approve the list of **Applications** subject to Scientific **Expertise**.

11. Scientific Expertise

- 11.1. **The Board**, in cooperation with **the Committee**, shall design and approve the evaluation sheets and the procedure for the first and second stages of Scientific Expertise of Applications.
- 11.2. Pursuant to the provisions of the RA Law “On Scientific and Technical Expertise”, the **Committee**, the **Board**, or the experts shall be prohibited from providing any information regarding the **Applications’** content, Scientific Expertise process, and the results thereof to a third party.

12. The 1st Stage of Scientific Expertise

- 12.1. During the 1st Stage of Scientific Expertise, the **Board** shall consider the Extensive Summary (Annex 2.5) of the **Project**, the **Applicants’** track record, their academic **CVs**, and the **Organization’s** and **Mentor’s** compatibility with the **Project’s** purposes. Subsequently, based on the **Board** members' consensus, the shortlist of eligible applications for the next stage of Scientific Expertise shall be formed.
- 12.2. The **Applicants** who have not been shortlisted for the 2nd Stage of Scientific Expertise shall be duly notified.

13. The 2nd Stage of Scientific Expertise

- 13.1. At the 2nd Stage of Scientific Expertise, the following aspects of the **Application** shall be evaluated by the Experts: the **Project** (Annex №2.2), the current state of research on the topic, relevance and prospects, the validity of the scope and timespan of the **Project**, the implementation feasibility at the **Organization**, compatibility with the research trends in the particular area, significance of the collaboration, the qualifications and professional compliance of the **Applicant** in terms of the **Project** objectives, the **Applicant’s** previous background in international cooperation, **Estimate** justification, as well as other issues related to the peculiarities of the current **Call**. At this stage, the **Board** shall also conduct interviews with the **Applicants**.
- 13.2. The **Application** shall be reviewed by at least 2 independent experts. A **Board Member** is also entitled to act as an independent expert.
- 13.3. For each **Application**, the expert shall fill out the Expert Evaluation Sheet.
- 13.4. The maximum score of the Interview shall not exceed 50% of the maximum evaluation score of the **Application**.
- 13.5. If the scores of two experts differ by 30 percent or more from the maximum evaluation score of scientific expertise, the **Application** shall be subject to further examination by a third expert.

14. The 2nd Stage of Scientific Expertise (Interview)

- 14.1. The **Board** shall conduct interviews with the **Applicants**.
- 14.2. Each member of the **Board** shall fill out an Interview Evaluation Sheet for each **Application**.
- 14.3. The maximum score for the Interview amounts to 50% of the maximum evaluation score for the **Application**.

15. Evaluations Results

- 15.1. The total score of scientific expertise shall be calculated as the sum of the arithmetic mean of the Evaluation Scores of 2 experts and the arithmetic mean of the Interview Scores. If the **Application** has been evaluated by 3 experts, the final **Application** score shall be calculated as the sum of the arithmetic mean of two of the closest scores submitted by 3 experts (in the case of equal difference between 3 experts' scores – the arithmetic mean of two higher scores) and the arithmetic mean of the Interview scores.
- 15.2. Based on the final evaluation results of the **Applications** shortlisted for the 2nd Stage of Scientific Expertise, the **Committee** shall form the Application Ranking List in descending order and further submit it to the **Board** for consideration.
- 15.3. The **Board** approves the **Application** Ranking List and presents the recommended threshold score for each research field for the consideration of the Chairman of the **Committee**.
- 15.4. Based on the volume of allocations from the Republic of Armenia's state budget for the contractual (thematic) funding of scientific and technical activities, the **Committee** shall determine the threshold score for each of the research fields and shall submit the draft order listing the **Applications** eligible for funding and the amount of funding to the **Minister's** approval.
- 15.5. The list of **Applications** eligible for funding and the amount of funding thereof shall be approved by the Order of the **Minister**.
- 15.6. The list of **Applications** eligible for funding as a result of the **Call** shall be published on the official website of the **Committee**.
- 15.7. The **Committee** shall duly provide each Head of the **Organization** with the Approved **Applications** List for their respective **Organization**.
- 15.8. The **Committee** shall provide the **Applicants** with the Expertise results and the threshold score.

IV. OTHER PROVISIONS

16. Contract Signing

- 16.1. The **Committee**, the **Organization**, and the **Applicant** of the approved **Application** shall sign a **Contract**.
- 16.2. The copies of the relevant contracts signed with the **Applicant** within the **Call** shall be submitted to the **Committee**.
- 16.3. The **Contracts** shall be signed within 10 days after the publication of the results of the present **Call**.
- 16.4. The **Projects** shall commence and be implemented within the timeframes outlined in the **Contract**.

17. Reporting

- 17.1. The **Applicant** shall submit an Implementation **Report** (Interim/Final) to the **Committee** every 12th month (by the last working day) since the commencement of the **Project**. Based on the

reports, the **Board** shall decide on the continuation of funding of the **Project** or the acceptability of the final report.

- 17.2. During the implementation of the **Project**, the **Committee** is entitled to initiate monitoring of the **Project** and present the results to the **Board**.
- 17.3. While deciding on the continuation of funding of the **Project**, the **Board** shall take into consideration the results of the monitoring.
- 17.4. Funding of the **Project** shall be terminated in the case of failure to submit the interim report within the established timeframe.
- 17.5. The **Committee** reserves the right to publish the abstracts and reports of the funded **Projects** either in a paper-based or electronic format.

18. Additional Information

- 18.1. Should the submitted **Project** and the reports based thereon include intellectual property or patent rights objects, the **Applicant** shall comply with the Laws of the Republic of Armenia “On Copyright and Related Rights” and “On Inventions, Utility Models and Industrial Designs.”
- 18.2. The **Applicant** shall be allowed to redistribute the financial means envisaged in the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate** by submitting an appropriate justification and receiving the **Committee's** written permission thereto.
- 18.3. The absence of the **Applicant** from the Republic of Armenia for 2 or more months must be agreed upon in writing with the **Committee**.
- 18.4. After the successful completion of the **Project**, the **Applicant** shall have the chance to apply to the “Incoming Research Fellowship Program (Integration Grant)”.

19. Termination of the Project Funding

The **Committee** is entitled to terminate the funding of the **Project** in the following cases:

- The Interim report has not been submitted within the established timeframe, or the **Board** has issued a negative conclusion on the acceptance of the report;
- A redistribution of financial means has been made in the “Other Costs” section of the **Estimate** without the **Committee's** written permission thereto;
- The absence of the **Applicant** from the Republic of Armenia for a period of two months or more without the **Committee's** written permission thereto,
- The provisions of Subparagraph 6.5 of the present **Call** failed to be fulfilled. Moreover, such noncompliance shall also affect further **Applications** from the **Organization** in the amount determined in the conclusion of the **Board** formed for the next **Calls for Proposals**.

RESEARCH FIELDS BY CLASSIFIERS

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Natural Sciences</p> <p>1.1. Mathematics 1.2. Computer and Information Sciences 1.3. Physical and Astronomical Sciences 1.4. Chemical Sciences 1.5. Earth and Related Environmental Sciences 1.6. Biological Sciences</p> <p>2. Engineering and Technology</p> <p>2.1. Civil Engineering and Architecture 2.2. Electrical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Energy Engineering, Computing and Information Technologies 2.3. Mechanics 2.4. Mechanical Science and Mechanical Engineering 2.5. Chemical Technologies 2.6. Material Studies 2.7. Medical Engineering 2.8. Environmental Studies 2.9. Biotechnology 2.10. Nanotechnology</p> <p>3. Medical and Health Sciences</p> <p>3.1. Basic Medicine 3.2. Clinical Medicine 3.3. Medical Biotechnology</p> | <p>4. Agricultural Sciences</p> <p>4.1. Animal Agriculture and Veterinary Science 4.2. Crop Science 4.3. Soil Science, Agrochemistry, Plant Protection 4.4. Agricultural Biotechnology</p> <p>5. Social Sciences</p> <p>5.1. Psychology 5.2. Economics and Business Administration 5.3. Education 5.4. Sociology 5.5. Law 5.6. Political Science 5.7. Social and Economic Geography 5.8. Media and Communications</p> <p>6. Armenian Studies and Humanities</p> <p>6.1. History and Archaeology 6.2. Languages and Literature Studies 6.3. Philosophy and Ethics 6.4. Theology and Religious Studies 6.5. Arts</p> |
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Project

To be filled out in English, on up to 12 pages, including graphs, tables, images, and references.

1. *Annotation*

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2. *Review of the Current State of Research on the Topic*

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3. *Project Aims and Objectives*

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4. *Research Project*

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5. *Scientific Methods of Project Implementation*

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6. *Calendar Plan (by quarters or Gantt Chart)*

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7. *Prerequisites for International Cooperation*

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8. *Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators for the Expected Results (publications, conference proceedings, use of innovative methods, such as technological investment, demonstration, sample, prototype, etc., management of intellectual property (patent, copyright, etc., fostering international cooperation, prospects for collaboration)*

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9. *References*

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Annex №2.3

to the Call for Proposals
“Program for Foreign Researchers in Scientific Organizations
of the Republic of Armenia (PostDoc-Armenia 2024)”

TO THE ATTENTION OF
MR. LEVON FARMANYAN
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
RA HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE COMMITTEE

From _____
(Name, Surname)

(Postal Address)

(Phone Number)

Application Letter

Kindly find enclosed herewith the Application entitled _____ submitted for consideration under the Call for Proposals “Program for Foreign Researchers in Scientific Organizations of the Republic of Armenia (PostDoc-Armenia 2024)”.

Applicant _____
(Signature)

(_____)
(Name, Surname)

« ____ » _____ 2024

TO THE ATTENTION OF
MR. SARGIS HAYOTSYAN
CHAIRMAN OF THE RA HIGHER EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE COMMITTEE

Application Letter

Kindly find enclosed herewith the Applications submitted by the
_____ (name of the Organization) entitled

_____ for consideration under the Call for Proposals “Program for Foreign
Researchers in Scientific Organizations of the Republic of Armenia (PostDoc-Armenia 2024)” within
the framework of contractual (thematic) funding of scientific and technical activities.

Head of the Organization _____ (_____)
(Signature) (Name, Surname)

« ____ » _____ 2024

Project Title

Extensive Summary

The Extensive Summary is evaluated at the 1st Stage of Scientific Expertise. It should be written in English (maximum 2 pages).

*The Extensive Summary should concisely describe the **Project**, outlining the relevance and expediency of the research.*