



**The European Ceramic Society AISBL, R&D Working Group,  
supported by the JECS Trust**

**announces the**

**“ECerS FRONTIERS OF CERAMICS FELLOWSHIP”**

**OPEN TO EARLY-STAGE RESEARCHERS OF COUNTRIES AFFILIATED TO THE  
EUROPEAN CERAMIC SOCIETY**

The proposal aims to **promote frontier research and knowledge transfer** in the field of **materials, devices and processes** related to any application area of ceramics. The competition objective is to provide seed funding for curiosity-driven research which could become the topic of further projects on a larger scale at a later stage, e.g. participation in EU programmes, but also developing innovative processes and new technologies, addressing the current challenges for European Industry and promoting knowledge transfer to industry. The funding is to enable research and/or collaboration at a host institution other than the applicant's home institution.

The competition will select up to **two research projects per call**, to be supported with amounts from **€20 000 to €40 000 per project**. The funding is to cover up to **1 year in total at the host institution within a 3-year period**. Additional funding of up to €5 000 may be requested for specific needs (dependants, family requirements, disability needs etc...).

### **1) Eligibility**

The following conditions must be fulfilled:

- Early-stage Postdocs within **6 active years** from the PhD.
- The applicants should be **individual members of ECerS or a National Ceramic Society affiliated to ECerS** (full member or associate member).
- The available **funding is to be used in performing research in host institutes or universities located in full member countries of the European Ceramic Society** and which are not the country in which the applicant is receiving their salary or grant. In addition, the host scientist/institution must be a member of ECerS.

### **2) Proposal Submission**

Applicants must submit a detailed programme of research in the field described above, together with an implementation plan, a timeline of the goals to be achieved during the project, and an itemised budget with a justification for each item requested.

*A format for the presentation of the project is supplied as an Annex to this call.*

### 3) Factors of Merit

The main Factors of Merit by which the proposals will be judged are as follows:

- i. **Originality of the idea** driving the proposed research project. The purpose is to stimulate novel ideas that can be considered beyond the current frontiers in the ceramics field for the anticipated applications.
- ii. **Collaboration between universities/institutes** of two different countries (the applicant's home institution and the host institution). The achievement of the objectives is related to the added value offered to the applicant through a period in a foreign institution.
- iii. **Collaboration between universities/institutes with the industry (optional)**. Where relevant, interest from industry of a country belonging to the European Ceramic Society will be an added value. In this case, a company declaring potential interest, can individually arrange additional co-funding with the involved institutions, outside of this grant framework. This factor is not considered for genuinely "blue sky" research proposals.

### 4) Allowable Costs

The funds from the European Ceramic Society, through the JECs Trust, must be used exclusively to cover the following expenses, which are related to the costs necessary to carry out part of the work in the host institution:

- **Travel to the host institution and accommodation** while there. Stays at the host institution can be in one single period or divided into different shorter periods. Grants will cover up to 1 year in total at the host institution within a 3-year project.
- **Specific consumables** (to be detailed in the application) to be used at the host institution.
- **Use of facilities** in the foreign host institution or in other laboratories, not available at the home institution.
- Expenses to participate in one **ECerS international conference** for the diffusion of the results **plus one focused workshop or national conference** (i.e. up to two conferences). Attendance at alternative conferences may be funded if named and a full justification given. The applicant should justify the scheduling of the conference/s with respect to the project timing. The ECerS project must be mentioned in the acknowledgement section of any conference contribution regarding the results obtained with this financial support. Conference can be scheduled (and associated costs claimed) up to six months after the end of the project execution.
- **Article Publication Charges** for papers published in Open Ceramics. The ECerS project must be mentioned in the acknowledgement section of any paper published regarding results obtained with this financial support.

The allowable costs, therefore, are normally only concerned with the research activities to be carried out in the host institution and dissemination of the results and/or, for part of the living expenses during a visit of the applicant in the partner foreign institution.

**Reasonable adjustments for family obligations, disability and other special needs of up to €5 000** will be considered case-by-case. These should be necessary for the applicant to perform the project and should be specified and justified in the application. In the case of disabilities, medical evidence should be presented. In case of family obligations, extra budget will be intended solely for travels to come back to the city of origin of the applicant or cover travel costs of the family to the city of destination of the applicant.

The above guidelines mean that the grant covers only a proportion of the costs of the proposed project. Additional costs such as the researcher's salary, part of the consumables, routine equipment usage, overheads, etc. should be provided by the home and/or host institution.

**NO SALARIES AND NO OVERHEADS WILL BE FINANCED.**

## 5) Requirements

The submission of the proposal must be accompanied by:

- i. A signed copy of the identity document of the applicant,
- ii. A CV of the applicant,
- iii. A declaration from the applicants that the project has been designed and written by him/herself.
- iv. A statement issued by the authorised signatories at the home and host institutions declaring their agreement to permit the activities related to the research programme.
- v. Proof of the ECerS membership of the applicant, either by means of ECerS-affiliated societies or as an individual,
- vi. Proof of the ECerS membership of the host reference scientist.
- vii. If applicable, a declaration of interest from an industrial partner.

ALL DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH.

## 6) Reviewing procedures

A Technical Review Team of Experts comprising 2 members of the R&D Working Group and 2 members the ECerS PEC will evaluate the proposals.

The evaluation procedure will be based on marks concerning each evaluation criterion: 1-poor, 2-average, 3-good, 4-excellent, related to the following entries:

- novelty of the idea, degree of innovation, progress beyond the state of the art (regardless of level of risk), or added value due to the industrial interest.
- scientific and technical quality.
- technical feasibility.
- relevance of the international collaboration.
- Main achievements of the applicant shown in the CV, skills and experience to develop the project and complementary skills to be acquired during the execution of the project.

In addition, applications must fulfil the following criteria:

- ethical acceptability.
- financial viability of the project.

The total of the marks for each project results in a classification proposed to the members of the R&D working group, who must approve the ranking.

Before consideration by the ECerS R&D Working Group, the ECerS Secretariat will check each of the projects submitted to ensure that the conditions for assignment of the support are satisfied.

## 7) Commitments after the selection

After the approval of the project, the project must start within a maximum of a six-months period.

The **ECerS R&D Working Group will be responsible** (under the Authority of PEC) **for the selected projects and will monitor their progress.**

This will be exercised by a “Supervisor” (one for each of the financed project) selected from the members of the ECerS R&D WG on the basis of the competences in the topic of research, neutrality relative to the country of the applicant and of the institutes involved.

The Supervisor will monitor the project, receive communications about the stages of the activities and progress reports by the applicant.

**Two reports from the applicant will be submitted to the PEC (midterm- and final- reports), accompanied by comments and remarks from the “Supervisor”.**

Contracts will be established between the applicant and ECerS in order to ensure the conformity of the money given to the conditions of the award and the activity programme to be carried out. Once the contract has been signed, and within six-month before the project starts, the awarded recipient will receive **50% of the total budget as advance funding**. A second funding equivalent to **30% of the total budget** will be received **upon presentation and positive evaluation of the mid-term scientific and financial reports**. The final payment, of the **remaining 20% will be made upon presentation and positive evaluation of the final scientific and financial reports**. If the fellow requires an advance of the final payment, it can be requested along with the submission of a brief interim report.

Confidentiality is guaranteed at all stages of the process.

## 8) Publication of the results

All results of the activities supported by this competition will be submitted to the **Journal of the European Ceramic Society or Open Ceramics** as a first option for publishing the outcomes. If publication in either of these journals is not possible, the ECerS Frontiers of Ceramics Fellow should consult the Supervisor about alternative Elsevier journals.

Please use the following sentence to acknowledge the grant in papers or presentations: "The authors are grateful to the ECerS for funding *name & surname*'s Frontiers of Ceramic fellowship (Contract No. xx)."

## 9) Guidelines, recommendations

The notice of the competition will be advertised on the ECerS Website and social media, and through the ECerS mailing list.

The advertisement will also be spread through the National Societies.

**Proposals should be submitted to the ECerS Secretariat by electronic mail:**

ECerS AISBL Secretariat - Ms Véronique Huart  
Ave. Gouverneur Cornez, 4 - B-7000 Mons, Belgium  
Tel. +32 (0)65 403421 - Fax +32 (0)65 403458  
**Email: [contact@ecers.org](mailto:contact@ecers.org)**

## **10) Deadlines and important requirements**

- The deadlines for applications are announced on the ECerS website and social media, and through the ECerS mailing list.
- After notification by the Selection Committee, a contract will be established between the applicant and ECerS.
- The activities of funded projects will start within 6 months from the signing date of the contract, and the duration will be in the range from 6 to 36 months according to the applicant's request and/or the ECerS R&D Working Group.
- All outcomes of the selected projects must be reported in scientific papers submitted to the Journal of the European Ceramic Society or Open Ceramics in the first instance.
- Successful applicants are invited to present an oral contribution, based on the activities funded by the Trust, at the next Conference of the European Ceramic Society.

**Annex to the**

**CALL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE COMPETITION  
“FRONTIERS OF CERAMICS”**

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM**

**Personal Details of the Applicant**

Title (Prof, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms etc.)

Surname

First name

Company/Institution

Street or P.O. Box

City

ZIP/Postal Code

Country

Telephone with Area Code

Fax with Area Code

e-mail

**Presentation Details**

- 1) Title (short: max 15 words)
- 2) Locations (home institution and host institution) for the proposed project
- 3) Names and contact details of the applicant and supervisor/co-director in the home institution, and the supervisor/co-director of laboratory in the host institution.
- 4) Affiliations of collaborators (within home and host institutions or in other Institutions)
- 5) Dates for the proposed project (starting date, duration and number of separate visits to the host institution)
- 6) Short summary overview (500 words)
- 7) Description of the project (max 5000 words)
  - State of the art
  - Objectives, beyond the state of the art
  - Experimental procedures
  - Expected results, outcomes
- 8) Benefits and impact of the proposed project
- 9) Time-schedule, Milestones and Gantt chart, including the following:
  - Report/s:  
**A mid-term report and a final report (in English) must be submitted first to the ECerS Supervisor of the project, then to the JECS Trust Committee.**  
*The final “official” detailed report has to be prepared within at least six months after the end of the project and sent to the European Ceramic Society Secretariat.*
  - The planned activity should include:
    - ✓ **The presentation of interim or final outcomes to the Biennial ECerS Conference, preferably, or other ECerS conferences**

- ✓ ***The final submission of at least one manuscript for consideration by the Journal of the European Ceramic Society or Open Ceramics. Submission must be within six-months after the project ends.***

#### 10) Budget

The budget should justify all planned expenditure (from all sources) over the lifetime of the project:

- Consumables, in detail.
- Use of facilities, in the host Institution or in other Institutions for particular and specific needs.
- Travel expenses and accommodation related to the periods of the visits to the host Institution.
- Expenses for the diffusion of the results at ECerS Conferences.
- Fee for publication in Open Ceramics, if applicable.
- Special needs requirements, if applicable.
- Other sources of funding.
- If applicable: co-funding to or from the institutions where the activity is carried out.

**The proposal submission must be accompanied by the documents listed under point 5 of the Notice of Competition:**

- ✓ A signed copy of the identity document of the Applicant;
- ✓ A CV of the Applicant;
- ✓ A declaration from the Applicant that the project has been designed and written by him/herself;
- ✓ A statement issued by the authorised signatories at the home and host institutions declaring their agreement to permit the activities related to the research programme;
- ✓ If applicable, a declaration of interest from an industrial partner;
- ✓ Proof of ECerS Membership of the Applicant: Country/date of the first membership, number of membership (if applicable);
- ✓ Proof of ECerS Membership of the host scientist either by means of ECerS affiliated Societies or as an individual.