

**Aid Programme for researchers – bizkaia:talent 2015**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

• **What is bizkaia:talent?**

**Bizkaia:talent**, non-profit-making Association, part of the Economic Promotion Department of Bizkaia Provincial Government (D.F.B./B.F.A.), has the mission of impelling and fostering the conditions and processes for retaining, attracting and involving highly skilled persons, by promoting the innovation and advanced knowledge areas of Bizkaia's organisations.

Bizkaia:talent is made up of the following members: Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa (BBK), BEAZ, CIC bioGUNE, Iberdrola, Idom, Industria de Turbo Propulsores (ITP), Mondragon, Sener, Deusto University, University of the Basque Country, Tecnalia Research & Innovation, IK4 Research Alliance and the County Council of Bizkaia, the office of Association President being held by the latter institution's Economic Promotion Department.

• **What does bizkaia:talent's call for researchers offer?**

This Financial Aid Programme for researchers supports:

- the integration in Bizkaia of experienced researchers allowing them to develop a research project in a research organisation based in Bizkaia.
- the linking of external collaborators who initiates innovative projects in Bizkaia, allowing very experienced researchers to build collaborations and develop innovative research projects with Biscayan organisations.
- the training of qualified people abroad, with a return phase to Bizkaia, offering researchers willing to develop a career in Bizkaia the opportunity to develop a research project and to enhance their career.

This programme is co-funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (People – Marie Curie Actions) and aims to reinforce the scientific capacity of the region, by attracting experienced and senior researchers, enhancing transfer of knowledge, strengthening its networks abroad and reaching an adequate number of researchers. It also aims to promote the development of the research activities and of the economic growth of Bizkaia and of Europe and to contribute to the professional development of researchers.

It is organised around three schemes that have been designed to help the integration of researchers in the Basque Country and to enhance their career development. They all involve international mobility and a partnership between an experienced researcher and a research organisation based in the Historic Territory of Bizkaia. They have the following characteristics:

- **Mode 1:** Support the integration in Bizkaia of experienced researchers (Incoming mobility and Reintegration).
- **Mode 2:** Support to the linking of external collaborators who initiates innovative projects in Bizkaia (Incoming mobility - Experienced researchers with more than 10 years of experience).
- **Mode 3:** Support for the training of qualified people abroad, with a return phase to Bizkaia (Outgoing mobility).

Additionally, in all three modes, the fellows will benefit from employment conditions that meet the regional, national and European standards.

Each researcher has all the freedom to choose its research topic, notably in the main scientific fields covered by the programme call. The researcher can develop freely their research project, by proposing directly their projects to the research centre they are interested in and by choosing freely the team with which they will work. In order to ensure the most efficient and valuable collaboration, the research project should match the activities carried out by the host institution, and make the collaboration beneficial for all.

Moreover, the researcher will benefit from training opportunities, depending on his/her needs, as assessed by both him/herself and the beneficiary host organisation.

- **Can you explain what a bizkaia:talent Fellowship is?**

Bizkaia offers three types of fellowships:

**A. MODE 1 - Support the integration in Bizkaia of experienced researchers**

The concept behind Mode 1 is to establish a long term collaboration between the host institution and the researcher, being researchers, the main focus for bizkaia:talent. The grant will correspond up to **100% of the living allowance of the researcher**, starting from the fellow's contract date in the organisation, **up to the first three years of employment**. If so, the remaining amount of the salary will be supported by the host organisation.

**B. MODE 2 - Support to the linking of external collaborators who initiates innovative projects in Bizkaia**

This scheme will allow very experienced researchers to build collaborations and develop innovative research projects with Biscayan organisations.

The spirit of Mode 2 is to create short-medium term collaborations that benefit researchers' career. This mode is appropriate for punctual collaborations between researchers and host organisations on a certain project. The researcher is taking part in the project, but his/her stay in Bizkaia is not intended to be permanent. This collaboration is defined by the researcher for a limited time-frame.

**Bizkaia:talent contribution covers up to 61 000€/year of the researcher's living allowance for a maximum of 2 years.** The cost above that yearly limit will be paid by the host organisation in Bizkaia.

### **C. MODE 3 - Support for the training of qualified people abroad, with a return phase to Bizkaia**

This scheme offers researchers willing to develop a career in Bizkaia the opportunity to develop a research project and to enhance their skills in international and prestigious organisations. The grant covers up to 100% of the researcher's mobility, travel and living allowance for a duration comprised between 3 months and 3 years.

**The grant received will cover, partially or completely the mobility, travel and living allowance of the researcher, depending on the candidate's evaluation and the degree of interest of the project.**

All researchers will benefit from social security coverage and of all the benefits foreseen by the host organisation's standards.

- **What are the eligibility criteria to benefit from the programme?**

The applications must be presented jointly by an experienced researcher and by a host institution based in the Historic Territory of Bizkaia in relation with which the researcher will develop his/her scientific project.

The **eligibility criteria** that apply are:

**a. Experienced researcher presenting a research project, having:**

- A PhD or at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience (More than ten years of full-time equivalent research experience is necessary in Mode 2)
- Not worked in the Country of the host organisation for more than 12 months in the last 3 years at the moment of the call deadline
- Willingness to develop their own research project and skills, in collaboration with an organisation based in Bizkaia, or
- Initiate innovative projects in Bizkaia, and to built collaboration with Biscayan organisations, or
- Want to develop in an innovative research project in Bizkaia and need to do top-level specialized training at an international centre.

**b. Host institution based in the Historic Territory of Bizkaia in relation to the researcher who will develop his/her scientific project.**

It must comply with the following requirements:

- Firms, Universities, Associations and Foundations domiciled for tax purposes in Bizkaia
- Willingness to support experienced researchers coming or returning to Bizkaia to develop a research project in a research organisation based in Bizkaia, or
- Willingness to bring in and involve (temporarily or indefinitely) experienced researchers with more than 10 years experience and proven international experience, in innovative projects located in Bizkaia.
- Willingness to give the opportunity to experienced researchers wanting to pursue their career in the Bizkaia-based participant organisation, to develop a research project and to enhance their skills in international and prestigious organisations abroad.

**Note:**

Applications from organisations with a work centre in the Historic Territory of Bizkaia out of which the researcher who is the subject of the aid will be able to work/research, will also be assessed, even though the organisation is not domiciled for tax purposes in Bizkaia.

Beneficiary organisations must have their own legal personality and be up to date with their tax and public law obligations and their Social Security contributions.

The conditions described here must be proven with documents at the time of submitting the application and throughout the process until the aid is paid.

- **How do I apply?**

Online registration:

To apply, the applicant organisation based on the Historic Territory of Bizkaia shall register in bizkaia:talent's website ([www.bizkaiatalent.org](http://www.bizkaiatalent.org)). The informatics system will only allow the organisation to enter the necessary data.

Then, the applicant organisation is asked to fill an online application form and to upload the researcher's CV and the required documents (see list in Appendix I) in the dedicated section.

Applicants may register and upload the documents at different times before submitting the application, before the deadline.

Bizkaia:talent will require the duly completed application and the required documentation to be submitted by 11 May at the latest.

**The required documentation must be submitted exclusively via the Association Website ([www.bizkaiatalent.org](http://www.bizkaiatalent.org)).**

After online registration, the applicants can check the status of the selection process, by entering the restricted area of bizkaia:talent's website. At the end of the selection process, the result of the application (positive or negative) will appear on the personal page. The list of the awarded fellows for each mode will also be published on our website ([www.bizkaiatalent.org](http://www.bizkaiatalent.org) and <http://bt-rea.org>).

- **Is there a deadline for application?**

The deadline for applying for the 2015 call is on the 11 May 2015.

- **What research areas is bizkaia:talent focused on?**

The Researchers who are the subject of the aid must, preferably, engage in their activity in one of the following strategic areas:

- *Aeronautics.*
- *Automotive industry.*
- *Aerospace Engineering.*
- *Biomedicine.*
- *Biotechnology.*
- *Ecological (environment-friendly) innovation:* Especially, environmental sciences and technologies. Meteorology and climatology.
- *Energy:* Especially, the areas of energy distribution, quality, efficiency and saving. Bringing in renewable energies. Wind, solar and wave energy. Production of biofuel, and fuel and hydrogen cells.
- *Electricity – Electronics.*
- *New materials:* Especially, the areas of steel, the metallurgical industry, electronic material and biomaterials.
- *Agrifood and agrifishery resources and technologies.*
- *Telecommunications.*
- *Virtual Reality Areas.*
- *Evolving and generating of networks.*
- *Language infoengineering.*
- *Environmental Intelligence:* Especially, the areas of information sensor networks; virtual, enhanced and mixed reality; content processing technologies; biometric technologies; person-device interfaces; semantic technologies and assistive technologies.
- *The extended Digital Business.*
- *New technologies.*

Applications from researchers who carry on their activity in areas different from those specified in this document will also be assessed, provided that the project and/or person justifies it.

- **Who will evaluate my application?**

To ensure an open, transparent, competition-based recruitment of researchers, bizkaia:talent will monitor the activity of the independent, international team of experts which will carry out the selection process of the eligible candidates through a peer review evaluation mainly based on scientific excellence.

The Scientific Evaluation Committee brings together independent experts with relevant experience to assess the candidates. It is composed of prestigious researchers, professors and professionals from the public and the private sectors, working in the different disciplines evaluated, in any Member State.

- **Which are the most important criteria for the Scientific Evaluation Committee?**

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria during the evaluation process:

- **Initial training:** the academic record is assessed, including the type of diploma, prizes and distinctions.
- **Professional experience and competence:** the experience in the field of the project, outstanding results (patents development, publications, participation in conferences, direction of PhD thesis, management of research and innovation, leadership, public awareness activities, teaching, knowledge transfer) and diversified career path are assessed.
- **Quality of the research project,** including career development perspectives: the project of the researcher and how it fits with the strategy of the host organisation will be assessed. Its sustainability (including ethical issues) as well as how the project fits in the researcher's career development prospects will be examined carefully. The capacity of the host organisation in Bizkaia and when applicable the outgoing host organisation will also be assessed (capacity of the teams, premises, laboratories, working conditions...).

For each evaluation criteria, the following breakdown will be applied, in all three modes:



*Scores of assessment criteria during the evaluation process (Researchers with more than 10 years of experience)*

Assessment Criteria	Mode 1: Support the integration in Bizkaia of experienced researchers	Mode 2: Support to the linking of external collaborators who participate in innovative projects in Bizkaia	Mode 3: Support for the training of qualified people abroad
Initial training	10	5	10
Professional experience	50	40	30
Quality of the research project, including career development perspectives	40	55	60
Total	100	100	100

*Scores of assessment criteria during the evaluation process (Researchers with between 4 and 10 years of experience)*

Assessment Criteria	Mode 1: Support the integration in Bizkaia of experienced researchers	Mode 2: Support to the linking of external collaborators who participate in innovative projects in Bizkaia	Mode 3: Support for the training of qualified people abroad
Initial training	15	N/A	15
Professional experience	45	N/A	25
Quality of the research project, including career development perspectives	40	N/A	60
Total	100	N/A	100

The programme is an open competition to any researcher, who fulfils the selection criteria. Thus, any applicant will be taken into consideration based on her/his the past experiences of research. The CV, the project and the organisation are the main criteria on which the candidate will be judged. Researchers returning from a career break are accepted with no discrimination in any sense. The participation of women will be assessed positively.

Bizkaia:talent will also ensure no discrimination based on gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion or social or economic condition.

- **Does bizkaia:talent contemplate any kind of help to relocate my spouse?**

No particular help is foreseen by this Financial Aid Programme for Researchers to relocate spouses. However, bizkaia:talent runs a relocation service, offering high-quality advice and/or information on aspects of administration and integration in the Province of Bizkaia environment (housing, education, health, leisure, etc.) to organisations and for researchers, technologists, professionals, post-doctoral students (including their families), who for reasons of work have settled in the Province of Bizkaia. This service is free of charge.

- **When will I received the results of my application?**

At all stage of the evaluation, applicants will receive feedback and information on the next steps of the selection process, by phone, e-mail and/or by regular post, as shown in the table below:

Evaluation stage	Feedback received by the applicants
Eligibility criteria phase	Rejection letter explaining which criteria were not respected
Evaluation phase	Evaluation report written by the members of the Scientific Evaluation Committee, explaining weaknesses and strengths of the application.  This letter will be sent only to people that did not pass the threshold.
Validation phase	Official letter of the Board of Directors awarding fellowships or notifying the rejection of the application, with comments on the weaknesses and strengths of the application.

The indicative timetable for this 2015 Financial Aid Programme for Researchers is:

- Application deadline: 11th May 2015
- Evaluation phase: May - June 2015
- Results and award of the grant: June - July 2015
- Contract for the fellowship: June - July 2015

- **If I am selected, when will I benefit from the grant / start my work or training?**

The general rule is that the awarded researchers can start their fellowships from the moment the contract between bizkaia:talent and the host institution is signed. However, some fellowships may exceptionally start before this date, if it is an absolute need for the project or if it is in the best interest of the researcher. In any case, the fellowship must not start before the call's deadline (11<sup>th</sup> may).

- **Are there any possibilities of working with Ph.D. students and directing Doctoral Theses?**

Researchers benefiting of the aid programme are allowed to work with students and to direct doctoral theses, if relevant and fitting with the duration of their stay (especially for Mode 2 and 3).

- **Is bizkaia:talent's full time contract in mode 1 and 2 compatible with other contracts as Professor?**

From bizkaia:talent's point of view, there is no restriction about holding academic charges for researchers awarded under this aid programme. However, these charges shall be held with the agreement of the beneficiary organisation and shall not take precedence over the research project agreed under this aid programme.

- **Is the information provided to bizkaia:talent confidential?**

Regarding the treatment of personal data, bizkaia:talent complies with the Spanish Organic Law Number 15/1999, dated 13 December, on the Protection of Personal Data. Any personal data obtained through the website, which is the main tool used for communications between the applicants and bizkaia:talent, shall be entered into the files owned by the organisation. The files are duly entered in the General Registry for the Protection of Personal Data, under the security measures set forth in Spanish Royal Decree number 994/1999, dated 11 June.

- **How many research positions/ vacancies bizkaia:talent offer?**

We foresee to award a total of about 18 fellowships for 2015. Depending on the budget for each project, this number may however vary and more or less projects might be funded, in the limit of the 900 000 euros fund.