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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
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**NECCA scholarships for the preparation of doctoral theses aiming to
explore the taxonomy of organism groups mainly spread in Greece**

Submission start date: Thursday 1st of February 2024, 12:00 (Greece time)

Submission end date: Thursday 29th of February 2024, 13:00 (Greece time)

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The Director of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation, having regard to:

1. Law 4429/2016 (OGG A' 199) on the "Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation and other provisions", as in force, and especially articles 2 par. 1, 5 par. 2 to 9, 8 par. 9 and 10 and 9 par. 7 thereof;
2. Law 4957/2022 on "New Horizons in Higher Educational Institutions: Strengthening the quality, functionality and connection of Higher Educational Institutions with society and other provisions" (OGG A' 141);
3. Law 4685/2020 (OGG A' 92) on the "Modernization of environmental legislation, transposition of Directives 2018/844 and 2019/692 of the European Parliament and Council and other provisions", as in force;
4. Decision No. 195245/15.11.2018 issued by the Ministers of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, as well as Finance and Administrative Reconstruction on the "Internal Rules of Operation of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.)" (OGG B' 5252), as in force;
5. Decision No. 59/17.09.2020 by the Board of Directors of NECCA on the appointment of Mr. Konstantinos Triantis (NECCA's CEO) as NECCA's authorizing officer. (IUN: Ω0ΥΦ46MAZT-2Υ2);
6. Decision No. 35627/31.03.2021 issued by the Deputy Minister of Development and Investments on the "Establishment of the Scientific Council of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation" (Issue for Specially Positioned Employees and Administrative Bodies of Public or Broader Public Sector Entities No. 246);
7. Decision No. 38750/21.04.2022 issued by the Deputy Minister of Development and Investments on the appointment of Dr. Aikaterini Kouravelou as the Director of H.F.R.I. (Issue for Specially Positioned Employees and Administrative Bodies of Public or Broader Public Sector Entities No. 335);
8. Decision No. 1878/10.06.2021 by the BoD of NECCA by which the three-year Action Plan for improving the policy of the Protected Areas of article 42 of Law 4685/2020 (OGG A' 92) was approved;
9. Decision No. 65691/26.04.2023 issued by the 153rd Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council on approving the conclusion of a schedule agreement between H.F.R.I. and the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA);
10. Decision No. 68029/01.06.2023 issued by the 24th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s General Assembly on approving the schedule agreement between H.F.R.I. and the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA);
11. Decision No. 13998/11.05.2023 on the assumption of obligations by NECCA (IUN: ΩΝΓΑ46MAZT-Ψ3Π);
12. The schedule agreement as of 02.06.2023 (also under No.68067/02.06.2023) between H.F.R.I. and NECCA;
13. Decision No.104217/01.11.2022 issued by the Deputy Minister of Development and Investments approving the annual planning of actions and resource allocation of the Hellenic Foundation for

Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) for 2023 (OGG B' 5687), as in force following its amendment by the Joint Decision No. 82321/15.09.2023 of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Development (OGG B' 5560);

14. Decision No. 7886/21.12.2018 issued at the 39th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council on the "Approval of the assumption of multi-year obligations" (IUN: 78E046M77Γ-Φ37), as in force following its 15th amendment by Decision No. 74954/16.11.2023 issued by the 167th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s Scientific Council; (IUN: ΨΖ1Λ46M77Γ-ΑΜΨ);
15. Decision No. 73975/30.10.2023 issued at the 165th Meeting of H.F.R.I.'s SC on the approval of the 2nd Call for "Actions to protect, conserve and promote biodiversity – Field studies of endemic, endangered and nationally important species of Greece" and
16. The Document under Ref. No. 74694/13.11.23 by the Chief Executive Officer of NECCA, Mr. Konstantinos Triantis, on the approval of the 2nd Call for "Actions to protect, conserve and promote biodiversity – Field studies of endemic, endangered and nationally important species of Greece".

CALLS

all interested potential beneficiaries to submit Proposals under this Call, which is funded by the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (hereafter "NECCA"), with the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (hereafter "H.F.R.I.") being the Implementing Institution, subject to the terms and conditions set forth below.

1. OBJECTIVE AND GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE ACTION

The Call aims to grant up to five (5) scholarships with a maximum duration of thirty-six (36) months to PhD Candidates (hereafter "PhD-C") for the preparation of a Doctoral Thesis (hereafter "Thesis") that explores the taxonomy of organism groups which have not been sufficiently studied and are spread mainly in Greece, using methods that may include genetic, genomic, morphologic or/and combined approaches.

2. BUDGET/DURATION

The total expenditure for the Call amounts to **€262,500.00**.

The funding (hereafter "Scholarship") for each Thesis shall be maximum **€52,500.00**.

The monthly compensation of the PhD Candidate equals nine hundred euro¹ (**€900.00**), while an additional amount is also provisioned for other costs that are necessary for the successful completion of the Thesis (consumables and travel).

The requested duration of the scholarship may extend from 24 to 36 months regardless of the appointment date of the Three-Member Advisory Committee.

3. ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

The terms and conditions for participating in this Call are as follows:

- The candidates should:
 - ✓ be graduates of Faculties of Biological Sciences, Forestry, Agricultural Sciences or other related Departments;
 - ✓ not be funded for the proposed doctoral research (for all or part of it) by any other source (public, private, European, international) during the scholarship²;
 - ✓ not be receiving any other scholarship from any source during the scholarship;
 - ✓ not be receiving an unemployment benefit in Greece or abroad during the scholarship;
 - ✓ hold a Greek Tax Identification Number (hereafter “TIN”).
- The scope of the thesis should explore the taxonomy of organism groups mainly spread in Greece and preferably, but not exclusively, groups that have not been sufficiently studied so far, using methods which may include genetic, genomic, morphologic or/and combined approaches.
- By the end submission date, no more than 12 months may have elapsed since the appointment of the Three-Member Advisory Committee.
- Male candidates should have fulfilled their military obligations or have been legally discharged from them or have been deferred or in any event are legally exempt from the armed forces³.
- In case the candidate is not registered as a PhD Candidate in a Higher Educational Institution, it shall be necessary to submit a letter or a solemn declaration/attestation from a Faculty Member of a related academic field who is employed in a Greek Higher Educational Institution, through which the latter shall confirm/certify their intention to assume the scientific supervision of the Thesis.

¹ The scholarship amount is tax-free.

² An exemption is made for the case of funding the PhD Candidate so as to cover travel and/or accommodation costs to carry out research within Greece or abroad by mobility programs with a duration of up to six (6) months.

³ The conditions must be fulfilled at the time of issuing the Scholarship Award Decision and cover the entire duration of the scholarship.

It is highlighted that during the scholarship, the PhD Candidate who holds an employment contract: i) in the public sector as permanent staff or under an open-term private law employment contract or ii) in the private sector under an open-term full-time employment contract or a salaried mandate relationship, cannot receive remuneration and they shall only be funded for travel and consumables costs.

3.1 Scientific Fields/Subfields

Each Proposal may be submitted exclusively in one (1) of the following fields/subfields, as defined by NECCA:

F.1. Ecology, Evolution, Population and Environmental Biology

- 1.1. Evolutionary biology
- 1.2. Population, biocommunity and ecosystem ecology
- 1.3. Biodiversity
- 1.4. Biogeography
- 1.5. Marine biology
- 1.6. Ecotoxicology
- 1.7. Microbial ecology

F.2. Ecology

- 2.1. Molecular ecology
- 2.2. Ecology of organisms
- 2.3. Population ecology
- 2.4. Ecology of biocommunities

3.2 Host Institution

Host Institutions (hereafter “HIs”) for the preparation of the theses shall be Higher Educational Institutions of Greece (hereafter “HEIs”) (art. 3 of Law 4957/2022).

When submitting the application, the PhD Candidate must declare the details of the HI.

All potential HIs shall be available for selection on the online submission platform in the form of a drop-down menu allowing only one selection.

In case the doctoral thesis is co-supervised by or prepared in cooperation with one or more Departments of the same or another Higher Educational Institution in Greece, Higher Military Educational Institutions, research or technological institutions of art. 13a of Law 4310/2014 or a foreign institution, the PhD Candidate shall be able to declare it in a relevant field on the application platform.

4. BUDGET

In order to be considered eligible, each cost should fall under the terms described in this Section and be provisioned in the Application. Cost eligibility begins on the Scholarship start date.

For the approval of costs (as eligible) it is necessary to keep and submit the relevant documents, as defined in the “Guide to Eligibility and Verification of Costs under the actions of H.F.R.I.” which will be posted on the Foundation's website.

Apart from the PhD Candidate’s remuneration, travel and consumables costs shall also be eligible up to **€20,100.00** (Table 1).

Table 1: Eligible cost categories and limits

Cost categories	Maximum limits
Remuneration of the PhD Candidate	€900/month up to 36 months
Travel costs	up to €20,100.00
Costs for consumables	

It is highlighted that indirect costs are not eligible under this Call.

4.1 Remuneration of the PhD Candidate

The amount granted to the PhD Candidate is entirely considered scholarship and it is not subject to any taxes, deductions or insurance contributions.

4.2 Travel costs

They concern travel (i.e. costs for mobility, overnight and daily allowance) of the PhD Candidate in Greece or abroad in the context of preparing the Thesis.

Costs in this category are incurred in line with the provisions of subparagraph D “Costs for Travelling in and out of State” of Law 4336/2015 (OGG A’ 94), as in force.

It is noted that in case of cancellation or postponement of travelling for reasons of force majeure, the costs resulting from the cancellation of tickets and/or accommodation may be considered eligible and burden the study budget, provided that they were incurred at a time when the HI could not have foreseen the cancellation/postponement. Furthermore, it must be ensured that costs or part thereof are not refunded from other sources. Any amounts refunded (e.g. by insurance coverage, air carrier, accommodation, etc.) are not considered eligible costs.

4.3 Costs for consumables

The costs for consumables indicatively involve the purchase of direct consumption materials (e.g. lab consumables, reagents, etc.) and are eligible if they concern solely the preparation of the Thesis.

For the procurement of consumables, the HIs must apply the provisions of Law 4412/2016 on “Public Contracts for Projects, Procurement and Services (adaptation to Directives 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU)” (OGG A’ 147), as in force, when considered contracting authorities within the meaning of said law, as well as the provisions of Law 4957/2022 (Chapter 27 and in particular article 250), as in force.

5. APPLICATIONS SUBMISSION

Each PhD Candidate can submit only one (1) application under this Call. The submission is done by the PhD Candidate exclusively **online** via H.F.R.I.’s web portal (<https://portal.hfri.gr/>).

To submit Applications, the following are required:

- General details of the PhD Candidate and information on the doctoral thesis (Section A),
- Scientific profile of the PhD Candidate and subject of the doctoral thesis (Section B).

All fields as well as the necessary documents shall be filled in and drafted in Greek, except for the title and the abstract to be filled also in English.

If the General Assembly of the Department approves the writing of the thesis in English, the above documents may be drafted in English.

All documents are uploaded in PDF format.

The Application shall be equivalent to a solemn declaration of Law 1599/1986 for the accuracy of information declared and the content of the documents submitted with it.

5.1 Section A: General information

Section A shall be filled in on the relevant fields of the online submission platform and shall include the details of the PhD Candidate as well as general information on the thesis, including the title and the abstract. The abstract should clearly present the objectives of the thesis and the way these should be accomplished. It is noted that in case the PhD Candidate is funded, this abstract may possibly be published and therefore must be brief and precise, not including confidential information.

In detail, Section A is filled in with the following information:

- **General information of the thesis**
 - **Scientific Fields/Subfields**
 - Title/Subject of the thesis (as specified in the relevant decision of the General Assembly of the Department— in Greek and English)
 - Date of appointment of the Three-Member Advisory Committee (*if applicable*)
 - Abstract of the thesis (up to 2,000 characters, in Greek and in English)
 - Keywords (*up to 10*)
 - Requested scholarship duration (*in months*)
 - Detailed budget
- **PhD Candidate details** (Full name, contact details, TIN, etc.)
- **Host Institution** (School, Department of the Higher Educational Institution)
- **Collaborating/Co-supervising Organizations** (School, Department or Research Centre-Institute or Organization/Institution, Country, etc.)
- **Members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee** (Full name, Capacity, Contact details).

All relevant documents where applicable (copies of diplomas, certificate of appointment of the Three-Member Advisory Committee, letter/attestation of a Faculty Member regarding their intention to assume the supervision of the Thesis, suspension of the preparation of a thesis, etc.), should be uploaded in the respective fields of the online submission platform.

5.2 Section B: Scientific profile of the PhD Candidate and subject of the doctoral thesis

Section B consists of two (2) sub-sections, Section B1 and Section B2. Templates for these two sub-sections will be available on H.F.R.I.'s website.

On the first page (cover) of the individual sections of the Application the following should be mentioned: (i) the full name of the PhD Candidate, (ii) the title of the doctoral thesis, (iii) the Scientific field/subfield, (iv) the requested duration of scholarship (*in months*), (v) the Host Institution and (vi) the Collaborating Organization (*in case of co-supervision*).

It is indicatively recommended for each page to contain a header presenting the full name of the PhD Candidate, the respective Scientific field, as well as a footer with reference to the total number of pages.

The following *Table 2* lists the suggested technical specifications to be followed in all submitted documents.

Table 2: Technical specifications for texts

Page Size	Font	Font Size	Line Spacing	Page Margins
A4	Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri or similar	11 pt (at least)	Single (at least)	Top-Bottom: 1.5 cm Left-Right: 2 cm

The limits (pages) of the length of the text are strictly applied. Any text outside these limits will not be taken into consideration during evaluation.

Section B1. Scientific profile of the PhD Candidate (maximum number of pages: 4)

Section B1 contains the CV of the PhD Candidate, which includes inter alia any publications of the PhD Candidate in international peer-reviewed journals and/or publications/announcements in conference proceedings.

Section B1 shall be submitted in Greek or in English (in case the Assembly of the Department of the PhD Candidate has approved the writing of his/her thesis in English), as a PDF file, and may be up to four (4) pages. Any text outside these limits will not be taken into consideration during evaluation.

Section B2. Detailed presentation of the thesis (maximum number of pages: 5)

The detailed presentation of the thesis should for example include the following: (a) the scope, the objectives and the scientific originality of the thesis, (b) an introduction to the research field of the subject and a description of the state of the art, (c) a description of the research questions addressed by the proposed subject and the long-term perspective, (d) the methodology/implementation

plan/risks and ways to address them (*where applicable*), (e) a time schedule for implementation (including an indicative Gantt Chart), (f) indicative bibliography.

Section B2 shall be submitted in Greek or in English (in case the Assembly of the Department of the PhD Candidate has approved the writing of his/her thesis in English), as a PDF file, and may be up to five (5) pages. Any text outside these limits will not be taken into consideration during evaluation. Bibliographic references fall within the limitation of five (5) pages.

The submission of Applications is made by the PhD Candidate

only online on H.F.R.I.'s web portal

(<https://portal.hfri.gr/>)

Submission start date: Thursday 1st of February 2024, 12:00 (Greece time)

Submission end date: Thursday 29th of February 2024, 13:00 (Greece time)

The PhD Candidate is exclusively responsible for the accuracy of data submitted on the online submission platform.

6. CHECK AND EVALUATION

The evaluation of Applications is conducted by Evaluation Committees (hereafter “ECs”) and independent experts, if deemed necessary, according to the provisions of article 5 par. 6 of Law 4429/2016, as amended and in force.

6.1 Completeness and eligibility check

Applications are checked as to the completeness of all necessary data and documents required, the observance of participation terms and limitations as well as other terms of this Call, as described in detail in *Sections 4 - 5*.

The completeness check of the Applications is carried out through the H.F.R.I.'s web portal, based on a standardized completeness check questionnaire, in order to ensure the appropriate filling in, drafting and submission of the proposal in accordance with the terms of the Call. Once the relevant check is completed, potential beneficiaries whose proposals are incomplete and therefore not forwarded for evaluation are informed.

Irrespective of the fact that all Applications are checked as to their completeness and eligibility prior to the substantial evaluation of their content, if, at any stage of the check and evaluation process, it is verified that an Application fails to meet any of the relevant criteria, it shall be excluded from the evaluation process.

It is highlighted that the scope of the doctoral thesis should explore the taxonomy of organism groups that are mainly spread in Greece and have not been sufficiently studied so far, using methods which may include genetic, genomic, morphologic or/and combined approaches, as a necessary condition for an Application to be eligible.

6.2 Evaluation

The evaluation of the Applications shall be performed by ECs, consisting of five (5) to twenty (20) members. If deemed necessary due to the specialised scope of the Applications, a non-binding evaluation of one or more Applications may be requested from one or more independent experts, at the discretion of each EC. The final decision for the evaluation of each Application shall be made by the Committee. Said experts and members of Evaluation Committees are pulled from the Register of Certified Evaluators of paragraph 11, article 5 of Law 4429/2016 or, until its creation, from the Register of Certified Evaluators of article 27 of Law 4310/2014 (OGG A' 258) and they shall have the qualifications related to the scope of the Application to be evaluated. The Evaluation Committees and independent experts are determined by the Scientific Council (hereafter "SC") of H.F.R.I. in line with the provisions of article 5 of Law 4429/2016. If expert scientists required for a specific evaluation are not available or the existing ones do not meet the needs of the evaluation in question, expert scientists, not included in the Register of Certified Evaluators, who are foreign tax residents may be designated as members, pursuant to a decision made by the Scientific Council.

6.3 Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The whole process is governed by rule of confidentiality. The EC members and independent experts sign a declaration of confidentiality and non-conflict of interest. All EC members and independent experts owe full confidentiality before, during and after the evaluation, as to the entire evaluation process.

6.4 Evaluation Process

The evaluation of Applications will be carried out in one Phase, based on the criteria listed in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting factor
1. Scientific Profile of the PhD Candidate	0.40
The following shall be taken into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degrees or diplomas Foreign languages Distinctions and/or previous scholarships Research activity in the relevant scientific field (Participation/Announcements in conferences, Publications) 	
2. Doctoral Thesis Proposal	0.60
The following shall be taken into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific quality and originality Methodology of Implementation Implementation time schedule 	

The EC initially rates the evaluation criteria on a scale of **0 to 100**, as follows:

(0 – 19) – Insufficient: The Application either fails to meet the criterion or cannot assess the criterion due to insufficient or incomplete information.

(20 – 39) – Weak: The Application does not sufficiently meet the criterion and/or there are inherent weaknesses.

(40 – 59) – Moderate: The Application meets the criterion in general but there are significant and substantial weaknesses.

(60 – 79) – Good: The Application meets the criterion at a good level but there is a number of shortcomings.

(80 – 89) – Very Good: The Application meets all aspects and dimensions of the criterion at a very good level but there is a small number of shortcomings.

(90 – 100) – Excellent: The Application meets all relevant aspects and dimensions of the criterion. Any shortcomings are classified as minor.

In case two or more Applications receive the same overall score in the ranking, the Application that has received the highest score in the individual criterion 2 “Doctoral Thesis Proposal” has priority.

In order for an Application to be eligible for funding it should receive a minimum score (threshold) of **80 points** in each of the two Criteria separately but also in total. Based on the above score combined with the minimum grade (80), the Applications are ranked based on an **A - B** scale, as described in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Grading of Applications

Grade	Description
A	The Application sufficiently meets all evaluation criteria and is recommended for funding if there is sufficient budget.
B	The Application does not sufficiently meet all evaluation criteria and is not recommended for funding.

6.5 Verification of copies

In order to verify the accuracy of data and supporting documents submitted online through the Web Portal (either at the submission stage or at the implementation stage), H.F.R.I. conducts a sample check on at least five percent (5%) of the copies submitted by the beneficiaries during the immediately following quarter, requesting the assistance of the agencies or bodies that issued the original documents, in line with paragraph 2 of article 11 of Law 2690/1999, as in force.

7. EVALUATION RESULTS

After the evaluation is completed, the results are communicated to the PhD Candidates along with a personalized report, which includes both the Application's total score (0-100) and its grading (A or B) as well as the evaluation report of the Evaluation Committee.

PhD Candidates are entitled to lodge a **substantiated objection on decision legality grounds** within a deadline of ten (10) days from the notification of the evaluation results.

Objections are judged by three-member committees, which shall decide within an exclusive deadline of ten (10) days (article 5, par. 8 of Law 4429/2016, as in force). The Objection Committee's decision is announced to the H.F.R.I. Director and communicated to the person who lodged the objection.

Following the evaluation of Applications, the H.F.R.I. Director issues the Funding Decision (list of Applications to be funded). This decision is an enforceable administrative act and is subject to petition for annulment before the Administrative Court of Appeal.

The PhD Candidate accepts that messages sent via email, and especially those sent to the email address they declared during the online submission of the Application, are considered notifications and signal the commencement of all legal processes and deadlines.

8. FUNDING REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

After issuing the Funding Decision, beneficiary PhD Candidates receive a letter of approval, also communicated to the HI, whereby they are invited to submit the following necessary supporting documents to H.F.R.I.'s Information System (hereafter "I.S."), within the deadline that shall be defined in the above mentioned letter, for the Funding Award Decision (hereafter "FAD") to be issued.

1. A solemn declaration (*Annex I*) signed (by electronic signature or via gov.gr) by the PhD Candidate, in which it will be stated that:
 - The PhD Candidate accepts the terms and conditions of the scholarship.
 - Everything listed in the Application [*state the application No.*] and all supporting documents submitted are true and accurate.
 - The PhD Candidate will not be funded by any other source for the proposed thesis, while the scholarship is awarded⁴.
 - The PhD Candidate will not be receiving an unemployment benefit in Greece or abroad during the scholarship.
 - During the scholarship the PhD Candidate will not be employed: i) in the public sector as permanent staff or under a private law open-term contract and/or ii) in the private sector under an open-term full employment contract or remunerated mandate.or
 - The PhD Candidate during the scholarship will be employed: i) in the public sector as permanent staff or under an open-term private law employment contract or ii) in the private sector under an open-term full-time employment contract or a salaried mandate relationship, and therefore cannot receive remuneration and shall only be funded for travel and consumables costs under the scholarship.
 - The PhD Candidate accepts that messages sent to the contact email address declared by them are considered to be notifications and signal the initiation of all legal consequences and deadlines.
2. A solemn declaration of Law 1599/1986 (*Annex II*) signed (by electronic signature or via gov.gr) by the legal representative of the HI, in which it will be stated that:
 - The Institution accepts the management of the Scholarship.
 - The Institution accepts the terms and conditions of the Call.
 - The Institution accepts that messages received by H.F.R.I. via email are considered notices and mark the initiation of all legal consequences and deadlines.

⁴ The event, where the PhD Candidate is funded for participating in mobility programmes in order to conduct research abroad, is noted as an exception. In this case, the PhD Candidate is obliged to inform H.F.R.I. in writing by submitting the relevant documents supporting the participation in the program concerned.

3. A certificate issued by the secretariat of the Candidate's School/Department, mentioning the topic of the Doctoral Thesis, the members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee and the date of their appointment (*in case it was not submitted with the Application*).
4. In regard to male PhD Candidates, a military status certificate confirming that they have completed their mandatory military service or have been legally exempt or have qualified for a military service deferment or are legally out of the armed forces.

Male candidates who have qualified for a deferment, which ends prior to the scholarship end date, must submit a new certificate of military service deferment, as a condition for the scholarship to continue being reimbursed, immediately after the issuance of the relevant decision. The scholarship for the time period between the end of the deferment and the issuance of a decision granting a new deferment is considered to be legally paid, if the PhD Candidate submits documents (ex. summons to enlist, application for deferment etc.), which prove that he is not obliged to enlist in the armed forces during this time period, to the H.F.R.I. The same applies also in case a decision granting a new deferment is not issued for any reason.

Failure to submit the above documents will lead to the discontinuation of the scholarship reimbursement, following a pertinent substantiated Decision by the H.F.R.I. Director, forwarded to the PhD Candidate and the Special Account for Research Funds of the Institution, where the doctoral Thesis is conducted (henceforth the "SARF"), ordering the return of unduly paid scholarship amounts corresponding to the period, during which the above conditions were not met, to H.F.R.I.'s bank account within sixty (60) calendar days from the communication of the Decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

Provided that the Application has been found eligible for funding, the Scholarship Award Decision is issued by the H.F.R.I. Director, after all the above supporting documents are submitted and checked, and is communicated to the PhD Candidate and the Special Account for Research Funds of the HI (hereafter "SARF").

The Scholarship's start date is specified by H.F.R.I. and is expressly referred to in the Funding Award Decision.

The HIs are obliged to include the Scholarship in their budget in order to receive the respective advance funding.

If the Application is found ineligible at a later stage (due to violation of the terms set in the Call), the Funding Award Decision is revoked by decision of the Director, which is communicated to the PhD Candidate and the SARF. In case part of the funding has been already paid, the Foundation orders the return of such unduly paid amounts to a pertinent H.F.R.I. bank account within sixty (60) calendar days following the communication of the revocation Decision. In the event of non-compliance, a

recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

It is highlighted that the above Funding Decision, as well as the FAD, which include, among others, the details of the HI and the beneficiaries PhD Candidates as well as the general details of the thesis (subject/title and approved budget), will be posted, for reasons of transparency, on the websites of H.F.R.I. (<https://www.elidek.gr/>), GSRI (<https://gsri.gov.gr/>), NECCA (<https://necca.gov.gr/>) and DIAVGEIA (<https://diavgeia.gov.gr/>).

9. FINANCING REIMBURSEMENT – REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

9.1 In general

The funding may reach, to a maximum, the amount noted in the FAD and is paid in three (3) stages (instalments). Each instalment corresponds to a specific percentage of the total budget approved for the Scholarship. The last instalment (final balance payment) is deposited after the Scholarship has been concluded and its amount depends on the total certified costs.

H.F.R.I. settles each instalment by transferring the corresponding amount to the HI's bank account, following the submission of supporting documents, as they shall be designated by H.F.R.I.'s Financial Services (*Annex III*).

The SARF is obliged to pay the amount corresponding to the PhD Candidate's remuneration to the latter on a monthly basis. These expenses are considered to be eligible and are approved, provided that the PhD Candidate has been paid in full.

9.2 Funding Reimbursement

9.2.1 Advance payment

Once the Funding Award Decision has been issued and the supporting documents defined in *Annex III* have been submitted, an advance payment amounting to 60% of the approved Scholarship budget is granted.

9.2.2 Interim payment

The interim payment amounts to 40% of the approved budget's part that is meant for the remuneration of the PhD Candidate and is paid after the Interim Progress Report is checked (confirmation of the smooth and successful progress of the doctoral research and administrative verification of the relevant expenses).

9.2.3 Final balance payment

The final instalment (final balance payment) is deposited following an audit – verification of the completion of the Scholarship as to its physical and financial scope, its final receipt and the issuance of a Scholarship Completion Certificate. At this stage, the final cost of the Scholarship that is eligible for funding is finalized, in combination with examining whether the Call requirements have been met or not.

10. MONITORING PROCESS

The implementation of the doctoral Thesis as well as the progress of the funding's financial scope are monitored through the Interim and the Final Progress Report. The above-mentioned Progress Reports are checked by employees or/and external partners of the H.F.R.I.

The PhD Candidate and the SARF are obligated to make available to the H.F.R.I. any information and data that may be requested, in order to check the proper implementation of the terms provisioned in the Call and the Funding Award Decision.

10.1 Interim Progress Report

The Interim Progress Report shall be submitted exclusively to the H.F.R.I. Web Portal within **sixty (60) calendar days** following expiration of the first half of the scholarship duration and shall include the following:

1. **A Scientific Report** of the PhD Candidate on the progress of the implementation of the doctoral thesis during the respective scholarship award term, signed by all members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee. Any relevant publications in reviewed scientific journals, communications in international conferences etc. are also submitted along with the Scientific Report.

In case the Scientific Report is not signed by all members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee, a letter from the Supervising Professor must also be submitted, explaining the reasons why it was not possible to acquire the signatures of the other members of the Committee. Any failure to submit the Progress Report or absence of progress with regard to the doctoral Thesis leads to the discontinuation of the scholarship award, following the issuance of a pertinent documented Decision by the H.F.R.I. Director, which is forwarded to the PhD Candidate and the SARF, ordering the return of any funding corresponding to the PhD Candidate's remuneration and paid during the respective period to the H.F.R.I.'s bank account within sixty (60) calendar days from the communication of the Decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

2. **A financial report** by the SARF with regard to the financial scope that has been implemented during the reporting period, with the submission of necessary information and evidence of expenditure, so as to verify the eligibility of costs.

10.2 Final Progress Report

The Final Progress Report is submitted to the H.F.R.I. Web Portal **within seventy-five (75) calendar days** from the end date of the Scholarship Award and includes the following:

1. A Final (Scientific) Report of the PhD Candidate.

The following are regarded as Final Reports:

i. The Awarded PhD Title or a Certificate from the Secretariat of the relevant Department or School confirming the successful defence of the Doctoral Thesis. If the title has been published, then the doctoral thesis number (ND number) issued by the National Documentation Centre (EKT) must also be forwarded.

or

ii. A Certificate from the Secretariat of the relevant Department or School or any other equivalent document substantiating the submission of an explanatory report from the Three-Member Advisory Committee to the Assembly of the Department/School regarding the appointment of a Seven-Member Examination Committee for the assessment of the Doctoral Thesis. The above certificates are submitted in case the Doctoral Thesis has been completed but the PhD Candidate has not defended it yet. In this case, within a deadline of sixty (60) calendar days from the defence of the Doctoral Thesis, the PhD Candidate is obligated to present their Awarded PhD Title or the Certificate of the relevant Department or School documenting the successful defence of the Doctoral Thesis and the doctoral thesis number (ND number) issued by the National Documentation Centre (similarly to case i).

In case where the doctoral thesis has not been completed for scientific or research reasons, a detailed Scientific Report signed by all members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee is prepared and submitted, documenting the doctoral thesis progress and the reasons for which it was not completed.

For all the above mentioned cases, all relevant publications, papers etc. deriving from and related to the PhD Candidate's doctoral thesis must be submitted along with the Final Progress Report.

2. A Financial Report from the SARF regarding the last reference period, according to the provisions of *Section 10.1*.

It is noted that:

In case the public defence of the thesis has been concluded prior to the expiration of the duration determined in the Funding Award Decision, the PhD Candidate must immediately submit a request to discontinue the Scholarship, in accordance with the provisions of *Section 13* herein ("Scholarship

Discontinuation”). In this instance the above-defined Final Progress Report (*Section 10.2*) shall be submitted.

If during the final audit it is found that the public defence procedure was completed before the end of the Scholarship award period, without a discontinuation request being submitted, the PhD Candidate will be asked to return the Scholarship amount reimbursed for the corresponding period as unduly paid. In case of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.’s Internal Rules of Operation is implemented.

It is mandatory to submit all Progress Reports (Interim and Final Progress Report as well as all accompanying documents).

Failure to submit the Final Progress Report and all accompanying documents leads to the revocation of the Funding Award Decision, upon issuance of a substantiated pertinent Decision by the H.F.R.I. Director, which is communicated to the PhD Candidate and the SARF, ordering the return of the amount corresponding to the PhD Candidate’s remuneration that was paid as part of the funding to an H.F.R.I. bank account within sixty (60) calendar days from the communication of the revocation Decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.’s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

11. THESIS INFORMATION AMENDMENT

In the event where any information relating to the Doctoral Thesis of the PhD Candidate is amended, the latter is obligated to send a justified request to the H.F.R.I., which shall be approved by the H.F.R.I. Director, if applicable. The requests to amend the information of the Doctoral Thesis are submitted to H.F.R.I.’s Web Portal and concern, for example, the below amendments.

11.1 Amendment of the Doctoral Thesis title

If the General Assembly of the relevant Department/School, where the doctoral Thesis is conducted, approves any change/differentiation of the Doctoral Thesis title (including its rendition in another language) compared to the one initially declared during the submission of the Application, the PhD Candidate submits an amendment request of the Funding Award Decision pertaining to the thesis title. The PhD Candidate’s request to amend the title of the Doctoral Thesis must be accompanied by the corresponding Department/School Certificate as well as a solemn declaration of the Supervising Professor which certifies that the topic of the Doctoral Thesis is not amended.

It is highlighted that amending the topic of the Doctoral Thesis shall not be acceptable, since this was closely related to a comparative evaluation criterion of the submitted Application during the evaluation stage.

In case it is found that the topic was amended, the Funding Award Decision is revoked by Decision of the H.F.R.I. Director, which is communicated to the PhD Candidate and the SARF. In case any scholarship funds have been already paid to the PhD Candidate, the Foundation orders the return of the amounts corresponding to the PhD Candidate's remuneration that were paid as part of the funding to a pertinent H.F.R.I. bank account within sixty (60) calendar days following the communication of the revocation Decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

11.2 Substitution of the Supervising Professor or another member of the Three-Member Advisory Committee

In case where the Supervising Professor or any member of the Three-Member Advisory Committee is replaced, the PhD candidate must inform H.F.R.I. about the new composition of the Three-Member Advisory Committee by submitting the pertinent Certificate provided by the General Assembly of the Department/School concerned.

The requests must be submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the specified Scholarship End-Date.

12. SCHOLARSHIP SUSPENSION

The suspension of the scholarship is possible in cases of force majeure or pregnancy and only if the relevant suspension has been approved by the General Assembly of the Department/School concerned. The PhD Candidate submits a reasoned written request to the H.F.R.I. Director, in which the exact period of the requested suspension is stated and is accompanied by any documentation supporting the request as well as the relevant certificate from the Secretariat of the Department/School concerned about the suspension of study in the Doctoral Program/the preparation of the doctoral thesis. During suspension, the Scholarship payments are suspended, to resume after the suspension period has ended, until the completion of the duration as provided for in the Funding Award Decision.

13. SCHOLARSHIP DISCONTINUATION

The discontinuation of the scholarship is only allowed in cases of force majeure or if the PhD Candidate has completed the preparation of the Doctoral Thesis before the end of the approved Scholarship duration, as defined in the FAD.

The discontinuation of the Scholarship for any other reason leads to the revocation of the FAD by decision of the H.F.R.I. Director and the return of any amount corresponding to the PhD Candidate's remuneration that was unduly paid as part of the funding to a pertinent H.F.R.I. bank account within sixty (60) calendar days from the communication of the revocation Decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

In case the Scholarship is discontinued for reasons of force majeure or due to the completion of the Doctoral Thesis, the following shall be submitted to the H.F.R.I.:

- a) An application by the PhD Candidate in which the reason(s) of the discontinuation are supported with the relevant documents attached.
- b) A Progress Report by the PhD Candidate on the implementation of his/her doctoral thesis, signed by the Three-Member Advisory Committee, regarding the period from the beginning of the Scholarship or the interim Progress Report (depending on the submission time of the request) until the discontinuation date.
- c) A Financial Report for costs incurred during the above period, according to the provisions of Section 4.1.

Following the request for discontinuation, the Director of H.F.R.I. issues, after a relevant check, a decision for the scholarship's award discontinuation, which is communicated to the PhD Candidate and to the SARF. In case the SARF has received an advance from H.F.R.I. that is higher than the amount finally approved up to the discontinuation of the Scholarship, as specified in the decision for the scholarship's award discontinuation, then the excess amount shall be returned to H.F.R.I.'s bank account by the HI's SARF within sixty (60) calendar days following the communication of the scholarship's award discontinuation decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed. When the PhD Candidate is required to return the paid scholarship, the amount is returned to H.F.R.I.'s bank account within sixty (60) calendar days from the communication of the relevant decision. In the event of non-compliance, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

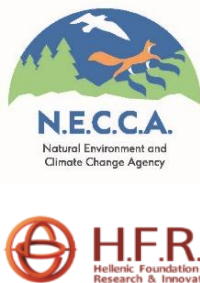
14. BENEFICIARY OBLIGATIONS

PhD Candidates receiving a Scholarship under this Call must comply with the following obligations:

- i. They must observe the terms of the Call and the Funding Award Decision.
- ii. They must not receive any aid/funding for preparing the same doctoral thesis from another national or EU program throughout the duration of the scholarship⁵.
- iii. They must include a reference to the funding (Acknowledgments) in all publicity and dissemination actions of any kind with regard to the funded Doctoral Thesis, using appropriate wording or/and the relevant logos as follows:



Η Διδακτορική Διατριβή χρηματοδοτείται στο πλαίσιο της Προκήρυξης του ΕΛ.ΙΔ.Ε.Κ. «Υποτροφίες για εκπόνηση διδακτορικής διατριβής με αντικείμενο τη διερεύνηση της ταξινομικής ομάδων οργανισμών με κύρια εξάπλωση στον ελληνικό χώρο» (Αριθμός Υποτροφίας:.....), που χρηματοδοτείται από τον Οργανισμό Φυσικού Περιβάλλοντος & Κλιματικής Αλλαγής (Ο.ΦΥ.ΠΕ.Κ.Α.).



The PhD thesis is implemented in the framework of H.F.R.I.'s Call "PhD scholarships for the study of the taxonomy of groups that are mainly distributed in the Greek region" (Scholarship Number:) funded by the National Environment & Climate Change Agency (N.E.C.C.A.).

Indicative dissemination and publicity actions include scientific publications, scientific essays in domestic and/or international journals, papers, presentations in scientific conferences, workshops and all types of events, any kind of promotional material produced for the purposes of promoting and

⁵ Funding received by the PhD Candidate for participating in mobility programs in order to conduct research abroad is excluded. In this case, the PhD Candidate is obliged to inform H.F.R.I. in writing by submitting the relevant documents supporting the participation in the program concerned.

disseminating the project (such as posters, banners, folders, brochures, publications and other promotional material), as well as announcements in printed or electronic media, etc.

The SARF of the HI has the following obligations:

- i. Keep accounting books and information specified in the provisions in force.
- ii. Keep a separate bank account for the payments of this Call.
- iii. Keep a separate account for each approved Scholarship granted under this Call. Said account shall list all costs, fully corresponding to the costs that have been declared in the progress reports addressed to H.F.R.I. The separate account in the SARF's accounting records should be kept in accordance with the rules of the Greek Accounting Standards and provide sufficient audit trail.
- iv. Keep and update a folder with all the original supporting documents pertaining to scholarship payments, including financial management receipts/invoices, throughout the duration of the scholarship and for a period of five years after its end-date. The aforementioned obligation to keep the original supporting documents remains in force, even if the beneficiary has gained the right to destroy the information in question for any reason, based on tax or other national legislation provisions.
- v. Accept all audits, verifications and inspections conducted by H.F.R.I. and other competent auditing bodies, and provide all supporting documents necessary to audit the financial and physical scope. Make available upon request all documents, supporting documents and scholarship award information, throughout the duration of the scholarship and for as long as it is required to keep such data.

Finally, the SARF and the Institution, where the doctoral thesis is prepared, are obliged to use the relevant logos and wording, as described above, on any documents, printed or online media, used or produced within the framework of the Scholarship award.

15. SCHOLARSHIP COMPLETION

Based on the certification results of the Progress Reports, the H.F.R.I. Director issues a **Scholarship Award Completion Decision**, which:

- i. Certifies that the physical scope of the approved scholarship has been completed.
- ii. Certifies that the financial scope of the approved scholarship has been completed and the final result of verified costs incurred is reflected.

iii. Establishes that the PhD Candidate has fulfilled his/her obligations.

H.F.R.I. communicates the Scholarship Award Completion Decision to the PhD Candidate and the SARF. All relevant documents and documentation data are archived in the file kept by H.F.R.I. for each approved Scholarship.

The SARF is obliged to return any undisposed balance from the advance payment and its corresponding interest to H.F.R.I.'s bank account, within sixty (60) calendar days from the **completion** of each scholarship. For each case of failure to return funds to H.F.R.I. within deadline, a recovery decision is issued and the process provisioned in articles 51 and 52 of the H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation is followed.

16. FINANCIAL CORRECTION – RECOVERY

For the funding recovery process, articles 48 and 50-52 of H.F.R.I.'s Internal Rules of Operation shall apply.

17. PUBLICITY

The Call and the Management Guide of this Call shall be posted on H.F.R.I.'s website (www.elidek.gr), the website of the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (<https://gsri.gov.gr/>), as well as the website of NECCA (<https://necca.gov.gr/>).

18. COMMUNICATION - INFORMATION

Detailed information and briefing on this Call will be provided by H.F.R.I.'s Department of Research Projects via email: researchdepartment@elidek.gr and by calling +30 210-6412410, +30 210-6412420.

The Director of the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation

Dr. Aikaterini Kouravelou

ANNEX I

SOLEMN DECLARATION

(article 8 of Law 1599/1986)

The accuracy of the information submitted along with this declaration may be cross-checked against the files kept by other services (article 8, par. 4 of Law 1599/1986)

TO:	Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.)		
Name:		Surname:	
Father's Full Name:			
Date of Birth:			

I.D. Card No.:				Tel.:			
TIN:				Tax Office:			
Place residence:	of	Street:		No.:		Post al Cod e:	
email:							

On my own responsibility and being fully aware of the sanctions⁽⁶⁾ stipulated in the provisions of par. 6 of article 22 of Law 1599/1986, as a scholar candidate under the Call “NECCA scholarships for the preparation of doctoral theses aiming to explore the taxonomy of organism groups mainly spread in Greece” I declare that:

- a. I accept the terms and conditions of the Scholarship award in accordance with the Call.
- b. All mentioned data and all supporting documents I submitted with my Application No. under the above Call are true and accurate.
- c. I will not be receiving an unemployment benefit in Greece or abroad during the scholarship.
- d. For the duration of the scholarship,

I will not hold an employment relationship: (i) in the public sector as a permanent employee or under a private law, open-term contract, or (ii) in the private sector under an open-term full employment contract or a remunerated mandate.

or

I will be employed: i) in the public sector as permanent staff or under an open-term private law employment contract or ii) in the private sector under an open-term full-time employment contract or a salaried mandate relationship, and therefore I will not be able to receive remuneration and I will only be funded for travel and consumables costs under the scholarship.

- e. Regarding the proposed doctoral thesis:

I am not funded for the scope of my doctoral thesis, in part or in whole, from any other source.

I will not be funded for the scope of my doctoral thesis, in part or in whole, from any other source during the scholarship.

⁽⁶⁾ Any person who knowingly states false facts, or denies or conceals true facts, by means of a written solemn declaration in line with article 8 shall be punished with imprisonment of at least three months. If the same person intended to obtain proprietary benefit for himself/herself or for another person to the detriment of a third party, or if said person intended to harm a third party, she/he may be sentenced to imprisonment of up to ten (10) years.

I am funded for participating in a mobility program by [*institution's name*] in order to conduct research abroad.

f. I accept that messages received via email and in particular those sent to the email address I declare in this Solemn Declaration (which is the same as the one declared in the Scholarship Acceptance Declaration), regarding **Application No.** submitted under the “4th Call for H.F.R.I. Scholarships to PhD Candidates”, are considered to be notifications and signal the initiation of all legal consequences and deadlines.

At

Date

The undersigned

 [SIGNATURE]

ANNEX II

SOLEMN DECLARATION

(article 8 of Law 1599/1986)

The accuracy of the information submitted along with this declaration may be cross-checked against the files kept by other services (article 8, par. 4 of Law 1599/1986)
--

TO:	Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.)		
Name:		Surname:	
Father's Full Name:			
Date of Birth:			
I.D. Card No.:		Tel.:	
TIN:			

Place residence:	of	Street:	No.:	Post al Cod e:
email:				

On my own responsibility and being fully aware of the sanctions⁽⁷⁾ stipulated in the provisions of par. 6 of article 22 of Law 1599/1986 as the legal representative of [*Name of Institution*], I declare that the Institution:

1. Accepts the management of Scholarship No. ... conducted by [*PhD Candidate's full name*] under the Call titled "NECCA scholarships for the preparation of doctoral theses aiming to explore the taxonomy of organism groups mainly spread in Greece".
2. Accepts the terms and conditions of the Call.
3. Accepts that messages received by H.F.R.I. via email in the email address(es) to be specified are considered notices and mark the initiation of all legal consequences and deadlines, both for the Institution and the PI.

At

Date

The undersigned

 [SIGNATURE]

 (*Stamp, legal representative details*)

⁽⁷⁾ Any person who knowingly states false facts, or denies or conceals true facts, by means of a written solemn declaration in line with article 8 shall be punished with imprisonment of at least three months. If the same person intended to obtain proprietary benefit for himself/herself or for another person to the detriment of a third party, or if said person intended to harm a third party, she/he may be sentenced to imprisonment of up to ten (10) years.

ANNEX III

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR FUNDING REIMBURSEMENT

To reimburse the funding, the following supporting documents shall be submitted:

1. Decision to include the Project/Scholarship funding in the budget of the Host Institution.
2. Tax clearance certificate for the collection of funds from entities other than Central Administration or Clearance Proof about debts to the State (*where appropriate*).
3. Social security clearance certificate for collecting cleared receivables from the State or Certificate for withholding (settling) social insurance contributions (*where appropriate*).
4. Bank account number (IBAN).

Upon payment of each instalment, the corresponding cash receipt voucher must be issued and sent and/or submitted to H.F.R.I.'s IS.