

Final Report Summary - INCA (International Career Grant)

In July 2013 EU and the Swedish Research Council (SRC) signed the agreement that set the terms of the INCA co-fund programme to support early career researchers in any scientific area.

The SRC has established a mobility program for early career fellowships, called INCA (International Career Grant). The program aimed at having two calls (2014 and 2015) to support the best young researchers with potential to become future research leaders. The SRC also aimed at taking an actively

supporting role during the grant period, including leadership training and networking activities.

The objectives of the programme were; the programme should be open to all nationalities, the applicants have worked between two and seven years after their Ph.D. exam, they must have relation to Sweden (incoming or outgoing) and the grants should be administered by a Swedish university, by which the fellow will be employed.

The calls have been published on the SRC website, they have been highlighted in the SRC newsletter and in the SRC web magazine Curie. Information about the INCA calls was also published in EUROAXESS.

All applications were first evaluated for their scientific quality in parallel panels ("subject specific panels") and then in a second panel ("common panel") where their career potentials were evaluated. The applications were assessed with the below criteria:

I. Overall scientific quality (1), Novelty and originality (2), Scientific quality of the proposed research (3), Merits of applicant (4), Feasibility

II. Career plan potential (1), Cohesiveness (2), Leadership development potential (3), Obligations of the Swedish host university and, if applicable, other host university.

A seven-grade scale was used for all criteria (except feasibility which had a three-grade scale). The common panel made an overall assessment weighing both scientific quality (60 %) and career potential (40 %). The panel made a final ranking list of proposals recommended for funding.

The first call closed April 23, 2014. The SRC received 95 applications (68 from male applicants and 27 from female applicants) and after assessment, 24 fellows were selected, 6 within the area of Medicine and Health, 12 within Natural and Engineering sciences and six within Humanities and Social Sciences. Of the selected, 15 were males and 9 females, however, there were more males applying and the success rates were 33% for females and 22% for males, respectively (25% in total).Of the selected six fellows were incoming to Sweden, the rest were outgoing.

The second call closed February 26, 2015. The SRC received 110 applications (67 from male applicants and 43 from female applicants) from which 29 fellows were selected; 3 of the selected fellows declined the fellowship before staring since they received other funding. Of the 26 reaming fellows, 8 within the area of Medicine and Health, 15 within Natural and Engineering sciences and 3 within Humanities and Social Sciences. Of the 26 awarded fellows, 18 were males and 8 females, however, the success rate was 19% for females and 27% for males (24% in total). Of the 26 awarded fellows, 12 fellows were incoming to Sweden and 14 were outgoing.

The fellows from 2014 received funding for up to 4 years (36-48 months according to the agreement), including living allowance, mobility allowance and a project grant, they started their project in beginning of 2015. The fellows from 2015 received funding for up to 3 years, including living allowance, mobility allowance and a project grant, they started their project in beginning of 2016. All fellows (except a few on parental leave) have completed a one-week leadership course in Stockholm.

During the INCA programme, 9 (4 from the 2014 call and 5 from the 2015 call) fellows left the fellowship

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early. The reasons for leaving the programme were other career opportunities, for three of the fellows the reason was that they received an ERC-grant. Two fellows were forced to leave the programme since they did not comply with the terms of the agreement concerning the mobility.

At the end of the INCA programme (28 February 2020), the fellows from the two different calls could apply for extensions of the programme to make up for time lost during parental leave and other conditions. The project period for all fellows ended on the 31 December 2018 (for 4 fellows it ended one year earlier). The year after the end date, 2019, was the availability period when the fellows could stay in the programme as long there were funds left, many fellow had reported parental leave and used this year to make up for lost research time. To further extend the programme time each fellow had to apply for further availability time, after 31 December 2019. 22 fellows applied for this and was granted additional time to finished the programme. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, 8 fellows were granted further availability time after the end of the programme (28 February 2020), this is granted and payed for by the SRC, as this was not part of the agreement of the amendments.

The INCA programme has provided the fellows with an opportunity to advance their careers and attract further funding. Almost all the fellows are staying in academia to continue their research and some have attract both EU and SRC-funding.

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