

IUFRO-EFI Young Scientists Initiative

1 BACKGROUND

Forests are the key to addressing interconnected global challenges of sustainable development. These for example include climate change, food and water security, biodiversity conservation as well as the transformation towards a bioeconomy. All these issues will underpin society's ability to prosper within the renewable boundaries of our planet.

The International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO; www.iufro.org) and the European Forest Institute (EFI; www.efi.int) are conscious of the importance of connecting the young forest science community to address challenges facing forests and forestry. Broadly, we strive to provide these future leaders with international experience to better equip them to address future global challenges and identify, create and fully utilise emerging opportunities. In order to promote this goal, we will establish a joint initiative to support Young Scientists.

The joint IUFRO-EFI Young Scientists Initiative (YSI) will offer up to five grants of up to EUR 5 000 annually for *Short Scientific Visits* specifically for Early Career Scientists¹ affiliated with IUFRO and EFI Member organisations. These *Visits* will provide a unique opportunity for:

- (1) European young scientists to visit a forest research organisation in Africa, Latin America or Asia; or
- (2) Young scientists from Africa, Latin America or Asia to visit a European forest research organisation.

The specific duration of the short scientific visits will be dependent on the complexity of the proposed projects, the location of the visit, and the availability of leveraged funding sources.

The desired outcomes of the IUFRO-EFI YSI will be to provide both the grantee and his/her affiliated organisation with the opportunity to build research collaboration and capacity and to provide opportunities extending beyond the initial scientific exchange. The goals for the grantee are broad and could include for example, skills development, establishing productive relationships with scientific peers in the host country, using the visit to benefit their own research and, if possible, publishing of scientific material.

¹ Early Career Scientist – is a scientist who has completed his/ her MSc or higher degree in forestry or related fields, is 35 years old or younger, and who is locally affiliated with an institution of research and higher learning in his/her respective home country.

While the delivery of a scientific publication (such as a journal article, chapter(s) in a book or similar publications) is not an absolute requirement, applicants are nevertheless encouraged to submit proposals with such a goal in mind. This scientific publication would preferably be co-authored by the grantee and at least one scientist of the respective member organisation hosting the visit.

The grantees will be required to make contact with the potential host organisation prior to applying for the support from the IUFRO-EFI YSI. This will be in order to establish and agree on a proposal, the duration of the proposed visit and on a mentor in the host country. The detailed agreement should be attached to the application.

The duration of the scientific visit supported by the IUFRO-EFI YSI will be dependent on the agreement between the grantee and host organisation and last approximately three months, unless additional funding has been sourced to undertake a more extensive exchange. While the main focus is the individual benefit to the young scientist, IUFRO and EFI are also open to a “twinning” arrangement between member organisations in Europe and the respective other regions. The “twinning” arrangement would entail a scientific visit by the mentor to the mentee’s organisation, followed by an exchange visit by the mentee to the mentor’s organisation.

Once selected for to receive a grant, grantees will be required to contact the host organisations and initiate the intended project well in advance of their visit. When selecting the topic for the proposal, grantees should address a topic of mutual significance to EFI and IUFRO, as included in summary in Annex 5. The complete respective Strategy documents of these organisations (<http://www.iufro.org/download/file/18532/3635/iufro-strategy-2015-2019.pdf>; http://www.efi.int/files/attachments/vision/efi_strategy2025_14112016.pdf) should be consulted when selecting a topic for the scientific visit. Proposals should address one or more of the emphasis areas of the six themes of the IUFRO and/or EFI Strategies. In making the selection of grants to be awarded, IUFRO and EFI will favour interesting and exciting proposals.

The grantee will be expected to provide IUFRO with short monthly updates on the scientific visit to be published on the IUFRO and EFI websites. Upon the conclusion of the scientific visit the grantee will be expected to deliver a detailed report on the work conducted, conclusions drawn, skills acquired, professional relationships established and future plans relating to the visit within four weeks of leaving the host country.

2 HOW TO APPLY

Candidates interested in undertaking a scientific visit supported by the IUFRO-EFI YSI should submit to IUFRO Headquarters (*Mr. Daniel Boehnke*; boehnke@iufro.org) the following documentation in an electronic format:

An Application Form as follows:

- The application should be in one pdf with all annexes, named as “SSV_FirstnameLastnameCountry.pdf” (e.g. SSV_JarrSmithFI.pdf)
- The application should be typewritten and dated (see the form in Annex 1).

- The following appendices are required:
 - Curriculum vitae of both the applicant and mentor
 - Visit application form with project proposal details, approved by host organisation (see Annex 1)
 - Work plan outlining the details of the scientific visit, approved by host organisation (see below format of the work plan in Annex 2)
 - Endorsement letter by applicant's host organisation (see the template in Annex 3)
 - Endorsement by the applicant's Head of Department
 - A short (no more than 3 minutes) video explaining the proposed project and expected outcome. The size of the video should be as small as possible.

The application deadline is **31 December 2017**. Only those applications containing all the required annexes will be considered for evaluation.

We emphasise that for applying for support from the IUFRO-EFI YSI applicants should have contacted the host organisation which they plan to work with. Applicants should also have tentatively agreed on the scope of scientific project, the associated work plan and the suitable dates for the planned research visit. The applicant will be responsible for all arrangements that need to be made prior to and during scientific visit.

After the evaluation, a IUFRO-EFI Review Committee will inform the applicant in writing entailing:

- the approval of the grant.
- the level of financing that has been approved.
- a payment request form.

The applicant will need to return to the Committee a signed acceptance letter (by email), within one week.

After completion of the scientific visit, the grantee will be expected to provide the Review Committee, within four weeks, with a full narrative report (Annex 4) about his/her stay that should contain the following information:

- Purpose of the scientific visit
- Description of the work carried out
- Description and significance of the main results obtained
- Possibility of future collaboration with host institution
- Scientific publication and additional or projected publications/articles resulting or to result from the *visit* (if applicable)
- Confirmation in the form of a signed letter by the host institute of the successful execution of the mission
- Other comments (if any)

In the case of an intended scientific publication, a draft should be provided, co-authored by at least one scientist from the member organisation hosting the visit.

3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The applicants will be selected on a competitive basis following the selection criteria provided below. Applicants will be informed of the outcome by the 31st of January 2018.

The following criteria will be used to select successful candidates:

- Originality and relevance of the research topic.
- Applicant's previous experience and work on the proposed research topic.
- Overall quality of the work plan.
- Feasibility of the work planned at the host institution.
- Geographical and gender balance.
- Leverage of funding from the host or home organisation that would allow for more ambitious research goals.

Applicants that have not previously been awarded a grant from the IUFRO-EFI YSI will have preference.

Following the evaluation procedure, the Evaluation Committee will send an acceptance letter in which the grantee is informed of:

- The approval of the mission.
- The level of the financial grant given.
- Grant payment method.

The successful applicants must return the signed acceptance letter to the Review Committee within one week.

4 FUNDING

The grant supporting the scientific visits will be a lump sum payment of up to €5,000 that will be paid once the grantee has acknowledged that his/her application has been successful.

The funding should cover travel and subsistence costs for the period of the grant. However, if additional funding is acquired, longer visits would be acceptable (final duration of the visit would be decided between awardee and host institution as appropriate to the proposed work). We strongly endorse seeking additional funds in order to yield the full potential of an extended scientific visit.

5 HOST INSTITUTION

The applicant will be responsible for obtaining the agreement of the host institution before submitting his/her application. While the applicant needs to be affiliated with a member organisation of IUFRO and/or EFI, the host institution need not necessarily be a member of either institution.

6 CONTACT

Should you have any questions regarding the IUFRO-EFI YSI, please contact the Secretary of the Review Committee, Mr. Daniel Boehnke (boehnke@iufro.org).

ANNEX 1.

IUFRO-EFI SHORT SCIENTIFIC VISIT APPLICATION FORM

Date

PERSONAL DATA

Family name (Surname):

First name (Given name):

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy):

Nationality:

Private address (street, no., floor):

Town:

Province:

Country:

P.O. Box:

Post code:

Tel. (Indicate country and area codes):

Fax (Indicate country and area codes):

E-mail address:

Motivation for the *Short Scientific Visit* (max. 250 words)

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Title of the project:

Relevance of research topic (if possible, include reference to relevant IUFRO and/or EFI Strategy themes):

Home institution (name, country)

Position at home institution

Host institution (name, country)

Please specify the dates to be spent at the host institution (dd/mm/yyyy)

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Detailed description of the project with the following headings (objectives, methodology, data collection, time schedule, expected results) (max. 1,000 words):

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HOST INSTITUTION DATA

Contact person's name and surname:

Contact person's e-mail:

Name of the university/institution:

Department or Faculty:

Complete address:

Country:

Tel. (Indicate country and area codes):

Fax (Indicate country and area codes):

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given is correct and I agree to inform of any modification

Date:

Signature:

ANNEX 2:

WORK PLAN TEMPLATE

(to be attached to the application)

Please use the format below as applicable. The maximum length of the work plan is 3 pages (excluding cover page).

A. **Cover Page**

Technical Data

- a. Project title
- b. Date of preparation
- c. Contact person's name, title/affiliation and contact information

B. **Starting from page 2**

1. **Objective and outputs**

- a. Objective
 - A clear specification of the main objectives of the project
- b. Output
 - Expected technical outputs (reviewed and other publications and articles, reports, seminars, technical improvements, etc.) of the project

2. **Methodology**

- Method(s) to be used
- Which data will be used and how will it be collected

3. **Work plan**

- Describe main activities and their timetable in a table format

4. **Links to other relevant activities**

List here other recent or ongoing projects and activities of relevance to the proposed project.

ANNEX 3.

ENDORSMENT LETTER

MUST BE ON OFFICIAL HEADED PAPER OF THE HOST UNIVERSITY/INSTITUTION

OBJECT: Invitation for a *Visit* to our university/institution in the framework of
IUFRO-EFI *Short Scientific Visit*

Dear Sir/Madam,

We hereby invite you to the *(name of the university/institution)*, *(name of the Department/Faculty)*, from day/month/year to day/month/year (XX working days), in order to *(please give the purpose of the Visit)*. During your *Visit* at our university/institution, we will help you in carrying out the following activities:

(List of activities to be carried out by the applicant)

(Add any practical arrangements/comments you deem necessary)

For all matters linked to your *Visit*, you can contact *(name of contact person, with contact details)*

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE of the person legally authorised to represent the
host university/institution

POSITION of the person legally authorised to represent the host
university/institution

OFFICIAL STAMP or SEAL of the university/institution

ANNEX 4.

SHORT SCIENTIFIC VISIT REPORT

Based on the approved work plan, and following the structure of a scientific publication, it should contain the following information:

1. **Cover Page** Technical Data
 1. Project title
 2. Dates of the visit
 3. Granted person's name, title/affiliation and contact information
2. **Objectives** (Purpose of the *Visit*)
3. **Methodology**
4. Description of the work carried out during the *Visit* (include the workplan) and main **results** obtained
5. **Discussion**
6. **Conclusions**
7. **References**: bibliography, websites, etc.
8. **Future collaboration** with host institution (if applicable)
9. Initiated or projected **publications**/articles resulting or to result from the *Short Scientific Visit* (if applicable)
10. **Abstract** of the SSV (2 paragraphs) for IUFRO and EFI websites

Other comments (if any)

ANNEX 5

Priority Themes

Theme 1: Forests for People

- a. Contribution of forests and trees to agricultural productivity, food and energy security and enhancement of traditional and alternative livelihoods
- b. The role of forests and trees in rural and urban areas for human health, wellbeing and quality of life

Theme 2: Forests and Climate Change

- a. The impacts of climate change and natural disturbances on the resilience of forest socio-ecological systems
- b. Strategies and management approaches, including forest restoration, for the enhancement of the resilience of forests, as well as of urban (urban forestry) and rural areas (agroforestry)

Theme 3: Bioeconomy - Forests and forest-based products for a greener future

- a. Sustainability impact assessment and monitoring of forest bio-based products and bioenergy value chains
- b. Future markets for current and new forest-based products and services as a result of the transition towards a bioeconomy from other sectors (energy, textile, construction, chemicals, food, etc.)

Theme 4: Biodiversity, ecosystem services and biological invasions

- a. Trends, causes and impacts of biodiversity loss, including biological invasions threatening ecosystem services of forests
- b. Contribution of restoration and forest management to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services

Theme 5: Forests, soil and water interactions

- a. Macro-level land management and impacts on the water cycle, including interactions with water yield and quality, nutrients and soil resources
- b. Managing forest ecosystems for water conservation and disaster prevention and reduction

Theme 6: Governance

- a. Forest and land use conflicts and synergies, including an understanding of key societal demands and the trade-offs between forest functions, products and land-uses
- b. Responsible development and management of supply chains and trade, as a basis for sustainable development, including business practices.

Annex 6:

Tentative schedule

September 2017	Publication of call (IUFRO and EFI website, mailing) to coincide with IUFRO 125 th Anniversary Congress
31 December 2017	Deadline for application submission
January 2018	Joint Committee meeting (decision on awards)
31 January 2018	Information submitted to successful candidates
Spring 2018	Presentation of grantees' names at a suitable EFI/IUFRO event
2018	Grants implemented