

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR 3 months FIXED-TERM RESEARCH POSITIONS FOR THREE VISITING RESEARCHERS FROM KENYA

Visiting Research Mobility for Kenyan Researchers in High-Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Data-Intensive Life Sciences

1. Purpose of the call

Area Science Park invites expression of interest from qualified researchers of Kenyan nationality for three visiting research mobility programme of three months each, at its Data Engineering Laboratory in Trieste, Italy. The programme will provide access to advanced high-performance computing (HPC), storage, GPU/CPU and cloud-native resources through ORFEO, the digital backbone of the PRP@CERIC research infrastructure, together with scientific training and mentoring in data engineering and artificial intelligence.

The initiative is funded under the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) programme supporting Transnational Access and visiting mobility for Kenyan researchers at PNRR-funded Research Infrastructures, Technological Innovation Infrastructures and National Centres.

2. Host institution and research environment

Area Science Park is a national public research organisation based in Trieste, Italy. Shortlisted candidates will be admitted to a selection procedure for three positions of fixed-term visiting researchers from Kenya, hosted by the Data Engineering Laboratory, within the PRP@CERIC ecosystem. Moreover, the research environment includes:

- ORFEO: a high-performance data centre offering scalable storage, state-of-the-art CPU and GPU resources, and advanced services deployed on Kubernetes.
- PRP@CERIC: the Pathogen Readiness Platform for the CERIC-ERIC Upgrade, a distributed research infrastructure supporting integrated and multidisciplinary research on human, animal and plant pathogens.
- LAGE Genomics Laboratory: a genomics facility whose data flows provide a practical setting for developing reproducible, automated and FAIR-by-design data pipelines.

Each researcher will receive scientific mentoring, technical support for use of the computing environment, and assistance with the administrative and logistical aspects of the stay.

3. Fixed term research positions and research tracks

Applicants must select one primary research track. Interdisciplinary proposals combining two or more tracks are welcome when they remain feasible within the mobility period.

Track A — FAIR-by-design data pipelines for genomics and HPC

- Design, implement and optimise automated workflows for secure and reliable transfer of data from the LAGE Genomics Laboratory to the ORFEO data centre.
- Embed FAIR principles—Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reusability—into workflow design, metadata capture, provenance, quality control and reproducibility.
- Evaluate workflow orchestration, containerisation and scalable execution in Kubernetes/HPC environments.

Track B — Benchmarking generative Large Language Models

- Design reproducible benchmarks for generative Large Language Models (LLMs), including performance, scalability, accuracy and resource utilisation.
- Measure and compare computational and energy efficiency across models, hardware configurations, inference strategies and workloads.
- Develop transparent reporting methods and reusable benchmark pipelines suitable for research infrastructures.

Track C — AI-augmented numerical simulation for biological applications

- Configure and implement advanced numerical simulation services enhanced by machine-learning or AI methods.
- Apply these approaches to biologically relevant use cases, including data-driven acceleration, surrogate modelling, parameter estimation or optimisation.
- Assess accuracy, reproducibility, scalability and computational efficiency on ORFEO resources.

4. Expected outcomes

In agreement with the scientific supervisor, each fellow will define a work plan with concrete outputs. Expected outcomes may include:

- a documented and reproducible software pipeline, benchmark suite or simulation service;
- technical documentation, metadata and code prepared according to FAIR and open-science principles, subject to data protection, security and intellectual-property requirements;
- a final technical and scientific report and an end-of-stay presentation;
- where appropriate, a joint publication, conference contribution, training resource or follow-up project concept involving Kenyan and Italian institutions.

5. Duration, location and indicative schedule

Item	Details
Number of fellowships	3

Item	Details
Duration	3 consecutive months
Location	Area Science Park, Padriciano Campus, Trieste, Italy
Working mode	Full-time, in person; access to ORFEO subject to host security and acceptable-use procedures
Indicative start	01/2027
Latest completion date	07/2027

6. Financial and practical support

The final awarded research contracts will be funded at the **standard unit cost** of 3.000,00€/month (equivalent to a flat-rate monthly allowance, defined by the MUR Public Notice) covering all expenses related to participation to the activities and presence at the Area Science Park site, such as travel, accommodation, subsistence and local transportation. If Area Science Park purchases airline tickets directly, the corresponding amount will be deducted from the flat-rate monthly allowance. Area Science Park will provide the selected researchers with the support foreseen by the approved project, including:

- insurance coverage as required by the funding programme;
- access to ORFEO computing and storage resources and relevant software services, subject to technical assessment and resource availability;
- scientific supervision, technical onboarding and specialist training;
- administrative and logistical support for the mobility period.

Note: Participation in the programme does not entail any obligation to offer future employment.

7. Eligibility requirements

Candidates must meet all the following requirements by the application deadline:

- be of Kenyan nationality;
- be enrolled in a PhD programme or hold a PhD or an equivalent scientific or professional qualification under the applicant's national system, corresponding to EQF Level 8 and relevant to the proposed research activities;
- be currently engaged in research at a university, research organisation or comparable institution, or demonstrate an equivalent active research profile based in the Republic of Kenya;
- have research experience relevant to at least one of the three tracks;
- have sufficient proficiency in English to carry out research, training and scientific communication;

- be able to reside in Trieste and undertake the fellowship within the dates established by Area Science Park;
- comply with Italian immigration requirements and with Area Science Park’s safety, cybersecurity, data-protection and acceptable-use policies;
- To propose non-economic research activities pursuant to European Commission Communications C/2016/2946 and 2022/C 414/01.

Applications from early-career researchers and women researchers are particularly encouraged. Area Science Park applies the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

8. Evaluation criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee appointed by Area Science Park. The proposed scoring framework is:

Criterion	Assessment focus	Maximum score
Scientific and technical profile	Qualifications, research experience, technical skills and relevance to the selected track	20
Quality of the proposed work plan	Clarity, scientific merit, methodology, feasibility and appropriate use of ORFEO resources	30
Expected impact	Benefits for the applicant and host, capacity building, knowledge transfer and potential for sustained Italy–Kenya collaboration	20
Motivation and fit	Rationale for the visit, learning objectives and complementarity with Area Science Park expertise	20
English communication	Ability to work and communicate effectively in the programme environment	10

Minimum threshold for selection: 70/100. Shortlisted applicants may be invited to an online interview.

9. Application package

Applications must be submitted in English and include all the following information and documents, to be provided at the url [Visiting Research Mobility for Kenyan Researchers | PRP](#):

1. Completed application form, including personal data and affiliation, email and contacts, and acceptance of privacy policy.
2. Copy of a valid Kenyan passport or national identity document.

3. Curriculum vitae, including education, employment, technical skills, publications, software, datasets, projects and other relevant outputs (recommended maximum: 4 pages).
4. Research proposal and work plan (maximum 3 pages) indicating the selected track, objectives, methods, datasets or software to be used, required CPU/GPU/storage resources, expected outputs, timetable, ethical or data-protection considerations and dissemination plan.
5. Motivation letter (maximum 2 pages) explaining the applicant's interest, expected learning outcomes and potential contribution to longer-term cooperation.
6. Letter of support from the applicant's home institution, signed by the applicant's supervisor, academic coordinator, professor, group leader, or another authorized representative, and issued on the institution's official letterhead, confirming the applicant's current role within the institution and availability for the proposed mobility period.

10. Submission procedure and deadline

Applications must be submitted by 12:00 (Central European Time) on 15/11/2026.

Applications received after the deadline, submitted through a different channel, or missing mandatory documents may be excluded. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt. Questions may be sent to visitingfromkenya@areasciencepark.it no later than 08/11/2026, 12:00AM CET.

11. Selection of shortlisted candidates, following selection procedure, acceptance and reserve list

1. Administrative eligibility check.
2. Appointment of a Selection Committee composed of three members with proven experience and expertise in the reference subject.
3. Scientific evaluation and, where necessary, online interview.
4. Approval of the ranking of the shortlisted candidates and notification of results.
5. Subsequent selection procedure conducted to fill three fixed-term research visiting positions among the shortlisted candidates.
6. Formal acceptance of the selected researchers, verification of original documents, request of a short-stay research visa at the competent Italian Embassy or Consulate and agreement on the work plan, mobility dates and resource allocation.

Area Science Park may establish a reserve list and use it if a selected candidate withdraws or cannot complete the required administrative procedures. Selection does not in itself guarantee entry into Italy or the issuance of a visa. The host will provide the documentation and reasonable assistance required for the applicable immigration procedure.

12. Data protection, ethics, security and intellectual property

Personal data will be processed solely for the purposes of managing the selection and mobility programme, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and the applicable Italian legislation.

Fellows must comply with Area Science Park policies and any applicable data-management plan.

Ownership, access rights, confidentiality, software licensing, publication and exploitation of results will be governed by the fellowship agreement. Publication and open dissemination are encouraged wherever compatible with legal, ethical, security and intellectual-property obligations.

13. Programme management and reporting

Selected fellows will be required to participate in onboarding and training, maintain appropriate records of activities and use of resources, attend progress meetings, acknowledge programme funding in relevant outputs, and submit a final report and presentation.

14. Indicative timetable

Stage	Indicative date
Call publication	10/10/2026
Deadline for questions	08/11/2026
Application deadline	15/11/2026
Interviews, if applicable limited to adequate candidates	20/11/2026
Notification of results	20/12/2026
Fellowship start	01/01/2027-31/01/2027
Fellowship duration	3 consecutive months, except for any duly justified and previously authorized temporary interruption
Completion of mobility	No later than 31/07/2027

15. Legal and administrative provisions

This call for expression of interest is issued within the framework of MUR Public Notice No. 175 of 29 April 2026, “Public notice for funding Transnational Access (TNA) and visiting mobility activities for researchers of Kenyan nationality at Research Infrastructures, Technological Innovation Infrastructures and National Centres funded under the PNRR”, and the approved Area Science Park proposal. Area Science Park reserves the right, in accordance with applicable law and the funding rules, to amend, suspend, extend or cancel the procedure, or not to award one or more fellowships where justified by programme, financial,

legal or operational requirements. Any such decision will be communicated through the same channels used to publish the call.