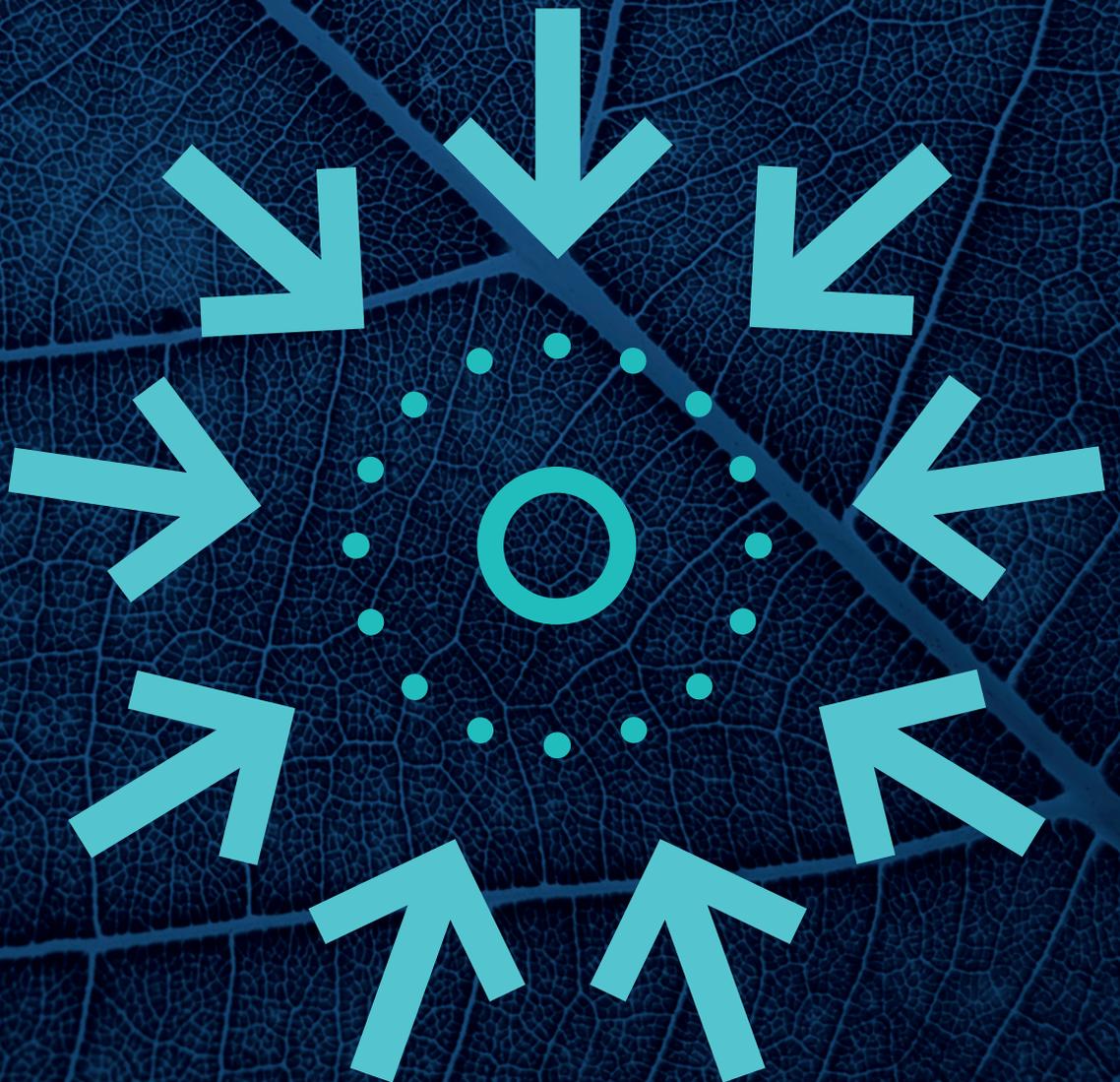


EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Science Connect
in a nutshell





WHO WE ARE

The European Science Foundation–Science Connect (ESF–SC) is a non–governmental, internationally oriented, non–profit association established in France in 1974.

ESF–SC is committed to promoting the highest quality science in Europe to drive progress in research and innovation. ESF–SC implements high–quality, independent science operations on the European Research Area.

The aims of ESF–SC (www.esf.org) consist of initiating, supporting, developing, and implementing all actions striving, at the European and international levels, to:

- serve and strengthen all disciplines of science,
- foster cooperation between the various research stakeholders,
- support and assist the conduct of scientific research.

ESF–SC’s actions are politically neutral and are guided by the following values: pan–European as well as worldwide scope, scientific excellence, openness, responsiveness, ethical awareness and human values.

ESF member organisations affirm their adherence to these values at the time of their admission.

ESF-SCIENCE CONNECT'S CORE ACTIVITIES

Grant Evaluation

ESF has been implementing [Grant Evaluation processes](#) for its own programmes for decades.

In 2011, it issued the [European Peer Review Guide – Integrating Policies and Practices into Coherent Procedures](#), which resulted from an in-depth analysis of peer review processes implemented in the leading European public research funding organisations. This benchmarking and synthesising exercise allowed ESF to refine and improve its approach and internal processes in order to integrate some of the best practices identified during that analysis.

Since 2009, ESF has been partnering with third party organisations on grant evaluation activities, supporting them in their effort to identify and select the best projects and applications. These partners are public funding institutions (e.g. FWO in Belgium, National Science Fund of Georgia or the 'Grand Est' in France), Philanthropies (e.g. the AXA Research Fund), Universities (e.g. Bordeaux, Luxembourg, Ghent) as well as European programmes (e.g. Graphene Flagship Ramp Up, Europlanet 2024 RI).

Since 2016, ESF-SC has been involved in

70

research grant
evaluation campaigns with

22

partners

Over the past two years ESF-SC has processed more than

9000

research proposals

Many types of scientific activity have been evaluated, including projects, fellowship applications, chair positions. The format of the scientific assessment can vary from one case to another, but the core of the processes is based on:

- Setting-up of disciplinary review panel which collectively assesses projects and applications and delivers a ranked list.
- Providing two or three specialist evaluation reports for each project and application to be assessed. These reports are then provided to the funder for selection.

In some cases, the approach adopted combines the two processes: ESF-SC sets up review panels that assess projects and applications with specialist insight provided by external evaluation reports.

The [ESF Community of Experts](#) plays a vital role in sustaining scientific collaboration and supporting excellence in grant and programmatic evaluation. Today it comprises over 9,000 key experts across all scientific disciplines.

Scientific Platforms Hosting

Networking, strategic advice, awareness raising, coordination of actions are necessary to make science progress and to develop a collective appropriation of the ever-evolving research. This often requires some level of structuring and coordination; however, getting organised and coordinated also often involves a significant administrative burden, in particular when it requires the setting up and management of independent legal entities.

ESF-SC intends to facilitate the work and operations of such scientific platforms. By providing access to its legal structure, staff, support services and facilities, it lowers the administrative burden and allows stakeholders to focus on activities and impact.

Currently, ESF hosts six scientific platforms:



[European Space Sciences Committee](#)
(ESSC – established in 1974)



[Committee on Radio Astronomy Frequencies](#)
(CRAF – established in 1988)



[Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee](#)
(NuPECC - established in 1991)



[Europlanet Society](#)
(established in 2018)



[European Astrobiology Institute](#)
(EAI – established in 2019)



[cOAlition S](#)
(office established at ESF in 2020)

Each scientific platform hosted by ESF has its own Terms of Reference, governance and decision-making process, workplan, funding structure and membership. They operate quite independently from ESF corporate activity and governance.

Participation in European Projects

In 2021, ESF–SC is involved as a Partner or Coordinator in 15 EU H2020 projects.

This allows ESF staff to hold good and accurate knowledge of the technical, administrative, and financial specificities of EC projects.

ESF–SC considers projects funded by the European Commission as valuable opportunities to develop stronger links with the scientific community and research organisations. Its model involves being fully integrated in consortia from the proposal preparation phase and then be part of the team if the proposal is successful.

ESF contributions to EC projects are based on its corporate knowledge and experience, these contributions primarily include:

- Coordination and administrative management of the grant,
- Project management,
- Stakeholders mapping and management,
- Landscape (programmatic) mapping,
- Scientific foresight and roadmapping,
- Community consultation,
- Communication and dissemination

These competencies are relevant to most domains of research, ESF can thus contribute to a wide range of projects across the scientific landscape.

Since 2018, ESF is involved in projects supported by Horizon 2020 SWAFS programme. With ten ongoing projects, the organisation has developed a good knowledge of the RRI (Responsible Research and Innovation) domains, in particular RRI governance, ethics and gender studies.

New development: Fight Kids Cancer funding programme



The [Fight Kids Cancer programme](#) is a new initiative supported by three European parent and patient representative organisations that have joined forces to launch an exciting opportunity supporting academic research for paediatric cancers.

In 2019 these three organisations ([Fondatioun Kriibskrank Kanner](#)–Luxemburg, [Imagine for Margo](#)–France, [KickCancer](#)–Belgium) approached ESF–SC to investigate the possibility of developing a research programme supported by a common pot of philanthropic funding.

This led to two joint open calls for projects (3 M€ budget/call) that resulted in the selection of eleven research projects in 2020 (results of the 2021 call are pending).

ESF coordinated the development of the call operations and programme governance and is now the implementing agent of the programme on behalf of the funders.

