



Initiative of excellence

**Support for scientific excellence and the internationalisation of research**

## **Talent Programme Description**

**Calls for proposals and application details**

03/11/2023

**Pre-application deadline : November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, 13:00 CET.**

**Application deadline : January 25<sup>th</sup> 2024, 13:00 CET.**

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## 1. Aim and scope of the programme

The CY Initiative TALENT PROGRAMME invites applications from high-profile young researchers willing to develop their research in one of the CY Initiative research groups.

It aims to support young researchers leading an ambitious research project at the highest level, in all academic fields. The recruitment will take the form of **junior chairs**, with a duration of **three years**, integrated in a research centre of CY Initiative and offering attractive compensation and research environment. The project will contribute to the development of the CY scientific community. It is expected that the research programme of the candidate be articulated with the research strategy of the hosting CY research centre and creator of research synergies therein, and beyond.

The TALENT PROGRAMME welcomes applications from junior researchers with **two to ten years of postdoctoral experience** and with a high research potential as demonstrated by their past academic achievements and their innovative and ambitious research project. It is also open to junior researchers from National Public Research Organizations wishing to conduct research at one of our associate centres.

The programme is part of a wider scheme to foster scientific excellence and internationalisation within the CY Initiative for excellence.

## 2. Academic environment

### a. The CY Initiative

The CY Initiative is an academic consortium composed of the [CY Cergy Paris University](#) (CYU) and the [ESSEC Business School](#). It is funded by the French *Investissements d'Avenir* programme as one of the 19 French Universities of Excellence.

CY Cergy Paris University was formed in January 2020 following a merger of Cergy-Pontoise University, EISTI school of engineering and University Paris Seine. ESSEC is associated by decree with CY Cergy Paris University and integrated in its governance. Both institutions have joined forces with an ambitious project, the CY Initiative, which has the objective to boost their research potential and international attractiveness in order to be ranked within the top 200 world research universities in the next ten years. Together, they have been selected by the French government as one of the 19 French Universities of Excellence. CYU appears in the top quartile of French institutions for several size-adjusted indicators of research performance, including ERC nominations. It is a multidisciplinary, mid-sized French university with significant recognition for the quality of its research and innovation. It runs two national centres of excellence in the fields of Modelling sciences (economics, mathematics, physics, computer science and finance) and Material heritage restoration and conservation (experimental science and humanities).

CYU is ranked 201+ of the THE Young University Rankings (2023). ESSEC is one of the world's leading Business Schools, ranked in the world top 150 in Business Administration (ARWU-2022); for Management Master programmes, ESSEC is ranked in the world top 2 by QS (2023 ranking), top 6 by Financial Times (2023 ranking); for Finance Master programmes, ESSEC is ranked in the world top 3 by Financial Times (2023 ranking).

### b. CY Initiative research areas and research centres

Research at CY Initiative covers all academic disciplines except medicine and can be grouped into four main scientific areas:

- Formal Sciences and Modelling;
- Natural Sciences and Engineering;
- Economics, Business, Law, and Politics;
- Humanities, Arts, and Education.

The academic community of the CY Initiative is structured in 26 research centres or laboratories. *You may find [here](#) the full list.*

Addressing cross-cutting topics, interdisciplinary and intersectoral research is also stimulated through the following three transversal structures:

- The [MME-DII Laboratoire d'excellence](#) gathers researchers in Mathematics, Economics, Physics and Computer Science and develops innovative models of uncertainty, interactions and dynamics. Some of the targeted application areas include economics, finance and social sciences.
- The [Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine](#) (Foundation for Heritage Science) gathers researchers from humanities, arts and sciences for the study, preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, in partnership with leading national and international cultural institutions.
- A third transversal research group focuses on risk and security issues and gathers researchers in data and computer science, experimental sciences, social sciences and external experts in forensics, criminology and security.

The CY Initiative research community offers high-quality research facilities and cutting-edge equipment including technological platforms for materials analysis, molecular diagnosis and characterization, digital technologies, operated by CYU<sup>1</sup>.

Laureates of the CY Initiative TALENT PROGRAMME are expected to develop their **individual research project** within a research group of the CY Initiative, or at the interface of two or more CY research groups. Their application will only be considered if they have established contacts with the heads of the research groups that align best with their research proposal and succeeded in co-constructing a detailed research project. Applications are expected to discuss how the project will benefit from and to the hosting **CY research group**, and how it will impact its strategy in terms of scientific positioning, international visibility (as demonstrated by publication and ranking impact), partnerships with external institutions.

A detailed presentation of the research environment offered at CY Initiative can be found on the 'research' pages of each institution's website:

- For [CYU](#)
- For [ESSEC Business School](#)

### 3. Eligibility conditions, expectations and terms of appointment

#### *Eligibility conditions*

- Applicants should have **two to ten years of postdoctoral experience** at the time of the start of their contract;
- The Programme supports researchers from all countries and all disciplinary backgrounds. While there is no restriction on nationality, appropriate permission to work in France is required before taking up a TALENT PROGRAMME position;
- Applicants **must not have held a research position (including PhD) at any of the institutions belonging to CY Initiative**, before the launch date of the present call for proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> CYU operates five main technological platforms: PATRIMEX (laser platform for the analysis of material for cultural heritage), PeptLab (molecular diagnosis), COSMETOMICS (characterization and analysis of cosmetic substances), TechEduLab (digital technologies for education), Smart Embedded Systems (digital technologies in health-care, with ENSEA). It plays a leading role in the large European infrastructure E-RHIS. ESSEC operates an Experimental Laboratory for economics, psychology and behavioral science. CY Initiative is also a member of several national technological platforms Robotex (in the field of robotics), the Synchrotron Soleil, ATTOLAB (rapid electronic dynamic), Vedecom (carbon-free vehicles).

- The programme is open to junior researchers from National Public Research Organizations wishing to conduct research at one of our associate centres (UMRs).

### *Expectations*

- Applicants must **promote their own research project to be carried** in the CYI research centre of their choice, or at the interface of two or more CYI research centres, for a maximum period of **three years**. Research projects will be evaluated on the basis of their intrinsic quality as well as their relevance for the host research centre(s), particularly with regards to their potential impact on the strategic positioning of the research centre(s), and their potential for collaboration with the CYI research community.
- Applicants **must be supported by the head of the CY research group(s)** that align(s) with their project. To this end, prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the directors of the above-listed research centres before pre-submitting their project abstract in the application process described below. **Only projects that have been co-constructed with the relevant CY research group(s) will be considered by the evaluation committee.** Final application shall be endorsed by an official support letter from the host research groups of the CY Initiative.
- Research projects supported by the TALENT PROGRAMME are expected to demonstrate their ability to attract external funding in order to sustain their scientific aims beyond the support received from the present CYI funding scheme. Selected applicants are expected to offer the prospect of attracting additional funding from national and international funding agencies and invited to explain how additional funding will be secured, which sort of funding they intent to apply for and at what stage of the project, in order to achieve the project's final goals.

### *Commitments*

CY Initiative TALENT laureates will undertake to:

- Submit a project to the ERC or another similar competitive source of funding within the first two years.
- Produce a scientific and financial activity report every year.
- Take part in the academic life of the local community (training and education, conferences, seminars, etc.).

### *Duration*

TALENT PROGRAMME positions are awarded for a duration of three years.

### *Budget and compensation*

Financial support is adjustable, depending on the research project and the researcher's experience.

Financial support may in particular include:

- the salary of the chair holder;
- operational costs, research and dissemination expenses associated with the project,
- funding for a postdoctoral or doctoral researcher or a technician associated with the project;
- teaching waivers for candidates currently preparing an application for a CY permanent position.

When the salary of the chair holder is supported by the CY Initiative TALENT PROGRAMME the minimum compensation paid to a researcher is equal to 2 800 € net per month and will depend on experience.

## **4. Application and selection process**

### **a. Timeline**

- Call opening: November 6<sup>th</sup> 2023
- Deadline for pre-submission of a project abstract: November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, 13:00 CET.
- Deadline for the submission of full-applications: January 25<sup>th</sup> 2024, 13:00 CET.
- Evaluations: February-April 2024
- Notifications: May 2024
- Start of the TALENT positions: Beginning of September 2024

## b. Application process

The application process is divided in two steps.

### **Pre-application stage:**

- All candidates must pre-submit a project abstract for TALENT positions offered by the CY Initiative, **before November 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, 13:00 CET**;
- Before the pre-submission of the abstract, candidates must have **identified and contacted the CY Initiative research centre(s)** that would best match their research project. CY research centre(s) must support the project from the pre-submission stage on and, at the stage of the pre-submission, be in the process of jointly constructing the research proposal with the candidate that will be submitted for possible funding;
- All (pre-)applications must be submitted online through a dedicated web application portal: <https://cy-initiative.smapply.io>
- The web application portal opens on **November 6<sup>th</sup> 2023**: application material will be made available via the portal.

### **Application stage:**

- All candidates must submit their final application to the TALENT PROGRAMME **by January 25<sup>th</sup> 2024, 13:00 CET**
- Details of the application process are presented on the following page [https://cy-initiative.smapply.io/prog/cy\\_initiative\\_2024\\_talent\\_programme/](https://cy-initiative.smapply.io/prog/cy_initiative_2024_talent_programme/)
- Application material will be available through the web portal <https://cy-initiative.smapply.io/res/p/CYI-docs/>

## c. Selection

Proposals will be selected by a dedicated panel, including external experts and internal panel members from the CY Initiative, on the basis of evaluation reports written by external reviewers. The general criteria considered in the assessment are:

- The research potential of the candidate, demonstrated by their past academic achievements and their innovative and ambitious research project;
- The scientific quality and innovative character of the project;
- The strategic nature of the project and its contribution to (a) the scientific development of the CY Initiative and (b) the strategic complementarity with the CY hosting research group;
- The expertise of the candidate.

Excellence of the candidate will be evaluated on two criteria:

- Research experience and scientific production including patents, publications...;
- Adequacy of the candidate's profile with the research project (scientific background and experience in the field).

Research projects will be evaluated on three criteria:

- Scientific/technological quality and innovative nature of the project;
- Structure of the project: precise definition of expected outputs, selected methods, setting of milestones;
- Sustainability of the project: presentation of a medium-run sustainability strategy, beyond the funding period of the CYI TALENT PROGRAMME scheme, including full details on the funding program(s) that the applicant will commit to apply to; e.g. Horizon Europe, ERC, ANR, FET, etc.