LE STUDIUM
Loire Valley
Institute for Advanced Studies

RÉGION CENTRE VAL DE LOIRE

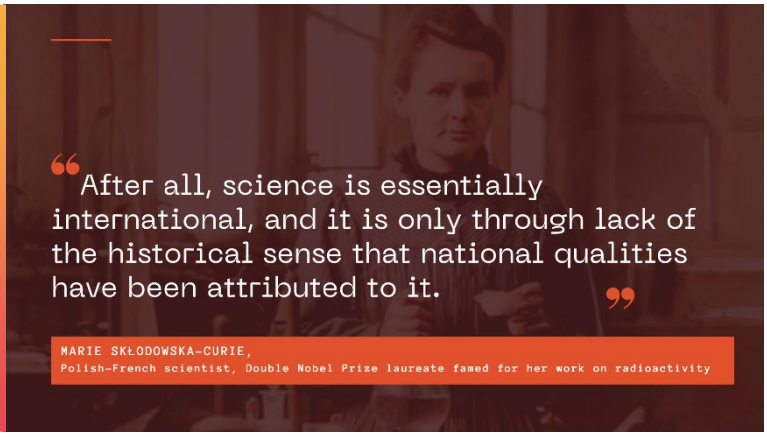
SMART LOIRE VALLEY (SLV) Programme

Call for applications and guidelines: campaign 2027

Tuesday 3rd November 2026 to Tuesday 2nd February 2027 (17:00 – CET Paris time)

Call for applications and guidelines : campaign 2027

Tuesday 3rd November 2026 to Tuesday 2nd February 2027 (17:00 – CET Paris time)



PREAMBLE

Created in 1996 and inspired by the Loire Valley’s rich historical, cultural and geographical heritage, **LE STUDIUM Loire Valley Institute for Advanced Studies** has the mission of **fostering a vibrant, outward-looking international scientific community** in the Centre-Val de Loire region of France. Its scope embraces **all research disciplines** and brings together **public and private research institutions** with the shared ambition of advancing knowledge, innovation and human capacity.

At the heart of LE STUDIUM’s activities lies the **welcoming of experienced international researchers**. Hosted within the laboratories of universities, research centres and enterprises of the region, these researchers are offered a **stimulating multidisciplinary environment** that encourages scientific creativity, collaboration and openness to a broad range of projects. Since its creation, LE STUDIUM has attracted **more than 350 senior researchers from over 50 countries**, strengthening the region’s visibility and connectivity within the global research landscape.

Beyond individual research projects, LE STUDIUM promotes **innovative exchange schemes and networking activities** that nurture a **dynamic international faculty of fellows**. By stimulating **cross-disciplinary dialogue** between regional and international scientific communities, these initiatives contribute to building **collective expertise** and reinforcing the region’s capacity for research, development and innovation.

Operating through an **extensive network of partners**, LE STUDIUM collaborates with the **University of Orléans, the University of Tours, INSA Centre Val de Loire, AgroParisTech Campus d’Orléans, and ESAD Orléans**, as well as major national research centres located in the region, including **BRGM, CEA Le Ripault, CNRS, INRAE and Inserm**. Strong links are also maintained with the **university hospitals of Tours and Orléans**, the **MSH Val de Loire**, and a range of **regional clusters and competitiveness poles**. In total, more than **eighty laboratories and institutes** are connected to LE STUDIUM’s activities.

The financial partners of this programme are the universities of Tours and Orleans, Orléans Metropole and the **Centre-Val de Loire Regional Council**, whose sustained supports underline the importance of **international collaboration** and **scientific excellence** for the regional research and innovation ecosystem.

CONTACTS

For scientific and technical questions:

Dr AURÉLIEN MONTAGU
Scientific Manager
aurelien.montagu@lestudium-ias.fr
+33 238 211 486

For administrative and financial questions:

SOPHIE GABILLET
General Secretary
sophie.gabillet@lestudium-ias.fr
+33 238 211 481

For technical questions related to the online submission platform:

WEBMASTER
webmaster@lestudium-ias.fr
+33 238 211 487

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1- PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME: CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 03

1-1 Context and objectives 03

1-2 Presentation of the programme 03

1-3 Brief description of the various mobility schemes 04

2- CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLICATIONS 05

3- REVIEW OF THE APPLICATIONS 05

3-1 Eligibility criteria 05

3-2 Evaluation criteria 06

3-3 Evaluation process 06

3-4 Appeal - Redress procedure 07

4- NOTIFICATION - DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS 07

5- GENERAL PROVISION AFTER ACCEPTANCE OF THE AWARD 07

5-1 Preparing the fellow's arrival 07

5-2 Welcoming the fellow 07

5-3 Contractual obligations during the residency 08

5-4 Networking & Career development opportunities 08

6- APPLICATION FORMAT AND ONLINE SUBMISSION 08

6-1 Process 08

6-2 Application form - Content and Rules 09

6-3 Advices for the submission 10

1- PRESENTATION OF THE SLV PROGRAMME: CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

1-1 Context and objectives

Beyond supporting the international mobility of researchers, the Smart Loire Valley (SLV) Programme seeks to do much more than simply fund research stays. It is designed to **foster long-lasting collaborations** and to generate a positive impact both for the visiting scientists and for the regional host institutions. Mobility is viewed not only as a geographical movement but also as an **intellectual and cultural journey**, enabling researchers to open **new perspectives**, strengthen **interdisciplinary bridges**, and expand their **international networks**.

By facilitating the arrival of experienced researchers from diverse backgrounds and countries, the programme contributes to the internationalisation of the Centre-Val de Loire region. Researchers bring with them novel methodologies, new scientific questions and a wealth of expertise, which enrich the work of host laboratories. In return, they gain access to the region's unique research environment, infrastructures and collaborations, often leading to joint publications, new project proposals, and enduring partnerships that extend well beyond the funded period.

The programme thus operates as a **catalyst for sustainable cooperation**, encouraging mobility that translates into shared projects, bilateral agreements, and international networks connecting the Loire Valley to research communities worldwide. These exchanges also play a key role in training younger scientists and students within host institutions, who benefit from exposure to different academic traditions and research cultures.

For the 2027 edition, the Smart Loire Valley (SLV) Programme offers awards, which are based on a principle of mutual engagement between the awardee, the host research institute or laboratory, and LE STUDIUM. Through this award, the SLV Programme strengthens not only scientific excellence but also human connections, creating a truly international faculty of LE STUDIUM Fellows who carry the spirit of the Loire Valley into their future collaborations across the world.

1-2 Presentation of the programme

This call for applications is open to **international experienced researchers in all disciplines**. It does not focus on specific thematic priorities but welcomes proposals from across the **full spectrum of research fields**. Successful candidates will be hosted in a laboratory or research unit within the Centre-Val de Loire region, whether in a university, a national research centre.

The programme seeks researchers whose profile embodies the core research values of LE STUDIUM: **Curiosity, Imagination and Intuition**. These values underpin an outward-looking international scientific community that embraces the benefits of international, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, as well as intersectoral approaches.

The award package is designed to create **favourable conditions** for both scientific and human interactions, facilitating the integration of fellows within LE STUDIUM's member institutions in the Centre-Val de Loire region. It also contributes to the growth of a wider Loire Valley research community, reinforcing its attractiveness and visibility on the global stage.

Ultimately, this programme generates **mutual benefits**: for the visiting scientists, who gain access to a **stimulating environment and new collaborations**; for the regional host laboratories and research centres, which enrich their networks and expertise; and for the regional innovation ecosystem, which is strengthened through knowledge exchange, international mobility and collaborative research.

The 2027 SLV programme is planned to offer **75 months of scientific residency in the Centre-Val de Loire region**.

Nota bene:

→ Host research institutes/laboratories cover the research costs.

→ Applicants must identify a host research institute/laboratory in the region. A list of host research institutes/laboratories is available on the following page: https://www.lestudium-ias.com/regional-ecosystem/research-institutes-and-laboratories

→ Alternatively, the Le Studium Scientific Manager can try to identify a host research institute/laboratory.

1-3 Key dates and brief description of the mobility scheme

This call for applications does not target any specific research themes. **It is open to international experienced researchers in all disciplines** wishing to join a research laboratory in the Centre-Val de Loire region (within research institutes of universities, national research centres).



LE STUDIUM VISITING RESEARCHER award is an opportunity for experienced scientists on leave from their institution with salary maintenance to integrate a high-level laboratory / research center in the Centre-Val de Loire region and the LE STUDIUM international faculty for periods of between 3 to 12 months. Experienced international researchers are eligible to submit an application after having negotiated their acceptance to a host laboratory, research center and/or host enterprise in Centre-Val de Loire.

This award supports the installation of the visiting researcher and her/his family *(children under 18 only) in the region (travel cost for the awardee, visa, accommodation, logistics, administrative support) and offers opportunities to organise an international scientific conference or workshop.

This programme is also well suited to researchers holding an Individual Fellowship (such as Full Bright, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship, ERC, etc…) willing to complete their fellowship in the region.

This award allows a starting date of the residency from September 2027 to Fall 2028.

OBJECTIVES

- 3 to 12 consecutive months residency to lead a collaborative scientific research project
- Sustainable collaboration between the international visiting researcher and the host laboratory / research center

BENEFITS

- Travel costs (economic class) capped to 800 EUR
- Fully furnished housing adapted to the family size of the visiting scientist*(children under 18 only)
- Relocation administrative support (visa, banking, housing, insurance, schooling…)
- Full integration in an international research community in the Centre-Val de Loire region
- French class (available according to the Academic calendar and timing of the visit) and training opportunities
- Involvement in the scientific exchanges, networking activities and animation led by LE STUDIUM to favour transdisciplinary exchanges
- Invitation to scientific events (conferences/workshops, seminars….) organised by LE STUDIUM Opportunity, logistic support and funding to organise an international scientific conference

2 – CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLICATIONS

Applicants are strongly encouraged to respond to all questions in the application form and to provide evidence supporting any claims made. Particular attention should be given—though not exclusively—to the following aspects: the proposal's background, research plan, data analysis and risk management, potential interdisciplinary dimension, significance and innovative character of the project, as well as the background and track record of both the applicant and the host scientist.

Applications must be written in **English** to ensure evaluation by international experts. A résumé in **French** is also required.

A key objective of the SLV Programme is to establish a long-lasting scientific partnership between visiting research fellows and host institutions. To this end, the host scientist must explain in the application form why the applicant is essential to the proposed research project. In addition, the host laboratory or research institute must provide a support letter demonstrating how the application aligns with its research strategy.

Finally, applicants are required to indicate whether they have used **artificial intelligence (AI) tools** in preparing their application. If applicable, they should include a brief explanation of how and to what extent these tools were employed.

3 - REVIEW OF THE APPLICATIONS

3 - 1 Eligibility criteria

The SLV Programme aims to attract **experienced international researchers willing to conduct a high quality and innovative project in collaboration with one of the research institutes of the Centre-Val de Loire region.**

Candidates are eligible if they meet the following conditions:
- Be national or **long-term resident of a country other than France** that is not to have resided in France for more than 12 months in the three years preceding the closing date of the call for applications. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.
- Have negotiated their **acceptance to a host research centre** in the Centre-Val de Loire region, France.

- Not having been awarded from a Le Studium award during the 2 last years prior to the call deadline (the date of the notification letter for the previous award will be considered).
- To be in possession of a doctoral degree and have at least five years of full-time equivalent research experience after their doctorate.
- Hold a work contract (permanent or not) in a foreign university or research institution during the residency.

3 - 2 Evaluation criteria

External peer-reviewers and Scientific Committee members follow three categorical criteria to review applications: the scientific quality, the impact of the proposed research and records of accomplishment of the applicant as well as the career development plan through the LE STUDIUM award:

- **Scientific Quality (50%) –** This includes the clarity of the stated research objectives, the quality of the methodology, the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research project, feasibility, and risk management.

- **Impact of the proposed research & collaboration (25%) –** This includes the interdisciplinary dimension of the proposed research, the demonstrated skill and ability of the researcher and her/his proposal to increase knowledge. In addition, it includes the application of new ideas, procedures, technologies, programmes or policy settings to important topics that will influence the proposed field of study and contribute to the host laboratory (co-publications, establishment of a new partnership with the research institute/laboratory employing the visiting scientist, teaching lectures, PhD supervision or mentoring...)

- **Career development, Track Record of the Applicant and Relevance of the choice of the host laboratory (25%) –** The track record evaluates whether the applicant's previous research activities demonstrate her/his capacity to achieve the proposed scientific objectives. This includes the applicant's ability to contribute to the research, especially in terms of having the appropriate mix of research skills and experience, to work with research teams and private partners. Experience of inter-sectorial and/or transnational mobility, as well as experience of working in multidisciplinary teams, management and team building experience, experience in transfer of technology and training competences will also be considered. An interruption to the applicant's career path has to be documented. Interruptions may include pregnancy and childcare, escaping regions of conflict, unexpected illness etc. The relevance of the choice of the host laboratory to perform the proposed research project is also taken into consideration

3 - 3 Evaluation process

After the campaign closing date, the LE STUDIUM team performs an administrative check ensuring each application conforms to the submission format guidelines and that all necessary documents are complete and signed. Only eligible applications will be considered for review and selection.
To ensure a fair transparent evaluation and selection process, the following occurs:

- **LE STUDIUM** ensures that the global administration and management of the evaluation process respects set criteria for the scientific review, including rules related to non-discrimination and conflict of interest.

- **External peer-reviewers** are invited to provide an independent, expert assessment of the scientific content of each eligible application based on the selection criteria. A minimum of three reviewers, screened for conflict of interest, are invited to evaluate each submitted application.

- **The Scientific Council** is composed of twenty-five eminent scientists. This committee, with the assistance of external peer-reviewers, provides an independent, impartial and fair scientific assessment of applications. Observers from the LE STUDIUM member structures, without any voting rights, are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee.

- **Ranking of applications:** the cumulative scores and comments of external peer-reviewers and of the Scientific Committee members enable the LE STUDIUM team to build the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for each application and to establish the final ranking list. Each ESR is validated by the President of LE STUDIUM Scientific Council. A reserve list is potentially established.

- **Exclusion warning:** any applicant who, at any time of the evaluation process, tries to contact and or influence peer-reviewers or Scientific Council members will be automatically excluded of the selection process.

3 - 4 Appeal - Redress procedure

- Should an applicant feel that there has been a shortcoming in the process of evaluation of her/his proposal, s/he may call upon this procedure. The appeal can be filed after each step of the evaluation process.
- A candidate willing to appeal is invited to send an email to the LE STUDIUM General Secretary. The message should mention: the title of the application, the elements in the evaluation procedure perceived as unfair or inappropriate and the correction measures that the candidate deems necessary.
- The General Secretary will share these elements with the LE STUDIUM President and President of the Scientific Committee for review. Corrective actions will be undertaken if necessary.
- Within the ten days following the redress request message, the candidate will receive feedback giving conclusion to the redress request.

4 - NOTIFICATION - DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The Scientific Committee meeting will take place in May 2027.
Final results will be communicated in the five weeks following the meeting of the Scientific Committee: a letter from the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee will notify all applicants.
All applicants, awarded or not, will receive an official notification and an evaluation summary report (ESR) listing the strengths and weaknesses of their proposal. For non-awarded applicants, the evaluation summary report may be helpful to improve the application and apply again for the following campaign.
After notification, the awarded applicants will have two weeks to confirm their acceptance of the award.
If an applicant does not accept the award, it will be given to the following candidate placed in the final ranking on the reserve list.

5 - GENERAL PROVISION AFTER ACCEPTANCE OF THE AWARD

5 - 1 Preparing the fellows' arrival

Once an applicant has accepted an award, the LE STUDIUM Scientific Manager will invite her/him and the host scientist to a videoconference meeting to review the details of the award, answer any administrative questions, and agree on dates for the residency that fit with the fellow's schedule and the LE STUDIUM housing calendar. Following this meeting, a formal letter of offer is sent to the fellow summarizing the residency and contract conditions. Awarded candidates will have to submit copies of their diplomas.

Following acceptance of the offer by the candidate, the LE STUDIUM staff process administrative duties to prepare the awardee's arrival (visa, residence permit, travel and/or private medical coverage, professional liability insurance, children's schooling, French class, other activities…). The accommodation is prepared to welcome the fellow and her/his family in the best conditions.

5 - 2 Welcoming the fellow

Upon her/his arrival, a member of the LE STUDIUM team welcomes the awardee and her/his family, introduces them to their apartment and answers any practical questions. The next day the fellow is invited to attend a meeting to review and finalise all contractual documents.
In the couple of weeks following the arrival, the fellow and host scientist are invited to a scientific discussion with

the General Secretary and the Scientific Manager of LE STUDIUM to review the research project and discuss opportunities linked to the award.

5 - 3 Contractual obligations during the residency

The Smart Loire Valley Programme's awards are partnership awards with mutual obligations between the researcher in residence, the host laboratory / research institute and LE STUDIUM. The awarded researcher, the host scientist and research team are invited to participate in the scientific life of the LE STUDIUM international research community across a variety of scientific events. The attendance to the LE STUDIUM THURSDAYS monthly seminars is mandatory for awarded researchers. They will present their work during one of these seminars.

At the end of the residency, the LE STUDIUM researcher is asked to produce a final report explaining the outcomes of her/his project in the context of the original proposal. This report is due at the scheduled exit meeting with the General Secretary and the Scientific Manager of LE STUDIUM. The report will be made publicly available with a DOI # on the LE STUDIUM website dedicated Journal section.

Host research institutes/laboratories welcoming a LE STUDIUM Visiting Researcher will sign a Research Contract with the visiting scientist and LE STUDIUM detailing mutual rights and obligations including property rights. LE STUDIUM does not acquire any intellectual property rights. Universities and national research centres of Centre-Val de Loire have signed up to the European Charter for Researchers and have received the Code of Conduct for Recruitment (HRS4R) certification. They commit to welcome researchers and offer excellent working conditions including work office space and research resources.

The visiting scientist will also sign with LE STUDIUM a Collaboration Agreement that describes other contractual obligations such as housing conditions, reporting, publication and credits.

5 - 4 Networking & Career development opportunities

Fellows hosted by Le Studium will be integrated into the vibrant international scientific community catalysed by the institute in the Centre-Val de Loire region. Monthly **Le Studium Thursday seminars** offer an excellent opportunity to meet and exchange with other researchers hosted by Le Studium across the region. Fellows are encouraged to engage actively with peers beyond their own discipline and host laboratory, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration.

In addition, all selected researchers are eligible to participate in a **dedicated internal call for expressions of interest** to obtain LE STUDIUM's support in organising an international conference, workshop, or symposium lasting from one to five days. Further details are provided to awardees at the launch of the call each year.

Beyond networking, Fellows will be offered access to a set of **non-mandatory training sessions focused on transferable skills** (e.g. project management, communication, leadership, research valorisation). They may also receive support, where appropriate, for the **preparation of collaborative project applications** involving local research teams, thereby strengthening their integration into the regional scientific ecosystem.

These opportunities also facilitate **connections with other research teams** across the Centre-Val de Loire region. The Le Studium Scientific Manager will support Fellows wishing to establish links with local researchers.

Finally, the Fellowship provides a unique opportunity to discover — or rediscover — **the rich cultural heritage of the Centre-Val de Loire region**, renowned for its history, landmarks, and cultural life.

6 - APPLICATION FORMAT AND ONLINE SUBMISSION

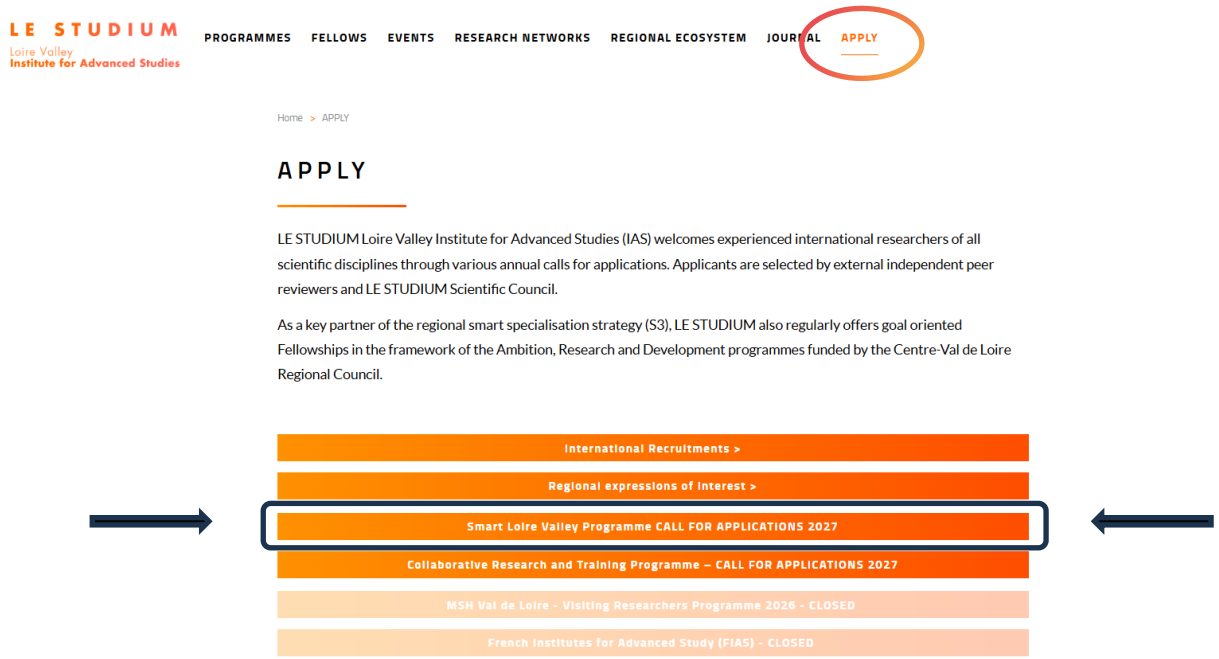
6 - 1 Process

Proposals must be submitted online through the LE STUDIUM website by Tuesday 2nd February 2027 (17:00 – CET Paris time)

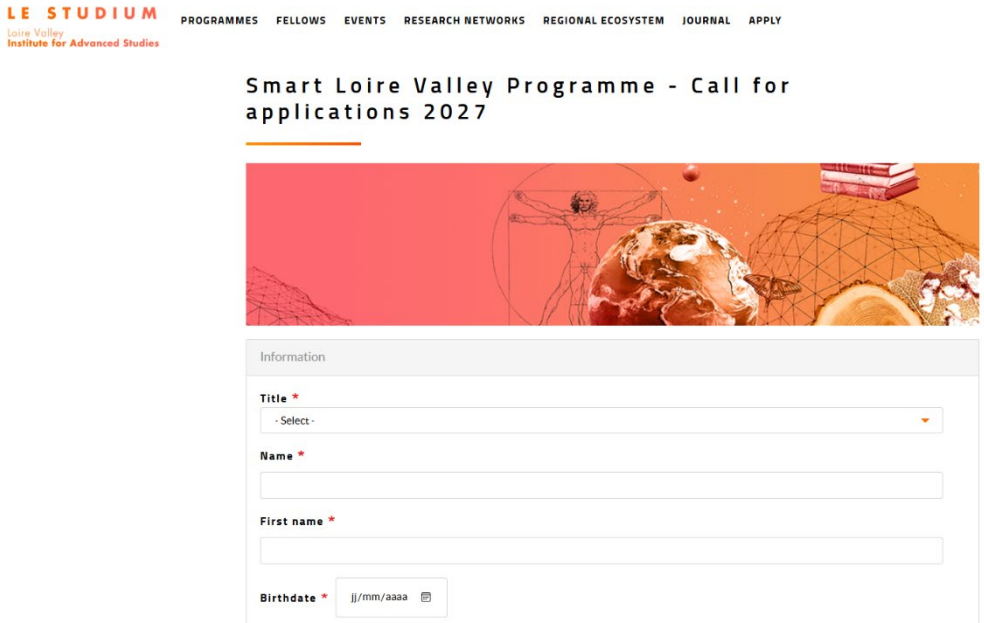
Go to www.lestudium-ias.fr

From the top menu, click on Apply.

Select the recruitment type: Click on Smart Loire Valley Programme



Fill in the registration form. You will receive a confirmation email. A candidate account will be created in the days that follow and an email sent to the applicant with the identification information. This is not an automatic process; the creation may take a few days if the request is made near a weekend or a public holiday.



6 - 2 Application form – Content and Rules

- The online application form is divided into 3 parts:
- **Part A: General information (online form), CV and support letters (documents to upload on the platform)**
- **Part B: Scientific proposal (document to upload on the platform)**
- **Part C: Engagement from the host laboratory (document to upload on the platform)**

Part A – Check the indicative form to see the different fields to be completed online.
Parts B and C must respect the following minimum standards:

- A minimum font size of 11 points, except for Gantt chart and tables where the minimum font size is 8 points
- Single line spacing

- A4 page size
- Margins (top, bottom, left, right) of 25 mm
- A clearly readable font (e.g. Arial or Times New Roman) on a printed copy

Tables are only for illustrating the core text of the proposal. As such, they cannot be used to contain the core text itself. The page formatting will be systematically checked by the LE STUDIUM operational team. For non- compliant proposals, applicants will be asked to reformat their proposal without the possibility of modifying the content. Excess pages will subsequently be disregarded by evaluators.
Footnotes are to be used exclusively for literature references. Their minimum font size is 8. They will count towards the page limit.

The Part B should be composed as follows (detailed description below):

- Section 1: Scientific project
- Section 2: Impact of the proposed research
- Section 3: Career and Track record of the Applicant

Within the maximum pages quota applying to the whole document, applicants are free to decide on the allocation of pages between sections 1, 2 and 3.
If some of the proposed sub-sections are not relevant to their proposal, applicants are invited to ignore them.
After the call deadline, excess pages will automatically be made invisible, and will not be taken into consideration by the experts. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the submitted PDF documents are readable and are within the page number limit.

Part C consists in a 2-page (maximum) letter from the host scientist supporting the application.
Part C has to be signed by the host scientist and the director of the host research institute/laboratory welcoming the potential awardee.

Nota bene:
Applicants have the option to save the form **as draft** and complete it later.

- Applicants are invited to **upload their documents**: CV, potential support letters, proposed research project (Part B) and laboratory commitment letter (Part C)
- Applicants will get a **confirmation email** once you have completed the online Part A, uploaded Parts B & C and submitted the application.

6 - 3 Advices for the submission

It is **strongly recommended** to:

- Process the registration on the LE STUDIUM website soon after the opening of the call for applications
- Refer to the FAQ document posted on the LE STUDIUM website when available
- Not wait until the deadline for submission to upload the documents
- If necessary, to contact by e-mail one of the persons listed on page 1 of this document.

The SLV programme receives support from the following institutions:

RÉGION CENTRE VAL DE LOIRE
Co-funded by the European Union
ORLÉANS MÉTROPOLE
université de TOURS
Université d'ORLÉANS