Host office eligibility

Hosts must:

- Be an eligible federal government office in Ottawa-Gatineau
- Host and support a fellow for 12 months starting in September, including paying a salary and providing benefits
- Accommodate fellow participation in Mitacs's professional development opportunities
- Have a policy-focused position that requires the advanced competencies and skills of a PhD holder

Please note: if you are a government entity with a host office outside of the cohort-based location of Ottawa, accommodations may be made to allow you to participate. This would require a commitment on your part to send your fellow to the location, including covering travel costs, so they can participate in all in-person training sessions and events facilitated by Mitacs. Should COVID-19 restrictions persist, travel to the cohort-based location would not be mandatory.

Application overview

The success of the CSPF program is in large part defined by the commitment and support of the host offices that welcome the fellows every September. By facilitating hands-on professional development experiences, host offices gain the scientific knowledge and analytical skills of academic experts, access to research networks, fresh perspectives, and the energy and initiative of their fellows. Together, hosts and fellows have the potential to make meaningful contributions in the public service, and ultimately to all Canadians.

Mitacs offers the following suggestions to outline the role of a host office in supporting a successful fellow selection process and placement.

Host office position description development and submission (October – March)
Create a position description for the year-long fellowship. This should include:

- The policy issue/area and general scope of work
- Policy processes that the fellow will be involved in (e.g., problem framing, policy formulation, supporting decision making, policy implementation, monitoring & evaluation)
- Policy activities that the fellow may support (e.g., preparation of briefing and speaking notes, senior decision maker briefings, supporting work of committees, stakeholder meetings and/or consultation management)
- Processes in your office (accountability practices, mentorship, networking or other professional opportunities, etc.) that can support the success of the fellowship
- Competencies and professional expectations of the fellow
- Reporting structure for the fellow

Submit the position description and complete the required information on the online Mitacs application form before **March 3, 2021.**

Please note:

The online application form for host applications does not allow you to save your work and come back to it. Please ensure your answers are fully developed before starting the webform.

All communication and updates on your application will be sent to the primary supervisor listed on your online application. To facilitate communication between Mitacs and your office, we strongly advise to have the primary supervisor contact Mitacs on behalf of your office for any question. Should another person need information about your application please have them copy or reference the primary supervisor listed on your online application.

Host application checklist

The following are questions that hosts can use to ensure their application is thorough and complete.

1. Have you provided a position title on your application?
2. Is the focus of the position clear?
    a. Are the policy issues, questions or challenges that the fellow will be working on clearly defined?
    b. Does the position involve policy processes? (e.g. problem framing, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)
    c. Does the position include policy activities? (e.g. preparing briefing and speaking notes, senior decision-maker briefings, supporting the work of committees, stakeholder meetings, and/or consultations)
3. Is there a clear value-add for the position?
    a. Are the fellow's key responsibilities clearly defined?
    b. Is the work appropriate for someone at a PhD level?
    c. Is there a value-add for the fellow in terms of skills development or exposure to government work?
4. Is there adequate support for the fellow to be successful in the position?
    a. Does the application reference mentoring or guidance throughout the fellowship, with a specific person in mind?
    b. Is there a clear accountability/reporting structure for the fellow in the application?
    c. Does the application reference any opportunities to engage in a wide range of internal and external activities, professional development, government training, etc.?
5. Is there a sense of the skills/competencies the position requires? Does the application reference the skills or competencies as described in the JRC Skills and Competencies for Science Policy framework?
    a. Understanding Science and Policy
    b. Interpersonal Skills
    c. Synthesizing Research
    d. Managing Collaborative Communities
    e. Communicating Scientific Knowledge
    f. Advising Policymakers
    g. Engaging with Citizens and Stakeholders
    h. Monitoring and Evaluation

6. If the fellow is working at a location other than in the host city, how will the host office facilitate the fellow's participation in the cohort-model? Please note video conferencing for Mitacs training sessions may not be supported for all activities.

For an example of a successful host position description, please refer to Appendix A.

Points to consider (after your application is approved)

- Fellows will not see your position description before applying for the fellowship. This means that there may be some extrapolation required on your part to determine if a potential fellow would be a good fit for your position. Host offices will receive a shortlist of semi-finalist applications and select fellows for interviews, and we encourage hosts to be flexible in their assessment of required qualifications and academic specializations.
- The fellow application does not ask for a CV, but this can be requested directly from the fellow as part of the interview stage of the process.

Mitacs will review the submissions and work with host offices to ensure that the position descriptions provide appropriate opportunities for the fellows. Internally, prospective hosts should identify administrative and Human Resources (HR) processes to be applied to the fellowship, including but not limited to:

- Budget allocation of fellow salary **(minimum $70,000 per year)**
- Type of employment (e.g., contract, temporary, etc.)
- Benefit entitlements for the fellow
- Classification group and level of work to be performed
- Security clearance requirements
- IT, workspace and other set-up requirements

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Canadian Science Policy Fellowship host office. Please review the CSPF web page and contact policyfellowship@mitacs.ca with any further questions about the fellowship process.

Appendix A: Example of a host position description

For context: this venture described below has been an ongoing position within the Canadian Science Policy Fellowship program, with each fellow carrying on the previous fellow's work. This is a good example of a multi-year project which takes advantage of the continuity of the program by bringing in a new fellow each year.

Title of the proposed science policy position
Biosafety Level 4 Zoonotic Laboratory Network: strategic vision for international coordination

Government host office (department, agency or Ministry) that will be hosting this fellowship
Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Position description
Recent years have seen the threat presented by bio-risks heighten significantly. Infectious disease emergencies have included Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), H1N1 influenza, Ebola and now Zika. Serious biological outbreaks are becoming more frequent, spreading more widely, and have increased potential to result in devastating damage to the human health, agriculture resources and national economies. To face this threat, bio-surveillance capabilities worldwide play a key role in arming health agencies with the scientific expertise, diagnostic tools, information, analysis and advice required to take decisive and pre-emptive action. At present, there exist a number of high containment animal health institutions world-wide, recognized as reference laboratories for their contributions to the protection of animal health, public health and trade. However, these institutions face barriers to effective collaboration preventing efficient exchange of information, materials, and expertise. These challenges limit the coordination of global resources to better understand disease transmission, assess risks as well as develop and apply new knowledge for improved situational awareness and management of high consequence bio-risks of concern. Being unaware and unprepared would leave Canada unable to launch coordinated, preventive or early reactive responses to emerging infectious diseases and zoonoses. These challenges highlight the urgent need for globally coordinated efforts of high containment laboratories (BSL4 [Biosafety Level 4/Containment Level 4 laboratories]). Canada took on a leadership role in 2016 to address barriers to working collaboratively through engagement of international partners and stakeholders. CFIA established a BSL4 Zoonotic Laboratory Network (BSL4ZNet) that includes representation from both scientists and decision-makers. The vision for this coordinated global alliance of BSL4 laboratories will achieve optimized collaboration and knowledge exchange of advanced capability with engagement from first responders, risk managers, policy/program developers, provincial health and agricultural ministries, decision-makers in animal health and public health in Canada (including PHAC and CFIA), as well as international partners and stakeholders. With overwhelming support from all stakeholders, CFIA believes that BSL4ZNet is capable of penetrating traditional national and continental boundaries in order to promote collaborative science and technology development, while effectively elevating collective bio-situational awareness. The proposed project within BSL4ZNet for a MITACS fellow involves supporting the Network Secretariat in continuing to coordinate 12 organizations from 5 countries to work together to share information, materials, best practices and training. The MITACS fellow will be involved in developing and coordinating emergency preparedness activities towards the development of critical harmonized protocols.

Policy activities

The Mitacs fellow will provide essential support to the implementation of the Network's strategic focus areas through coordinating research efforts and collecting information to:

1. Engage in relationship-building with Canadian and international partner organizations
2. Establish a peer reviewed online journal to share public facing documents
3. Prepare a best practices process map for exchange of high consequence materials and reagents between countries
4. Research the current emergency management practices and propose a communications protocol for an international outbreak response
5. Perform a mapping exercise of steps required to make the developed countermeasure(s) available for human use in an emergency situation, including scaling up production and receiving regulatory approvals for use
6. Develop a simulation exercise to test the response to a hypothetical case of a synthetic biology threat 7. Liaise with the World Health Organization and establish complementarity with their new global high containment laboratory network.

Through this Network, Canada has become a global leader in managing high consequence emerging zoonotic infectious diseases. Responding to this challenge requires a robust and orchestrated response from both scientists and policymakers. The successful candidate will be involved with senior management at the CFIA and have the opportunity to prepare briefing notes to inform and engage with government officials, scientists and the general public about the Network successes and future plans. The fellow will also be working directly with government officials and scientists internationally to collect and share information. BSL4ZNet will provide an excellent opportunity for a trainee to contribute to the international science landscape with a vision of optimizing collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Expertise

The ideal candidate will have a working knowledge of emerging infectious diseases, strong leadership, strategic thinking and communications skills. The candidate should have a willingness to network and the ability to organize, orchestrate and facilitate large international meetings and information exchange.

Desirable qualifications

Experience with international science networks or organizations (i.e. Disease or health network, WHO, OIE). Experience managing multiple projects with competing deadlines and working on collaborative projects. Experience in knowledge translation and track record of excellence in academic and extracurricular activities.