

AXA-TIPS for PostDoc Applications 2014

TIP 1: Matching our Selection Criteria

Academic excellence of the candidate: evidenced by the publication track record, in terms of impact even more than volume and the quality of the recommendation letters.

Innovative nature and originality of the project: as regard to the objectives and the methodology proposed. Knowledge of relevant literature is valued in the proposal. Naturally, demonstrating a contribution to a better understanding of important hazards and risks, or current global societal challenges is the core of what we are looking for.

International scope of the host research laboratory: Global leading labs and labs with a dynamic growth path are targeted. The quality of the facilities and attractiveness of international students and researchers – both junior and senior –demonstrate these traits, as is the international exposure of the project/lab director.

Feasibility of the project: Quality of the environment (Postdoctoral program, supervision); Project framework (macro-planning, budget); Quality of the preliminary work and access to needed equipment, field studies, data and so on.

TIP 2: Demonstrating Exciting Innovation

As you know, the innovative nature of the research projects is very important and “high risk/high gain” projects are better ranked than rather pedestrian ones, albeit productive approaches. We believe that this is a quality of the applicant more than of the application so we’ll look both at the question asked and at previous research demonstrating creativity and innovative potential.

TIP 3: Helping Young Researchers’ Mobility

We believe that it is crucial for young researchers to have an international exposure and be exposed to various research environments in the early stage of their career.

By International exposure, we mean (a) Change of institution and/or country between current institution of applicant and targeted post-doc position or (b) Minimum of 1 semester spent abroad since Master’s thesis or planned in the course of upcoming postdoc studies.

It is expected that most of selected candidates move to another country between current and targeted post-doc position. Such international mobility is more valued than national mobility. Where a candidate remains in the same institution for the Post-Doc fellowship, it is required a clear justification of such a decision.

TIP4: Our Starting Grants are for *Junior* Researchers

Less than 5 years since awarding of first Ph.D. Extensions to this period may be allowed in case of eligible career breaks which must be properly documented. For more senior candidates, other funding schemes are available.

TIP 5: Helping Research to Impact/Interact with Policy-Making

Please encourage the applicant to highlight the contribution of his/her research to the discipline and, to a greater extent, to the understanding/ modeling/ mitigation/prevention of major risks and global challenges. The AXA Research Fund wants to better help researchers to have a voice in the public debate and nurture it with the most advanced scientific

discoveries. Any proof of the potential of the applicant to bring his research subject to the global table is mostly welcomed!

TIP 6: Great Recommendation(s) are key

Recommendation letter should first and foremost prove the potential of the applicant. It can also demonstrate the robustness of the research project and its alignment with the strategy of the host institution/lab. It gives also the opportunity to provide us with insights regarding the quality of the environment in which the research project will be conducted in terms of equipment, expertise of the host laboratory, and its international scope.