

Background

Recent developments affecting the scientific research landscape in the United States - particularly in the areas of climate science, environmental research, and sustainability - have created significant constraints for researchers working in federal agencies and universities. These include funding interruptions, restrictions on research themes, institutional restructuring, and, in some cases, the loss of positions or access to critical research infrastructures and datasets.

Thanks to the financial support of the Helios Foundation, the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) has established a dedicated Visiting Researchers Fund aimed at welcoming researchers currently based in the United States who work in the field of decarbonization. Through this initiative, ULB seeks both to support researchers facing disrupted research conditions and to strengthen international scientific collaboration in areas of critical global importance.

Objectives of the Programme

The Visiting Researchers Programme pursues three main objectives:

1. Support high-level research in the field of decarbonization, in its broad dimensions (climate science, environmental studies, and sustainable socio-ecological transitions, across both natural sciences and social sciences);
2. Maintain and strengthen international scientific collaborations, particularly with researchers currently active in the United States;
3. Enhance ULB's research capacity and international visibility by integrating complementary expertise into its research teams.

The programme is designed to be flexible, allowing it to accommodate a diversity of academic profiles and career stages, as well as varying lengths of stay.

Eligibility & type of support

Applications are open to researchers currently working in the United States in fields related to decarbonization,

There is no a priori restriction on status, provided that the proposed stay and research activities are scientifically justified and relevant to ULB's research priorities. Specifically, depending on the candidate's profile and the proposed duration of stay, the programme may fund:

- Visiting Chairs (professor level)
- Senior researcher positions
- Postdoctoral fellowships
- Doctoral fellowships

Depending on the specific situations, the position will be initially of one-year and could be extended to a maximum of four years.

Hosting and Integration at ULB

A mandatory requirement for eligibility is the support of a ULB academic host, who will act as sponsor ("host professor") for the duration of the stay. This sponsorship aims to ensure:

- Effective integration into an existing research group;
- Access to appropriate research infrastructures;
- The development or strengthening of scientific collaborations.

Expected Impact

The duration of the funded stays (up to four years) is expected to enable substantial scientific output, including publications, project development, and sustained collaboration. Beyond immediate research results, the programme aims to foster long-lasting partnerships that will continue beyond the funded period, regardless of the subsequent career paths of the hosted researchers. The anticipated impact—scientific, institutional, and collaborative—will form an integral part of the evaluation of applications and may vary according to individual profiles.

Application Procedure

Applications must be sent to angelique.greindl@ulb.be with the subject line: "US researcher – name of the ULB host – name of the US researcher".

Applications must be submitted by the ULB host professor and must include:

- the CV of the researcher currently based in the United States;
- the CV of the ULB host professor;
- a one-page document explaining how the ULB laboratory will host and integrate the researcher, clearly indicating the expected start date of the stay, and highlighting the long-term collaboration perspective;
- a one-page document providing evidence that the current research programme supporting the U.S.-based researcher is endangered by changing political priorities.

Selection will be carried out by the Vice-Rectors for Research and Knowledge Transfer, and for Sustainable Development, together with their advisors.