**Newton Fund Vietnam: Call for applications for the “Leaders in Innovation Fellowships” programme.**

**Deadline for concept notes:** 17:00 on 14 September 2017 (VN time).

Within the framework of the Newton Fund Vietnam year 4, the National Agency for Technology Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation (NATEC) under the Vietnamese Ministry of Science and Technology and the UK Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) invite applications from Vietnamese researchers to attend the “Leaders in Innovation Fellowships” (LIF) programme.

The programme aims to build the capacity of Vietnamese researchers for entrepreneurship and commercialisation of their research and create international networks of innovators and technology entrepreneurs. The programme is aimed at researchers who are about to develop, or are in the process of developing, a business proposition for their innovation.

**I. Programme design**

The LIF 2017 Vietnam programme consists of the following stages:

* Stage 1: Introduction training on technology commercialisation prior to the training in the UK, led by NATEC in cooperation with the UK experts.
* Stage 2: Two-week residential training in London, for 14 Vietnamese researchers and 1 representative from NATEC, with coaching and mentoring for all participants.
* Stage 3: Follow-on activities in Vietnam, with the guidance of NATEC and the collaboration of the Vietnamese research organisations sending participants.

**II. Eligibility criteria**

Researchers interested in this programme must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a Vietnamese citizen and currently living in Vietnam.
2. Be a researcher at a Vietnamese university or research institution (private or public sector); *or* an independent researcher who holds a national patent; *or* a researcher working in the research and development department of a Vietnamese start-up company.
3. Be in the founding team of a proposed innovation and in the process of developing a business proposition for their innovation; priorities are given to the engineering-based innovation.
4. Innovation’s technological readiness: at least at proven concept or prototype level.
5. Have a good command of English skills.

**III. Selection criteria:**

Selection decisions will be made on the basis of:

1. Prioritised sectors: no limitation but priorities are given to innovation in the fields of health; agriculture; environment and energy; future cities/urban engineering; or digital innovation and creativity.
2. Excellence of the research: Excellence, novelty and/or effectiveness of the proposed innovation.
3. Potential of the innovation for commercialisation: Feasibility, market size and potential benefit of the proposed business plan.
4. Expected benefit(s) of the innovation to the Vietnam’s socio-economic development.
5. The applicant’s potential to contribute to develop the Vietnamese innovation ecosystem.
6. The applicant’s potential in taking the idea forward: Track record (including technical and non-technical capabilities) and entrepreneurial potential and commercial awareness of the applicant.
7. English language skills of the applicant.

**IV. Tentative timetable:**

* 1 August to 14 September 2017: NATEC receives and screens Concept notes to select about 30-35 eligible and most competitive concept notes.
* 17 August 2017 in Hochiminh city and 22 August 2017 in Hanoi: NATEC holds information sessions to introduce the programme to interested applicants.
* 26 - 27 September 2017 in Hanoi: Orientation training and networking session with last years LIF cohorts, led by NATEC in collaboration with UK experts from RAEng.
* 28 September to 4 October 2017: NATEC and RAEng receive complete applications from shortlisted applicants.
* 9 - 11 October 2017: Panel meetings of Vietnamese experts to assess the applications and interview applicants.
* 13 October to 3 November 2017: RAEng’s reviewers assess 20-25 applications recommended by NATEC and agree on final participant funding decision.
* 6 November 2017: Result announcement to the selected applicants.
* 4-15 December 2017: Residential training in London, UK.
* December 2017 onwards: Follow-on activities in Vietnam.

**V. Budget and funding**

**1. Funding from Royal Academy of Engineering**

* UK experts for the training in Hanoi on 26 September 2017
* Return economy air-tickets between Hanoi/Hochiminh city and London for researchers
* Travel, accommodation and subsistence for the residential training in the UK
* Venue, trainers and coaches for the residential training in the UK

**2. Funding from NATEC**

* Organisation and Vietnamese trainers for the training in Hanoi on 26-27 September 2017
* Support for Vietnamese researcher to attend the innovation networking events in Vietnam

**3. Self-support from the applicants**

* Travel and subsistence to attend the training in Hanoi on 26-27 September 2017
* Visa fee and compulsory travel insurance to attend the residential training in the UK

**VI. How to apply**

**Step 1: Submission of Concept notes**

* Applicants submit their concept notes at this [link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8xuFwcDPOp3Li5ih2LADYjXnvRbc39OsHWkEeMDwW97zEzw/viewform?c=0&w=1&includes_info_params=true)
* The applicants notify their application and submit scanned copies of their English skill certificates and Patent certificates to these email addresses: lif.natec@gmail.com and newtonfund.vietnam@fco.gov.uk

**Deadline for concept notes submission: 17:00 on 14 September 2017 (VN time).**

Notes: only eligible applications will be considered

**Step 2: Submission of Full applications. This step is only applicable to the shortlisted applicants. A detailed guidance will be sent to the shortlisted applicants via emails about 5-7 days after the deadline of concept notes.**

**VII. Contacts**

For further information please contact:

* Ms Do Hai Minh Ngoc, Officer, National Agency for Technology Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation. Tel: +84 24 3943 6865, email: dhmngoc@most.gov.vn
* Ms Phan Lien Huong, Research and Innovation Programme Manager, British Embassy Hanoi. Tel: +84 24 3936 0597; email: phan.huong@fco.gov.uk

**Annex: Leaders in Innovation Fellowships programme**

A select cohort of researchers from the same country will benefit from a focused period of training in the UK, access to expert coaches, and opportunities for international networking. In the short term they will develop, with the support of the programme, a commercialisation plan for their innovation. In the long term they will benefit from access to an international network of peer innovators, in taking their commercialisation plan forward.

The programme builds on the expertise of The Academy in supporting technology entrepreneurs within the UK through a variety of fellowships and prizes. Fellows supported through this programme will benefit from connectivity to The Academy’s Enterprise Hub, a network of technology innovators, researcher entrepreneurs, and senior industrialists driving and supporting world class innovation.

**The residential training in the UK**

Fifteen successful applicants (‘LIF Fellows’) will be invited to attend a ten-day residential programme, in the UK, arranged and supported by the Academy.

**Week 1** – An activity based learning week combined with external visits and master class sessions.

The first week of training involves getting familiar with Business Modelling and Customer Markets along with visits to a UK University Incubator and a site visit to an Industry Partner. The groups will start working with their coaches to start to develop their business plans.

**Week 2** – Intensive training programme in entrepreneurship and innovation leadership

The second week is more classroom style leaning with a training programme hosted by the Royal Academy of Engineering. It consists of a **training programme in innovation leadership**, delivered by expert trainers, and based on existing training programmes of the Academy for UK researchers. The course will focus on skills and knowledge in:

* Operations and leadership;
* Finance, IP and regulation;
* Presenting and pitching to investors and customers;
* Negotiation skills.

Importantly, over the course of both weeks, there will be time for each fellow to develop their own **business plan and pitch decks**, while receiving guidance and coaching. The week will conclude with a competitive pitch session to a panel of expert judges including senior Academy Fellows.

During the programme, LIF Fellows will also benefit from opportunities to network with coaches, representatives of technology driven organisations, and each other. All participants in the LIF programme will automatically join an international network of innovators and coaches clustered around the Academy’s [Enterprise Hub](http://enterprisehub.raeng.org.uk/).

Please note that the residential programme will be conducted entirely in English.

**Follow-on support**

After the two-week residential programme, we begin the follow-on support aspect of the programme lasting up to 6 months. This will comprise of the individual coaches from the residential training continuing to provide mentoring and advice to allow LIF fellows to achieve some of the jointly established goals set when designing the business plan in London. In-country events to keep LIF fellows engaged with the Academy will also be included in the programme.

The LIF programme is part of the broader Newton Fund.

***\* Newton Fund***

The Newton Fund builds research and innovation partnerships with 18 partner countries to support their economic development and social welfare, and to develop their research and innovation capacity for long-term sustainable growth. It has a total UK Government investment of £735 million up until 2021, with matched resources from the partner countries.

The Newton Fund is managed by the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and delivered through 15 UK delivery partners, which include the Research Councils, the UK Academies, the British Council, Innovate UK and the Met Office.

For further information visit the Newton Fund website ([www.newtonfund.ac.uk](http://www.newtonfund.ac.uk)) and follow via Twitter: [@NewtonFund](https://twitter.com/newtonfund?lang=en-gb).