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SEERC –  
ReTraCE  
MSCA ITN  
ESR  
positions:  
Call for PhD  
Applications



## **Realising the Transition to the Circular Economy (ReTraCE) project**

### **PhD Studies at the South East European Research Centre ([SEERC](#)): Call for Applications (Submission Deadline: January 15, 2019)**

Applications are invited for two (2) Early Stage Researcher (ESR) 3-year fixed-term positions to be funded by the Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network “ReTraCE” – Realising the Transition towards the Circular Economy” within the Horizon 2020 Programme of the European Commission. The ESRs will be **based in Thessaloniki Greece**, will be hired for 36 months by SEERC under the provisions of Greek Law and based on the salary provisions of the H2020 MSCA program and will be offered a PhD candidate position with the University of Sheffield.

#### **1. The ReTraCE project: Realising the Transition towards the Circular Economy**

The ReTraCE project network brings together an exceptionally strong team of world-leading experts from a wide set of beneficiaries and partners in order to achieve breakthroughs in understanding how the transition towards a **Circular Economy (CE)** can be realised in a successful way in the European context, both within existing organisations and industries as well as through innovative and sustainable business models. The proposed approach is inherently multi-disciplinary, drawing upon research that will advance significantly the state-of-the-art in terms of the current understanding of the applicability of the CE paradigm from Economic, Environmental and Social points of view, providing policy insights and implications for practice. The consortium of 10 beneficiaries (including 7 academic and 3 non-academic groups from the UK, The Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Greece and Germany) will design and deliver world class multidisciplinary training to 15 Early Stage Researchers (ESRs), offering them an extended and valuable program of international exchanges and secondments through the wide network of partner organisations (from public, private and third sector) involved in the proposal.

The network builds on the success of previous projects in which beneficiaries have successfully delivered high impact research and knowledge exchange. ReTraCE is specifically designed to train a cohort of new thought leaders capable of driving the transition towards a more sustainable mode of production and consumption in Europe in the next decades, who will directly facilitate the implementation of the recently adopted ambitious Circular Economy strategy of the European Commission, which is require new professional profiles for realising the transition towards the CE.

## 2. The SEERC PhD Programme

SEERC gives the opportunity to qualified students to read for a Degree at the University of Sheffield through a combination of high quality UK studies and a unique research infrastructure in South East Europe. The PhD candidates will be enrolled and study at the Management School of the University of Sheffield in the UK while being supported by the SEERC team and infrastructure in South East Europe . When they successfully finish their studies, they will receive their degrees directly from the Management School at Sheffield, UK.

The 2 positions are available for the **Full Time programme**. The duration is 3 years (with a 4<sup>th</sup> year available for writing up the thesis) and it requires full time commitment on the part of the PhD student, which means that **one would have to be physically present at SEERC premises located in Thessaloniki, Greece**.

Students applying for the programme must have an excellent academic record (normally Degrees with Distinction) and should possess a Master's Degree. Potential work experience, research training and publications play important role also.

## 3. Entry Requirements

- A relevant first Degree (Normally with Distinction)
- A Master's Degree (Normally with Distinction)
- Proof of English Language Qualifications

The standard English Language requirement is IELTS at 7.0 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component or equivalent. For more details please see: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/study/researchdegrees/howtoapply#tab01>

On top of the above, the candidates shall comply with the following MSCA requirements:

- ***Early-stage researchers (ESR)***: ESRs are those who are, at the time of recruitment by the host, in the first four years (full-time equivalent) of their research careers and do not hold a doctorate. This is measured from the date when they obtained the degree which formally entitles them to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the research training is provided, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate was envisaged.
- ***Conditions of international mobility of researchers***: ESRs can be of any nationality. They are required to undertake physical, transnational mobility (i.e. move from one country to another) when taking up their appointment. At the time of selection by SEERC, researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Greece for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment. Short stays, such as holidays, are not taken into account.

#### **4. Benefits & Salary**

The selected candidates will receive an attractive salary in accordance with the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) regulations for early stage researchers: Basic gross rates include a living allowance (€2,900.49 per month), a mobility allowance (€600.00 per month) and a family allowance (€500.00 per month, if applicable). ESRs will also get access to funds covering Research, Networking and Training costs. Funding will cover the entire 36-month period.

In addition to individual scientific projects, all ESRs will benefit from further continuing education, which includes internships and secondments, a variety of training modules as well as transferable skills courses and active participation in workshops and conferences.

#### **5. Main duties and responsibilities**

Applicants are expected to have an outstanding education record, be highly motivated and proactive, have excellent organisation and communication skills, be able to work independently as well as in a team, and be eager to disseminate research results through publications and presentations at international conferences and seminars. Fluency in English is a prerequisite. Women are especially encouraged to apply.

In general, all ESR positions will be dealing with the following main duties:

- Conduct research into the design and development of novel research in each related theme in collaboration with researchers from the host institution as well as with those from the entire ReTraCE network.
- Undertake reporting requirements for the project, present results to collaborators, to members of the research group and to external audiences.
- Read academic papers, journals and textbooks and attend conferences to keep abreast of developments.
- Prepare journal papers and presentations either in-house or at national/international conferences or seminars to disseminate research findings.
- Write supporting documents to contribute to and support the work of the research group, e.g. reports, interim reports and grant applications.
- Carry out administrative roles as required; arranging project progress meetings, etc.

Other duties, commensurate with the post and H2020-MSCA-ITN regulations:

- Plan for specific aspects of research programmes. Timescales range from 1-6 months in advance.
- If given a particular problem/hypothesis to examine, plan for own contribution up to 3 months ahead, incorporating issues such as the availability of

resources, deadlines, project milestones and overall research aims. Design individual experiments weekly.

- Coordinate and liaise with other members of the research group over work progress. Supervise research team/activities if required.
- Continuously monitor and check results. The unpredictability of research means that daily planning needs to accommodate new developments.
- Plan several months in advance to meet deadlines for journal publications and to prepare presentations and papers for conferences.

## 6. Submission process

We accept proposals from qualified students for **the topics mentioned in section 7 of this document**.

In order to apply, PhD candidates should send the following documents to [phd\\_admissions@seerc.org](mailto:phd_admissions@seerc.org) by **January 15, 2019**:

- **a letter of interest**
- **a Research Proposal**
- **an updated CV**
- **full contact details of two referees**
- **any documents providing proof of knowledge of English language**

The selection process will involve one or more interviews (to be contacted via skype and/or at SEERC premises in Thessaloniki) with the proposed supervisors.

**Note that all candidates who will be selected for the interview phase will be asked to provide official documentation proving their CV claims (education, past employment etc)**

The **Research Proposal** should be typed, the length should be up to maximum 2,000 words and should include the following:

- a) Title of the proposed thesis*
- b) Reference to one of the Specific Research Topics (section 7)*
- c) Background to research topic*

This section needs to introduce the topic before discussing it in relation to wider academic debates. The section might seek to situate the topic and highlight why the issue being addressed is important - this should be identified and justified as an important/interesting academic issue not simply in terms of current media/political/popular interest.

- d) Specific problem(s) to be examined*

In his section the discussion of the topic needs to be more specific. The focus should include reference to the framework or conceptual approach that the research might

seek to draw on. Also the discussion is likely to highlight and make reference to parallel, comparable and complimentary research. The aim of this section is essentially to set up the area of research specifically. The challenge is to ensure that the proposed research has a substantive empirical and conceptual focus, both of which are suitably grounded in contemporary academic debate with appropriate citations to relevant literature. By the end of the section a gap in existing knowledge needs to be highlighted and the research questions(s) that the thesis will address be stated.

*e) Methods of research proposal, plan and timetable of work*

The research methods section needs to highlight what methods will be used and how, with an appropriate level of detail. In the case of quantitative research, the data set to be accessed and used should be identified and the nature if proposed statistical analysis detailed. In the case of more qualitative research, again the methods should be elaborated and proposed stakeholders/populations to be interviewed/surveyed should be detailed. Due consideration should be given to accessing relevant data/interviewees. Proposals should also highlight ethical issues and potential limitations.

*f) Any other information in support of your proposal*

*g) The proposal should include correct literature citations and a brief bibliography*

## 7. Research Topics

Fellow	Host Institution
Research Topic 1 - ESR13	SEERC - The South-East European Research Centre (Greece)
<b>Regional development and governance for the transition to the Circular Economy (WP4)</b>	
<p><b>Objectives</b>(i) To identify core actors and institutions that could support the transition to a Circular Economy through policy development and implementation in regional contexts; (ii) To provide insight to the development of socially inclusive and responsible mechanisms of local governance for the transition to a Circular Economy. (iii) To identify metrics and indicators of CE-based regional development and to understand how different stakeholders actors influence them; (iv) To identify drivers and barriers to the implementation of regional policies for the transition towards a Circular Economy (e.g. incentives, skills, environmental regulations or establishment of industrial eco-parks).</p>	
<p><b>Main Supervisor(s):</b> Prof Panayiotis Ketikidis (<a href="mailto:pktikidis@seerc.org">pktikidis@seerc.org</a>) &amp; Dr Adrian Solomon (<a href="mailto:asolomon@seerc.org">asolomon@seerc.org</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Essential skills &amp; qualifications of the candidate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate degree in a related field (sustainability, management, operations,</li> </ul>	

<p>economics, production systems, regional studies, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good understanding of regional actors/stakeholders and their collaboration (innovation, industry, government, society, etc)</li> <li>• Proven quantitative &amp; qualitative research skills</li> <li>• Previous experience in multi-stakeholder collaboration</li> <li>• Excellent communication skills both verbal and written</li> <li>• Excellent team working skills</li> <li>• Ability to develop creative approaches to problem solving</li> <li>• Ability to assess and organise available resources, plan ahead to meet deadlines and monitor progress of work activities.</li> <li>• Ability to analyse and solve problems with an appreciation of longer-term implications.</li> <li>• Ability to develop and maintain good working relationships with colleagues and a network of contacts throughout own work area.</li> <li>• Ability to adapt own skills to new circumstances.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Desirable skills &amp; qualifications of the candidate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of production systems and of circular economy</li> <li>• Awareness of geo-politics (global and EU) in relation to circular economy</li> <li>• Awareness of the circular economy labour market and necessary skills as well as related EU policies</li> <li>• Contribution to drafting policy papers</li> <li>• Affiliation/participation in any relevant professional associations</li> <li>• Publications in high impact journals/conferences</li> </ul>	
<b>Fellow</b>	<b>Host Institution</b>
Research Topic 2 - ESR14	SEERC - The South-East European Research Centre (Greece)
<p><b>Consumer perception and the transition to the Circular Economy (WP4)</b></p>	
<p><b>Objectives:</b> (i) To identify how consumers perceive Circular Economy (by focusing on key related practices) and its role in societal development and regional growth; (ii) To identify the mechanisms that influence consumers perception towards the adoption of CE practices; (iii) To provide insight to the development of new services aimed at the filling current gaps in the adoption of CE practices by consumers, also understanding the potential of services currently provided by the informal sector.</p> <p><b>Main Supervisor(s):</b> Dr Efi Vasileiou (<a href="mailto:evasileiou@citycollege.sheffield.eu">evasileiou@citycollege.sheffield.eu</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Essential skills &amp; qualifications of the candidate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate degree in a related field (sustainability, management, economics, operations, social sciences, regional studies, marketing, etc)</li> <li>• Good understanding of consumer behaviour</li> <li>• Proven quantitative &amp; qualitative research skills</li> </ul>	

- Previous experience in consumer behavior assessment
- Excellent communication skills both verbal and written
- Excellent team working skills
- Ability to develop creative approaches to problem solving
- Ability to assess and organise available resources, plan ahead to meet deadlines and monitor progress of work activities
- Ability to analyse and solve problems with an appreciation of longer-term implications.
- Ability to develop and maintain good working relationships with colleagues and a network of contacts throughout own work area
- Ability to adapt own skills to new circumstances

**Desirable skills & qualifications of the candidate:**

- Awareness of tools for the promotion of sustainable behaviour including Technology Acceptance Models, Neuromarketing and other brain-friendly approaches to consumer behaviour
- Awareness of the circular economy market
- Affiliation/participation in any relevant professional associations
- Publications in high impact journals/conferences





## South-East European Research Centre

24 Proxenou Koromila Str.  
54622, Thessaloniki, Greece  
Tel: +30 2310-253477-8  
Fax: +30 2310 234205  
[contact@seerc.org](mailto:contact@seerc.org)  
<http://www.seerc.org>