



## Application Guidelines

The NOMIS Foundation (<https://nomisfoundation.ch/>) and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI; <https://stri.si.edu>) seek outstanding biologists to join cohorts of three-year postdoctoral fellows in tropical animal behavior, based in the Republic of Panama. For more information on the NOMIS–STRI fellowship program, see <https://stri.si.edu/nomis>.

**Award:** The annual stipend is \$62,000 USD (\*see tax information below), and the annual research and travel budget is up to \$13,000/year. Fellows may supplement their basic yearly research budget by competing for additional intramural and external research funds.

**Deadline for submission:** July 15, 2024

### Eligibility:

- PhD studies must be completed before the fellowship begins. Preferably candidates will be more advanced in their scientific career, and will have already acquired their first postdoctoral experience. However, the Selection Panel will also consider exceptionally promising candidates who fall outside the above criteria.
- NOMIS–STRI fellows will be based in Panama and will have the opportunity to conduct comparative research throughout the tropics.

**Application procedures:** All candidates must submit an application through SOLAA (Smithsonian Online Academic Appointment system) as follows:

1. Go to: <https://solaa.si.edu>
2. Select "New to SOLAA? Complete the information to create an account."
3. Once you create your account and provide the information required, you can select the type of appointment. Choose as follows:
4. Program Type: "Fellowship"

5. *Unit of interest: "Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute"*

6. *Program: "3-Year NOMIS–STRI Postdoctoral Fellowship in Animal Behavior"*

*a. Fill in the application questions.*

*b. Upload the required documents.*

*c. Request the reference letters, giving sufficient time for referees to submit them. It is your responsibility to send the email request to your recommenders and check in the system that the letters have been submitted.*

The complete application should include the following information, and should be formatted as follows: 12 pt font size, single-spaced, 8 ½ x 11 inch paper size, with 1 inch margins.

✓ A summary of the proposed research (one-page maximum). The summary should provide an overview of an independent research project of the applicant's own design, with an emphasis on animal social behavior and its proximate and ultimate causes, with areas of specialty that could include but are not limited to the evolution and maintenance of social behavior, sensory biology and neuroethology, cognitive ecology, socioecology, neurogenetics, and the genetic or physiological bases of social behavior.

✓ A detailed research proposal (five-pages maximum): The project description should provide a clear description of research. The project description should be aimed at an audience of scientists who are not necessarily experts in your field of animal behavior. It should (1) communicate the objectives and significance of the research, describe clear research questions and/or hypotheses, and detail the project's methodological approach; (2) highlight why the proposed research is interdisciplinary and high-risk/outside-the-box; (3) highlight how the proposed research will promote synergy between research activities of STRI and partner institutes; (4) describe how the proposed research is different from and extends the bounds of your current research; (5) indicate which milestones you expect to achieve mid-way through the fellowship period, and by completion.

✓ A detailed annual budget. The research/travel expenses should not exceed \$13,000 per year. There will be opportunities for accepted fellows to supplement their basic yearly research budget by competing for additional intramural and external research funds.

✓ References cited.

✓ A curriculum vitae.

✓ A diversity statement (one-page maximum) that reflects your views and experience in working to the goal of promoting a diverse, inclusive, collegial, and rigorous scientific workplace, and any specific goals/plans/strategies to contribute to building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community during your time at STRI. For guidance on the preparation of this statement, please [see here](#).

✓ Three letters of support from references.

✓ Identify at least three advisors. At least one of these advisors must be a STRI staff scientist; the other advisors may be other STRI staff scientists or collaborating PI partners. Candidates are strongly encouraged

to contact potential advisors well in advance to discuss their proposed project and methodologies, and to request feedback during the application process regarding approach and feasibility, knowledge of the local habitats, species, seasonal variation, and other logistical matters. In addition to their primary advisor and two co-advisors, all NOMIS–STRI fellows will have the support of the Animal Behavior Fellowship Advisory Board (see members below), and will be supported through a cohort network of animal behavior fellows working at STRI.

Incomplete applications and applications received after the July 15, 2024 deadline will not be considered. Selection decisions will be communicated by September 15, 2024. The start date is flexible but should begin within six months of notification of the award.

*STRI is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to diversity in its workforce. Awards are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, age, or disability.*

**For more information, please send an email to [STRIFellows@si.edu](mailto:STRIFellows@si.edu).**

\* Tax Information – This information is being offered as a courtesy for fellows. Fellows are solely responsible for determining their own tax liability and complying with all applicable tax laws and reporting obligations. Note: Neither the Smithsonian, on behalf of STRI, nor the Republic of Panama withholds taxes on any fellowship awards. This is because fellows are performing their own, independent research and are neither treated as employees or contractors of the Smithsonian.

**US citizens:** Payment of income tax is a personal obligation of each individual. The Internal Revenue Service of the United States (IRS) specifies that all income of citizens and residents of the USA, and their spouses if filing jointly, that is generated from fellowship or internship appointments is reportable.

Smithsonian stipend recipients who are U.S. citizens or residents will NOT receive an IRS tax form (W-2 or 1099) from the Smithsonian because they are neither employees nor contractors of the Smithsonian. Stipend recipients are responsible, however, for including the entire award (stipend, travel and research allowances) in their income tax return for each full or partial tax year during which they received an award. U.S. citizens who reside in the U.S. will receive a Financial Statement from the Smithsonian that includes the amount of the stipend paid; this is for the fellow or intern's personal records and is not submitted to the IRS. U.S. Citizens who reside in Panama will not receive a Financial Statement unless they request one. Persons who are residents of other countries are responsible for complying with the applicable tax reporting requirements for their home country.

For those required to report their income to the IRS, various income exemptions and the tax credits on fellowship awards may be available, depending in part on the length of time the fellow spends in Panama during a tax year. These exemptions vary tremendously with individual circumstances and each fellow is responsible for determining their own exemptions and tax liability. The Smithsonian cannot provide tax advice on these matters. Fellowship recipients are encouraged to consult IRS publications 970 "Tax Benefits for Education" at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf> and publication 54 "Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad" at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p54.pdf>. You may call the IRS at 1-800-829-3676 for further information and to request forms by mail. Commercial online tax preparation services also are available.