

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

# Think Tank Young Professional Development Program for MA and PhD Graduates

## Think Tank Fund

The Think Tank Fund announces the Think Tank Young Professional Development Program for MA and PhD graduates who graduated with a PhD, LLM or MA degree in the social sciences and humanities from high-quality universities in the OECD countries in the past three years.

***Applicants must be residents of the following countries:***

Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Ukraine

***What is the Think Tank Young Professional Development Program?***

Human capital is the biggest asset of each and every think tank. In securing reliable and high-quality researchers, think tanks compete with much more powerful competitors, i.e. governments, state agencies, private companies, banks, and consulting companies. The region's think tanks, therefore, have to devise special motivation strategies to retain existing staff and attract new talented individuals to opt for this career. Despite being present in the public life, think tanks constitute a small part of civil society and are often not the first choice to fresh graduates who are interested in embarking on research/policy careers.

With this initiative, Think Tank Fund aims at supporting up to fifteen 'returnees' per year to assume posts in think tanks interested in attracting young staff. With these activities, we hope to help young and talented people enter the region's think tanks, provide additional capacity building with talented returnees getting engaged in policy-relevant research, analysis and advocacy under the guidance of experienced staff, and assist think tanks in recruiting new talent into their ranks.

The Think Tank Young Professional Development Program intends to attract recent graduates of MA and PhD programs in the social sciences and humanities to selected think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, giving them an opportunity to gain first-hand policy research and advocacy experience at a renowned think tank in the region. The program is designed to benefit both young returning professionals and their host organizations. It enables participating think tanks to recruit young researchers originally from the region who recently graduated from universities in the OECD countries, including the Central European University in Hungary. Depending on a research topic, individual programs at hosting organizations will last up to 6 months and start from November 2015.

### ***Eligibility Criteria for Young Professionals***

Eligible candidates must fulfill ALL of the following four requirements:

- Have graduated in the past three years with a PhD, LLM or MA degree in the social sciences and humanities from universities in the OECD countries.
- Be a citizen or permanent resident of the selected countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, and South Caucasus listed above.
- Applicants should be between 23 and 35 years of age at the time of application.
- Applicants must be fluent in written and spoken English and the working language of the host organization.

### ***What is expected from the selected young professional and the hosting think tank?***

After the selection process, the Think Tank Fund expects accepted young professionals to assume a full-time position in one of the region's think tanks (in their home country, or a country where they would like to resume their career and are able to justify this decision) for a period of up to six months. These individuals will reside in the hosting organization's country for the entire duration of the program, work full-time at the hosting think tank's offices, and will become a part of the organization (this commitment resembles a full-time paid internship).

Throughout this period, the young professionals are expected to engage in ongoing policy research projects and develop concrete policy products in agreement with the hosting organization. The policy product(s) can be one or more of the following:

- A full research or baseline study (young researchers are expected to formulate clear tangible outcomes at the end of the study/survey);
- Policy papers, briefs, or newsletters;
- An organized event or conference (young researchers should contribute to thematic development of an event organized within the program term);
- Any other policy-related product or activity that benefits both the individual and the hosting organization (e.g. designing and hosting policy blogs).

Given that the young professionals would be part of the think tank for an extended period, we would expect them to be engaged in more than one project and, if feasible, in preparation of several policy products.

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Their work will be guided by senior policy staff or the hosting think tank director who will be considered the mentor. The Think Tank Fund would encourage both the young professional and the hosting organization to use these six months to fundraise for other funds and, if possible, make the position permanent. All young professionals engaged in this program should produce the outputs stipulated in the position's description. A fully successful engagement of young returning professionals would ideally result in retaining the person on staff. Upon completion of the six months, the Think Tank Fund expects a final report from both the young professional and the hosting think tank.

### ***How should a graduate search for a hosting organization?***

Prospective young professional should examine the list of hosting organizations and available internship positions (available [here](#))\* and directly contact the organization(s) where they most wish to work. Applicants should discuss ideas for research topics and policy product(s) with the potential mentor and develop an action plan for the program period that is mutually beneficial to both parties. Graduates wishing to apply to the Think Tank Fund for financial support should not explore opportunities at think tanks not listed in this call.

### ***Award Terms for the Think Tank Young Professional Development Program***

With this initiative, the Think Tank Fund aims to support up to fifteen individuals per year to assume posts in think tanks that are interested in such a possibility. The award cannot exceed 7,000 USD per paid position. The Think Tank Fund will cover a gross compensation/salary for the paid position (at the level of the hosting organization's pay for junior research staff), and other reasonable expenses that are essential for carrying out the work engagement. The award will not cover any administrative and mentorship costs incurred by the hosting think tank as these costs will be the contribution of the hosting organization to the program.

### ***How to Apply?***

**Step 1:** Interested graduates should contact the think tanks directly and negotiate the topic area, policy product(s) and work plan for the engagement in this program.

**Step 2:** The potential host organizations will interview candidates, assess how their interests and skills correspond to the profile and needs of a potential host organization, and decide whether they are interested in working with the candidate. This decision should be clearly communicated to the candidate well before the deadline for submitting individual applications to Think Tank Fund.

**Step 3:** Having been selected by the host organization, the candidate will then apply to the Think Tank Fund.

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\*The descriptions and requirements of the proposed internship positions were written by the think tanks interested to host young professionals. The Think Tank Fund does not take the responsibility for the content and style of the proposals submitted by aspiring host organizations. The description, requirements and outputs for available position will be negotiated between the applicant and the host organization before being submitted by the applying graduate as part of the joint application to the Think Tank Fund.

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To be considered for the Think Tank Young Professional Development Program, applying graduates should submit the following documents in English (as .doc or .pdf attachments to email) by **August 24, 2015** to [tffellowships@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:tffellowships@opensocietyfoundations.org):

- **Motivation/cover letter**
  - The letter should describe the applicant's interest in this development program and specific objectives for the work in the host organization, the applicant's skills and qualifications, and the added value s/he will contribute both to the hosting and sponsoring organizations.
- **Brief action plan**
  - The action plan for period of work in the host organization should be developed jointly with the mentor and should also include clear evaluation indicators for the proposed work on policy products agreed with the hosting organization.
- **Draft budget in USD**
  - The budget template is available for download <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/think-tank-young-professional-development-program-20150505>
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**
  - The CV should describe the applicant's academic and professional background, giving a detailed description of the applicant's previous employment and listing recent policy and academic projects in which the applicant has been involved.
- **Support letter from a hosting organization** with endorsement of the Executive Director or President. The letter should:
  - Describe the benefits of engaging with the young professional to the host organization.
  - Include the CV of any assigned mentors and a job description for the young professional.
  - Include the statement of commitment that the host organization will secure supervision from a senior policy analyst (mentor) up to 30 hours per month and will render necessary support to the intern in obtaining necessary employment permits.
  - Include a month-by month mentorship plan.

The **Think Tank Fund** (TTF) supports independent policy research centers that strengthen democratic processes by identifying political, economic, and social problems, and researching them in nonpartisan and policy-relevant ways. TTF further supports the interaction of policy research centers with governments to advance better policy responses, to involve nongovernmental stakeholders in policy debates, and disseminate their research findings widely.

#### CONTACT

Think Tank Fund  
[tffellowships@opensocietyfoundations.org](mailto:tffellowships@opensocietyfoundations.org)  
Tel: +36-1-882-3121  
Fax: +36-1-882-3101