



OPEC Visiting Research Fellow Programme VRFP-2024

Announcement

Visiting Research Fellow Programme (VRFP-2024)

Deadline for nominations: 1 April 2024

Objectives of the Visiting Research Fellow Programme

The Visiting Research Fellow Programme (VRFP) is an innovative approach to human capacity development and is designed to help professionals from OPEC Member Countries improve their expertise and technical skills in research in an array of energy-related issues. It does this by providing participants with the opportunity to become involved in the Secretariat's research operation through practical experience and 'learning by doing'.

Professional Benefits to Fellows

Participants in the VRFP benefit from being in the programme through:

- Involvement and close participation in the Secretariat's research programme and studies;
- Contributing to ongoing projects in the Secretariat's and strengthening of networks with Member Country professionals;
- Gaining experience at the Secretariat and deepening their knowledge of OPEC and understanding of its goals, priorities and activities;
- Opportunities to involve themselves in cutting-edge research and hands-on experience of policy issues in climate change and on a range of energy-related topics;
- Enhancing their professional experience through practical work assignments;
- Exposure to a rich international environment and interaction with researchers from OPEC Members and other countries;
- Broadening their career possibilities as a result of the experience and insights gained at OPEC.

General Eligibility Requirements

- The programme is open to applicants from Member Countries only. They must be nominated and supported by their respective OPEC Governors;
- Applicants should be professionals with a minimum of five years of relevant work experience;
- Applicants must be familiar with research methodology and should have a proven record of research experience;
- Participants are expected to be able to undertake the programme in English, which is the working language of the Secretariat;
- Applications must be submitted through the relevant Governor for OPEC.

Expected Outcome/Deliverables

- Participants in the programme will be involved directly in the research undertakings at the Secretariat and will contribute to them;
- Participants are required to deliver a report to the Secretariat on the findings of their research projects;
- Participants are required to make a presentation at the end of their assignments and to discuss their research findings with members of the Secretariat.

All intellectual property arising from research by the programme's participants belongs to the Secretariat. An intellectual property and confidentiality agreement will be signed before a successful participant is formally accepted into the programme.

Duration & Working Hours

The duration of the programme will be six months. The Visiting Research Fellows are expected to observe the official working hours of the Secretariat.

Allowances, Accommodation, Travel and Insurance

Participants are required to have paid employment and to be able to fully support themselves financially while staying in Vienna, and they must provide adequate evidence of this through their nominating Governors before they can be admitted to the programme. The Secretariat will provide each participant with a monthly honorarium of €1,000 to assist with extra expenses.

However, the Secretariat will not cover any costs related to the accommodation or travel of participants or their dependents. Participants must arrange their own health/sickness insurance and provide evidence that they possess adequate health coverage before arriving in Vienna.

The Secretariat will not be responsible for any health or sickness claims stemming from the fellowship period. With regard to accident insurance at the workplace, the Secretariat will enroll participants in its accident insurance scheme for the duration of their stay in the programme at the Secretariat.

Application Evaluation Criterion

Candidates' professional merit and potential for successful research will be the main consideration when evaluating the applicants.

Application Procedure

Applicants are required to complete the application form, which includes writing an elaborate research proposal that should center on any of the topics listed below. Applicants are also requested to attach their latest Curriculum Vitae to the completed application form. The following are the research topics available in the different Departments/Office/Unit at the Secretariat for the 2024 VRFP:

Petroleum Studies Department

Introduction to the Petroleum Studies Department

Within the Research Division, the Petroleum Studies Department (PSD) is responsible for continuous monitoring of oil and product market developments in the short-term, and reporting thereon in a timely and precise manner to Member Countries. Its objective is to provide pertinent and reliable information and analyses in support of decision-making and policy-making in Member Countries, as well as to highlight the conditions under which the world oil markets are balanced.

PSD is also responsible for carrying out, on a continuous basis, research programmes and studies on short-term energy market issues. Its objective here is to make reports and ad hoc papers, highlighting particularly important issues available to Member Countries for their use and consideration.

A further area of responsibility is conducting a series of regular forecasts by elaborating on and analysing oil market scenarios. These findings will then be reported to Member Countries for information purposes, as well as in support of policy-making.

Research topics:

1) Estimating short term income and price elasticities for oil product demand of major oil consumer countries.

The proposed study aims to build a model that estimate the short-run income and price elasticities of petroleum products demand in USA, Germany, Japan, China and India (based on the data availability).

Report should address the following:

- Aid in developing customized models for each country (USA, Germany, Japan, China, and India) to estimate short-run income and price elasticities for petroleum products based on available data.
- Contribute insights into country-specific consumer behaviors related to petroleum product demand, providing a nuanced understanding of how income and prices impact consumption patterns.
- Help to provide accurate estimates of short-run income and price elasticities, offering valuable information for forecasting.
- Compare and contrast the estimated elasticities across the selected countries, identifying any unique trends or common patterns in how demand responds to income and price changes.
- Offer data-driven insights that can support analyzing petroleum product demand.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate for this position should have an advanced university degree in economics, especially applied economics, applied energy economics (PhD is preferred), a genuine innovative interest in data science and the oil market. Expert knowledge in E-views and Excel is an absolute prerequisite. He or she should further demonstrate computer programming skills, such as R, Python, STATA, SAS. Knowledge of database management systems is also preferred.

2) Understanding of the BRICS economies and evolving of the “BRICS plus” country group in terms of economic developments and consequences on oil-demand trends in history, present and future.

The objective of this study is to focus on tracing the economic developments of the four major BRIC economies since 2002, particularly after China joined the WTO at the end of 2001. It will also explore the collective status of the BRICS group, delve into the prospects of expanding the BRICS+ alliance, provide a near-term outlook on the group's future developments, and offer a medium- to long-term perspective.

Furthermore, it will be important to assess not only the individual development of each economy and the collective status of the group but also to examine the near-term and medium- to long-term perspectives for both individual economies and the group as a whole. The areas under examination will encompass future cooperation within the group, involving economic and trade agreements, currency alignments (potentially moving away from US-dollar denominated trade relations), collaboration in energy and commodity sectors, financial market-related cooperation, technological transformations, demographic trends, and collaboration with G7 economies.

Report should address the following:

- Provide essential assistance in analyzing economic developments in BRIC economies since 2002, especially post-China's WTO entry.
- Support in exploring the current collective status of the BRICS group, assisting in identifying shared economic indicators and collaborative efforts.
- Assist in researching opportunities and challenges for the BRICS+ alliance.
- Contribute to the creation of a detailed near-term outlook for the BRICS group, aiding in the assessment of anticipated economic shifts and policy changes.
- Provide assistance in developing a medium- to long-term perspective on individual BRIC economies and the collective BRICS+ group.
- Assist in researching potential areas for future cooperation within BRICS, including trade agreements and technological collaboration partnerships.
- Contribute to the examination of monetary alignments, and collaboration in energy, commodity sectors, financial markets, and technology.
- Investigate the potential impact of the BRICS+ alliance on oil markets and OPEC in general.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

The candidate will be engaged in conducting a literature review, analyzing data, exploring potential case studies, conducting possible expert interviews, and performing both quantitative analysis and modeling. He or she must have a Master's or advanced degree in economics and sound knowledge in economic modelling.

Data Services Department

Introduction to the Data Services Department

The Data Services Department (DSD) is responsible for supporting the research activities in the Research Division through provision of statistical data management and analysis, software development, and documentation/references management services. The department is the central provider of reliable, timely, up-to-date data, documentation and information pertaining to the oil market in particular, and energy and related issues in general.

Research topics:

1) Overview of historical and current petrochemical capacity evolution

The aim of this study is to conduct an analysis of the historical evolution of petrochemical capacities worldwide, as well as to summarize prospective capacity expansions of future projects. In this light, the impact on current and future oil demand stemming from the petrochemical industry will be assessed.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate for this position should have a genuine innovative interest in data collection and statistical related subjects, and the oil/petrochemical market in general. He or she would ideally further demonstrate data gathering skills. Knowledge of data systems such as Excel and SQL would be of advantage.

2) Collection of historical petroleum products supply data

The aim of this study is to collect historical petroleum products supply data from official and non-official sources (statistical yearbooks, research entities, etc.) with an annual and monthly frequency and on a country level. Furthermore, the collected data would be summarized and complement the existing database on the topic.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate for this position should have a genuine innovative interest in data collection and statistical related subjects, and the refining sector in general. He or she would further demonstrate good data gathering skills, as well as preexisting refining-related knowledge. Good knowledge of quantitative tools, mainly Excel, is essential.

3) Now-casting petroleum products supply data

The aim of this study is to develop a quantitative now-casting tool for producing monthly petroleum products supply data on a country level for the period M-2 to M-0, based on a mixture of refinery variables, including refinery intake, capacities and yields.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate for this position should have a genuine innovative interest in the detailed mechanics and dynamics of the refining sector. He or she would further demonstrate excellent quantitative skills, in particular in Excel, as well as preexisting refining-related knowledge.

4) Enhancing Efficiency And Knowledge Management In The Oil And Gas Industry Through Advanced Libraries

This study should investigate and improve information management in the oil and gas industry by exploring the potential of advanced libraries. The study should assess the current state of libraries in the sector, identify challenges, and propose solutions for more effective knowledge dissemination. Through a comprehensive literature review and methodology involving data collection and analysis, the research should contribute valuable insights to enhance operational efficiency and knowledge management in the oil and gas field. The anticipated results should include a better understanding of existing library systems, identification of key challenges, and recommendations for implementing advanced libraries. The study's significance lies in its potential impact on industry practices and its contribution to the broader field of information management.

Objectives:

- a) Assess the Current State of Information Management:
 - Conduct an in-depth analysis of the existing information management practices within the oil and gas industry.
 - Evaluate the efficacy of current systems, technologies, and processes in place for data acquisition, storage, and utilization.
- b) Identify Challenges and Gaps:
 - Systematically identify and categorize the challenges faced by the industry in accessing and utilizing information.
 - Explore gaps in existing information management frameworks, including issues related to data integration, security, and collaboration.
 - Explore the Role of Advanced Libraries:
 - Investigate the evolving role of libraries in other industries and draw parallels to identify potential applications in the oil and gas sector.
 - Examine how advanced libraries can serve as hubs for knowledge management, collaboration, and innovative information dissemination within the industry.
- c) Propose Solutions for Efficiency Enhancement:
 - Propose innovative solutions leveraging advanced libraries to address identified challenges.
 - Explore how advanced libraries can facilitate seamless data integration, enhance accessibility, and contribute to streamlined decision-making processes.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate should have advanced university degree (Master's) in library and information science. In-depth knowledge of E-library Web Management and E-library Data management and Analysis, as well as genuine interest in integration of emerging technologies into advanced libraries, e.g. AI-driven cataloging systems, machine learning for personalized information retrieval, and implementation of blockchain technology for enhanced data security.

Energy Studies Department

Introduction to the Energy Studies Department

The Department is responsible for monitoring, analyzing and forecasting world energy developments in the medium and long term and reporting thereon. It also monitors developments, and undertakes specific studies, on energy demand and production-related technology and the emerging implications for OPEC.

Research topics:

1) Strategies of National oil companies (NOCs)

This study will look into strategies of National Oil Companies (NOCs) and their positioning related to global energy transitions. Diversification of energy portfolios as well as strategies aiming at the reduction of the carbon footprint throughout the value chain will be analyzed. The study will also include review of supranational initiatives such as the Global Decarbonization Accelerator (GDA), announced at the COP28 in late 2023. This is a series of landmark initiatives designed to speed up the energy transition and drastically reduce global emissions. Finally, the study will also look into investments strategies within the NOCs value chain, exchanges in technologies, and human resource development within the energy transition road map and business structure transformation. The non-conventional supply and how NOC's capitalize on these resources will be a topic of research within the study.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate for this position should preferably have an advanced university degree (Master graduates or PhD candidates) in a relevant field to Energy, Economics, or Energy Policy. He or she should also have working experience in the energy industry.

2) Costs of renewables: key trends and outlook

This study will investigate the costs of major renewable energy sources on the global and regional level, especially solar photovoltaic and wind. It will review recent trends in cost developments, especially related to recent inflationary trends seen since 2020. The analysis will focus not only on levelized costs of electricity (LCOE), but also full integration costs (e.g. costs related to network expansion, storage, backup capacity, demand-side management, various infrastructure etc.).

Specific Eligibility Requirements

A successful candidate for this position should preferably have an advanced university degree (Master graduates or PhD candidates) in a relevant field to Energy, Economics, or Energy Policy. He or she should also have working experience in the energy industry.

PR & Information Department

Introduction to PR & Information Department

The Department is statutorily responsible for presenting OPEC's objectives, decisions and actions in their true and most desirable perspective, contributing to the awareness of governments, national and international institutions and companies, as well as the general public about OPEC and its activities, while presenting the OPEC Secretariat as a professional institution in the field of energy market data, analysis and projections.

Research topic:

1) Shaping stakeholder impressions by enhancing the visual appeal and user experience on www.opec.org

The OPEC website is considered an information hub for any relevant information about and from OPEC. In a digitalized world, the website is often the first place in which people engage with OPEC and its messaging. We regard the website as our virtual storefront and digital brand ambassador. As such, we aim to convey OPEC's identity and take our website visitors on a journey to Member Countries, meetings, relevant data and present our flagship publications in a most inspiring way. The website's design should be revamped in a way that maximizes OPEC's credibility and enhances trust in our brand.

The chosen candidate will look into enhancing the presentation of content and our visual display, advise on where to present relevant information, both in structure as well as visually, and develop a user-friendly, intuitive design that is in line with OPEC's overall Corporate Identity. You will ensure that OPEC's website is visually outstanding and be able to justify your design with studies that have already been done.

Specific Eligibility Requirements

- University degree in (web) design, visual communication, marketing, or related field.
- Proficiency in English.
- Relevant work experience in branding/digital agencies or in-house design departments.
- Expert knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite and basic understanding of web technologies (WordPress).
- Experience in branding, messaging and visual communication.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.
- Creative thinking, hands-on mentality, curiosity, teamwork, initiative, and professionalism.