Horizon Europe Programme

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships (HE MSCA PF)

Project proposal – Technical description (Part B)

Version 1.0
18 June 2021

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	**Publication date**	**Changes**
1.0	18.06.2021	▪ Initial version

Note

National Contact Points (NCPs) have been set up across Europe and beyond by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to Horizon Europe applicants in their native language. The mission of the NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on Horizon Europe funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the *preparation, submission and follow-up* of the grant applications. For details on the NCP in your country, please consult the National Contact Points page.

Instructions for Drafting Part B of the Proposal

Part B of the proposal contains the details of the proposed MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship as well as the required supporting information. It will be used by the independent experts to undertake their assessment of the proposal. We therefore advise applicants to address each of the award criteria as outlined in the relevant sections, using both descriptive text and the tables provided. Please note that the explanatory notes included in the part B proposal template serve to <u>explain the award criteria without being exhaustive</u>. To draft a proposal, applicants should also consult the current version of the MSCA Work Programme.

> Applicants <u>must</u> structure their MSCA-2021-PF proposal according to the headings indicated in the Part B proposal template.

Please note that this call will be a single-stage proposal submission and evaluation procedure. At the end of this document you can see the structure of the actual proposal that you need to submit, please remove all instruction pages that are watermarked. Applicants <u>must</u> ensure that their proposals conform to this layout and to the instructions given.

Please be aware that proposals will be evaluated as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made. This means that only proposals that successfully address all the required aspects will have a chance of being funded.

Applicants **must submit Part B of their proposal as two separate files:** part B-1 with a page limit applied, and part B-2 without a page limit.

Part B-1

Page limit: <u>Sections 1, 2 and 3 together should not be longer than **10 pages.**</u> All tables, figures, references and any other element pertaining to these sections must be included as an integral part of these sections and are thus counted towards this page limit. The page limit for this part of the proposal will be applied automatically; therefore, you must remove these instruction pages before submitting. Do not add a cover page or a table of contents.

If you attempt to upload a proposal longer than the specified page limit before the deadline, you will receive an automatic warning and will be advised to shorten and re-upload the proposal. After the deadline, excess pages (in over-long proposals) will be automatically made invisible, and therefore will not be taken into consideration by the experts. Note that experts will be instructed to ignore hyperlinks to information that is specifically designed to expand the proposal, thus circumventing the page limit.

The following formatting conditions apply:
- The <u>page size is A4</u>, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers).
- The reference font for the body text of proposals is <u>Times New Roman</u> (Windows platforms), <u>Times/Times New Roman</u> (Apple platforms) or <u>Nimbus Roman No. 9 L</u> (Linux distributions).
- The use of a different font for the body text is not advised and is subject to the cumulative conditions that the font is legible and that its use does not significantly shorten the representation of the proposal in number of pages compared to using the reference font (for example with a view to bypassing the page limit).

- The <u>minimum font size allowed is 11 points</u>. Standard character spacing and a minimum of single line spacing is to be used.
- Text elements other than the body text, such as tables, headers, foot/end notes, captions, formulas, etc. may deviate, but must be legible and <u>not be less than 8 points</u>.
- Tables are only to be used for *illustrating* the core text of the proposal; they cannot be used to contain the core text itself.

Part B-2

Part B-2, for which you will find a template at the end of this document does not have a page limit. It must comprise the CV of the researcher, the capacity of the participating organisation(s) and the commitment letter(s) of the associated partner(s) if applicable (only for Global Fellowships outgoing hosts and all proposals with a non-academic placement period). Part B-2 must be submitted as a separate document.

> Applicants will not be able to submit their proposal in the submission system unless both Parts 1 and 2 are provided in PDF format (Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts).

Definitions

DEFINITIONS	
Deliverable	A report that is sent to the Commission or Agency providing information to ensure effective monitoring of the project. There are different types of deliverables (e.g. a report on specific activities or results, data management plans, ethics or security requirements).
Impacts	Wider long term effects on society (including the environment), the economy and science, enabled by the outcomes of R&I investments (long term). Impacts generally occur some time after the end of the project. For this call Impacts refers to subsection 2.3 Example: *The deployment of the advanced forecasting system enables each airport to increase maximum passenger capacity by 15% and passenger average throughput by 10%, leading to a 28% reduction in infrastructure expansion costs.*
Milestone	Control points in the project that help to chart progress. Milestones may correspond to the achievement of a key result, allowing the next phase of the work to begin. They may also be needed at intermediary points so that, if problems have arisen, corrective measures can be taken. A milestone may be a critical decision point in the project where, for example, the consortium must decide which of several technologies to adopt for further development. The achievement of a milestone should be verifiable.
Objectives	The goals of the work performed within the project, in terms of its research and innovation content. This will be translated into the project's results. These may range from tackling specific research questions, demonstrating the feasibility of an innovation, sharing

	knowledge among stakeholders on specific issues. The nature of the objectives will depend on the type of action, and the scope of the topic.
Outcomes	The expected effects, over the medium term, of projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered in particular by the dissemination and exploitation measures. This may include the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups. Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project. Example: *9 European airports adopt the advanced forecasting system demonstrated during the project.*
Research output	Results generated by the action to which access can be given in the form of scientific publications, data or other engineered outcomes and processes such as software, algorithms, protocols and electronic notebooks.
Results	What is generated during the project implementation. This may include, for example, know-how, innovative solutions, algorithms, proof of feasibility, new business models, policy recommendations, guidelines, prototypes, demonstrators, databases and datasets, trained researchers, new infrastructures, networks, etc. Most project results (inventions, scientific works, etc.) are 'Intellectual Property', which may, if appropriate, be protected by formal 'Intellectual Property Rights'. Example: *Successful large-scale demonstrator: trial with 3 airports of an advanced forecasting system for proactive airport passenger flow management.*

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Part B-1

1. Excellence

1.1   Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art)

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- Describe the quality and pertinence of the R&I objectives; are the objectives measurable and verifiable? Are they realistically achievable?
- Describe how your project goes beyond the state-of-the-art, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious.

1.2   Soundness of the proposed methodology (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users, where appropriate)

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- Overall methodology: Describe and explain the overall methodology, including the concepts, models and assumptions that underpin your work. Explain how this will enable you to deliver your project's objectives. Refer to any important challenges you may have identified in the chosen methodology and how you intend to overcome them.

- Integration of methods and disciplines to pursue the objectives: Explain how expertise and methods from different disciplines will be brought together and integrated in pursuit of your objectives. If you consider that an inter-disciplinary[1] approach is unnecessary in the context of the proposed work, please provide a justification.
- Gender dimension and other diversity aspects: Describe how the gender dimension and other diversity aspects are taken into account in the project's research and innovation content. If you do not consider such a gender dimension to be relevant in your project, please provide a justification.
    - ⚠ Remember that that this question relates to the content of the planned research and innovation activities, and not to gender balance in the teams in charge of carrying out the project.
    - ⚠ Sex, gender and diversity analysis refers to biological characteristics and social/cultural factors respectively. For guidance on methods of sex / gender analysis and the issues to be taken into account, please refer to this page.

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[1] Interdisciplinarity means the integration of information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts or theories from two or more scientific disciplines.

- <u>Open science practices:</u> Describe how appropriate open science practices are implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology. Show how the choice of practices and their implementation is adapted to the nature of your work in a way that will increase the chances of the project delivering on its objectives *[e.g. up to 1/2 page, including research data management]*. If you believe that none of these practices are appropriate for your project, please provide a justification here.

  Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Open science practices include early and open sharing of research (for example through pre-registration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing); research output management; measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs; providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows); participation in open peer-review; and involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

⚠ *Please note that this does not refer to outreach actions that may be planned as part of the communication, dissemination and exploitation activities. These aspects should instead be described below under 'Impact'.*

- <u>Research data management and management of other research outputs</u>: Applicants generating/collecting data and/or other research outputs (except for publications) during the project must explain how the data will be managed in line with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

⚠ *For guidance on open science practices and research data management, please refer to the relevant section of the [HE Programme Guide](#) on the Funding & Tenders Portal.*

1.3 Quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- Describe the qualifications and experience of the supervisor(s). Provide information regarding the supervisors' level of experience on the research topic proposed and their track record of work, including main international collaborations, as well as the level of experience in supervising/training, especially at advanced level (i.e. PhD and postdoctoral researchers).
- Planned training activities for the researcher (scientific aspects, management/organisation, horizontal and key transferrable skills...).
- For *European Fellowships*: two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and host organisation.
- For *Global Fellowships*: three-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher, host organisation, and associated partner for outgoing phase.
- Rationale and added-value of the non-academic placement (if applicable).

> **Supervision**
>
> Employers and/or funders should ensure that a person is clearly identified to whom researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties, and should inform the researchers accordingly.
>
> Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisors are sufficiently expert in supervising research, have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise and commitment to be able to offer the postdoctoral researcher appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms.

⚠ *Supervision is one of the crucial elements of successful research. Guiding, supporting, directing, advising and mentoring are key factors for a researcher to pursue his/her career path. In this context, all MSCA-funded projects are encouraged to follow the recommendations outlined in the* [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision.](#)[2]

1.4 Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills

Discuss the quality and appropriateness of the researcher's **existing** professional experience in relation to the proposed research project.

2. Impact

2.1 Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to his/her skills development

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- **Expected** skill development of the researcher.
- **Expected** impact of the proposed research and training activities on the researcher's career perspectives inside and/or outside academia.

2.2 Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- Plan for the dissemination and exploitation activities, including communication activities:[3] Describe the planned measures to maximize the impact of your project by providing a first version of your 'plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities'. Describe the dissemination, exploitation measures that are planned, and the target group(s) addressed (e.g. scientific community, end users,

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[2] While the MSCA Guidelines on Supervision are non-binding, funded-projects are strongly encouraged to take them into account.

[3] In case your proposal is selected for funding, a more detailed Dissemination and Exploitation plan will need to be provided as a mandatory project deliverable during project implementation

financial actors, public at large). Regarding communication measures and public engagement strategy, the aim is to inform and reach out to society and show the activities performed, and the use and the benefits the project will have for citizens. Activities must be strategically planned, with clear objectives, start at the outset and continue through the lifetime of the project. The description of the communication activities needs to state the main messages as well as the tools and channels that will be used to reach out to each of the chosen target groups.

- <u>Strategy for the management of intellectual property, foreseen protection measures</u>: if relevant, discuss the strategy for the management of intellectual property, foreseen protection measures, such as patents, design rights, copyright, trade secrets, etc., and how these would be used to support exploitation.

⚠ All measures should be proportionate to the scale of the project, and should contain concrete actions to be implemented both during and after the end of the project.

2.3. The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts

⚠ Provide a narrative explaining how the project's results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the immediate scope and duration of the project. The narrative should include the components below, tailored to your project.

⚠ Be specific, referring to the effects of your project, and not R&I in general in this field. State the target groups that would benefit.
  - <u>Expected scientific impact(s)</u>: e.g. contributing to specific scientific advances, across and within disciplines, creating new knowledge, reinforcing scientific equipment and instruments, computing systems (i.e. research infrastructures);
  - <u>Expected economic/technological impact(s)</u>: e.g. bringing new products, services, business processes to the market, increasing efficiency, decreasing costs, increasing profits, contributing to standards' setting, etc.
  - <u>Expected societal impact(s)</u>: e.g. decreasing CO_2 emissions, decreasing avoidable mortality, improving policies and decision-making, raising consumer awareness.

⚠ Only include such outcomes and impacts where your project would make a significant and direct contribution. Avoid describing very tenuous links to wider impacts.

⚠ Give an indication of the magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected outcomes and impacts, should the project be successful. Provide quantified estimates where possible and meaningful. 'Magnitude' refers to how widespread the outcomes and impacts are likely to be. For example, in terms of the size of the target group, or the proportion of that group, that should benefit over time; 'Importance' refers to the value of those benefits. For example, number of additional healthy life years; efficiency savings in energy supply.

3. Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- Brief presentation of the overall structure of the work plan, including deliverables and milestones.
- Timing of the different work packages and their components;
- Mechanisms in place to assess and mitigate risks (of research and/or administrative nature).

A Gantt chart must be included and should indicate the proposed Work Packages (WP), major deliverables, milestones, secondments, placements. This Gantt chart counts towards the 10-page limit.

⚠ The schedule in the Gantt chart should indicate the number of months elapsed from the start of the action (Month 1).

3.2 Quality and capacity of the host institutions and participating organisations, including hosting arrangements

At a minimum, address the following aspects:
- Hosting arrangements, including integration in the team/institution and support services available to the researcher.
- Quality and capacity of the participating organisations, including infrastructure, logistics and facilities should be outlined in Part B-2 Section 5 (“*Capacity of the Participating Organisations*”).

Note that for GF, both the quality and capacity of the outgoing Third Country host and the return host should be outlined.

Associated partners linked to a beneficiary[4]
If applicable, outline here the involvement of any 'associated partners linked to a beneficiary' (in particular, the name of the entity, the type of link with the beneficiary and the tasks to be carried out).

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[4] See the definitions section of the MSCA Work Programme for further information.

Part B2 (no overall page limit applied)

4.   CV of the researcher (indicative length: 5 pages)

Any information provided in Parts A and B of the proposal should be fully consistent. Always mention full dates (using format: dd/mm/yyyy). The CV should include the standard academic and research record. Any research career gaps and/or unconventional paths should be clearly explained.

At a minimum, the CV should contain:
>   a) The name of the researcher;
>   b) Professional experience (most recent first, with exact dates in format dd/mm/yyyy);
>   c) Education, including PhD award date (most recent first, with exact dates in format: dd/mm/yyyy).

The CV should include information on:
- Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, peer-reviewed conference proceedings, and/or monographs (they are expected to be open access either published or through repositories) and other outputs such as data, software, algorithms significant for your research path (they are expected to be open access in appropriate repositories to the extent possible; they should be accompanied by a very short qualitative assessment of their scientific significance and not by the Journal Impact Factor);
- Invited presentations to internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools;
- Organisation of international conferences, including membership in the steering and/or programme committee;
- Research expeditions led by the researcher;
- Granted patent(s);
- Examples of participation in industrial innovation;
- Prizes and Awards;
- Funding received so far;
- Supervising and mentoring activities;
- Other items of interest.

Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis *before* the call deadline but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree must clearly indicate the date of the successful PhD defence ("viva"). Researchers having their last thesis defence *after* the call deadline will be automatically declared ineligible for this call.

5.   Capacity of the Participating Organisation(s)

Please provide an overview list of all participating organisations (the beneficiary and, where applicable, all associated partners) using template table 5.1 below, and more detailed information for each of the participating organisations (using a separate table for each organisation) using template table 5.2 below.

Any inter-relationship between the participating organisation(s) or individuals and other entities/persons appearing (e.g. family ties, shared premises or facilities, joint ownership, financial interest, overlapping staff or directors, etc.) must be declared in the proposal.

Applicants should provide additional information regarding the administrative/legal relations between the department carrying out the work as described in the table below, and the entity/entities mentioned in Part A of the proposal (i.e. linked to the given Participant Identification Code – PIC).

Should the proposal be shortlisted for funding, all participating organisations will have to be registered with the European Commission's Participant Register Services. Therefore where this information is already known, please provide in Table 5.1 the (draft or validated) nine digit Participant Identification Code (PIC) for the beneficiary and, where applicable, each associated partner.

5.1 Template table: *Overview of Participating Organisations*

Organisation role	PIC	Legal Entity Short Name	Academic organisation (Y/N)	Country	Name of Supervisor
Beneficiary					
Associated partner linked to a beneficiary (if applicable)					
Associated partner for outgoing phase (mandatory for GF)					
Associated partner for secondment (optional)					
Associated partner for non-academic placement (optional)					
Other: _____					

5.2 Template table: *Capacity of the Participating Organisations*

Please complete a separate table for each participating organisation. For the beneficiary, this table should be maximum 1 page in length; for each associated partner, the table should be maximum ½ page in length.

Choose one of:
☐ *Beneficiary (compulsory)*
☐ *Associated partner linked to a beneficiary (if applicable)*
☐ *Associated partner for outgoing phase (compulsory for GF only)*
☐ *Associated partner for secondment (optional)*
☐ *Associated partner for non-academic placement (optional)*

[Full name + Legal Entity Short Name + Country]	
General description	
Role and profile of supervisor	
Key research facilities, Infrastructure and Equipment	*Demonstrate that the beneficiary has sufficient facilities and infrastructure to host and/or offer a suitable environment for training and transfer of knowledge to the recruited experienced researcher.* *If applicable, indicate the name of the associated partner linked to a beneficiary and describe the nature of the link in the corresponding table.*
Previous and current involvement in EU-funded research and training programmes/actions/projects	*Indicate up to 5 relevant EU, national or international research and training actions/projects in which the institution/department has previously participated and/or is currently participating.*

6. Additional ethics information

Additional information that could not be included in Part A of the proposal (if needed).

7. Additional information on security screening

Additional information on security aspects that could not be included in Part A of the proposal (if needed).

8. Letter(s) of commitment from associated partners (only for hosts of outgoing phase of Global Fellowships or non-academic placement)

Use this section to add scanned copies of the letter(s) of commitment, if applicable.

Minimum requirements:
- With heading or stamp from the institution;
- Up-to-date document, i.e. not dated prior to the call publication;
- Demonstrating the will to actively participate in the (identified) proposal;
- Explanation of the precise role.

Any additional information the organisation deems useful can be added in the letter.

Note that the expert evaluators will be instructed to disregard the contribution of any associated partners for which no such evidence of commitment is submitted.

In case the letter fails to provide enough information on the associated partner's role and/or enough assurance of their commitment in the project (e.g. no signature, wrong proposal references, outdated letter…), the experts may penalise the proposal on these aspects under the implementation evaluation criterion.

For GF proposals, and for all proposals requesting a non-academic placement, the absence of a letter of commitment will render the proposal inadmissible and the proposal will not be evaluated.

Non-binding example of template letter of commitment for PF associated partners:

I undersigned *[title, first name and surname]*, in my quality of *[role in the organisation]* in *[name of the organisation]* commit to set up all necessary provisions to participate as associated partner in the proposal *[proposal number and/or acronym]* submitted to the call HE-MSCA-PF-2021, should the proposal be funded.

On behalf of *[name of the organisation]*, I also confirm that we will participate and contribute to the research, innovation and training activities as planned in this project. In particular, *[name of the organisation]* will be involved in [*free field for any additional information that the participating organisation wishes to indicate in order to describe its role and contribution to the project]*.

I hereby declare that I am entitled to commit into this process the entity I represent.

Name, Date, Signature