

# Applying for a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship

- What is a MSCA Fellowship?
- Am I eligible?
- What is my budget?
- How do I apply?
- What makes a successful application?



# Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Horizon 2020

“Ensure **excellent** and **innovative research training** as well as attractive career and knowledge-exchange opportunities through **cross-border** and **cross-sector mobility** of researchers to best prepare them to face current and future societal challenges.

*MSCA Work Programme*

# What is an Individual Fellowship?

- Individual grant for **experienced researchers** in **any field of research** to support their mobility, research project and training.
- **Individual** applies for the Fellowship in conjunction with a **host institution**.
- Opportunity to gain new knowledge in and outside academia, work on research projects in or outside Europe.
- Fully-funded.
- No age or career stage restrictions.
- Specific support for **return** of researchers to Europe (RI) and career **restart** for individuals with high potential who have been out of active research (CAR).

**Experienced researcher** : At the time of the call deadline the applicant must be in possession of a **doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience**.

**One Stage Submission Deadline Annually September**  
Outcome February  
Signing and Start Dates May onwards

## Type of Fellowships – European Fellowships

### European Fellowship

**Duration:** 12-24 months

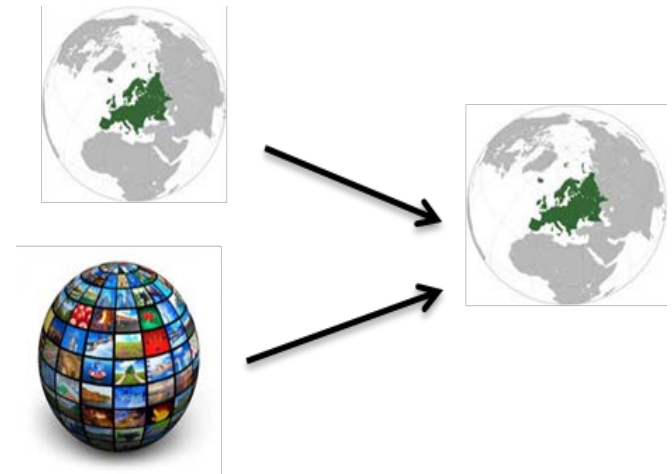
From **any country to a host institution in an EU Member State/Associated Country.**

Standard Scientific Panels.

**Career Restart Panel** – For those who have not been active in research for at least 12 months.

**Reintegration Panel** – For those relocating to EU.

**Enterprise & Society Panel** – If host institution is non-academic sector.



**New from 2016 onwards**

# Type of Fellowships – Global Fellowships

## Global Fellowship

**Outgoing:** 12-24 months.

**Return:** 12 months.

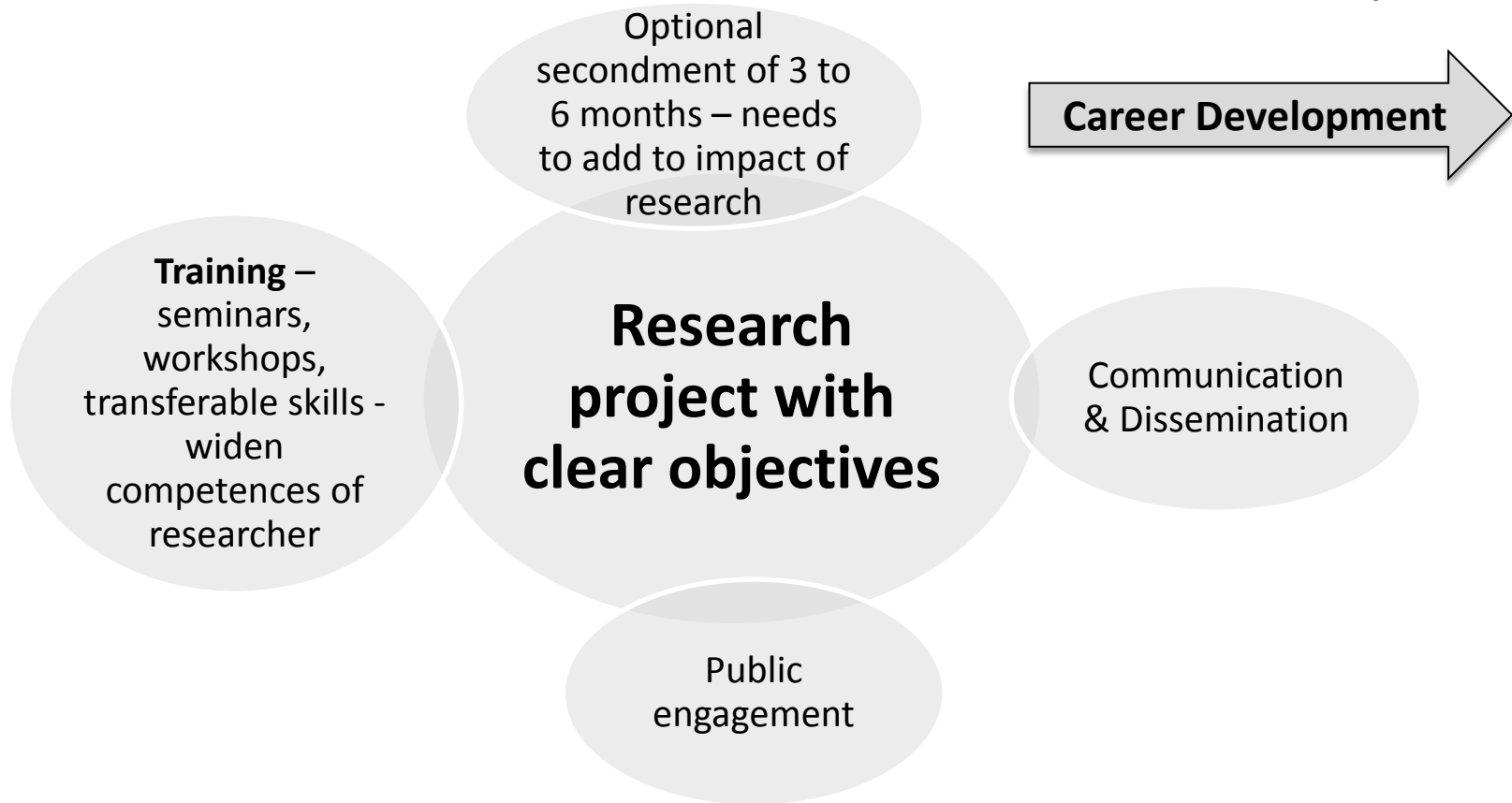
**Outgoing phase** is a secondment from an EU MS/AC to a **host institution** in a third country.

**PLUS**

Mandatory return phase to a **host institution** in Europe.



# What Does a Marie Curie Fellow Do - Typical Activities



**Secondments are highly recommended but they must take place in Europe, preferably in a different sector and they must show how they enable knowledge transfer or they are a training opportunity. Field work is not a secondment.**

# Why Apply for an Individual Fellow

## Fellow's Perspective

- Opportunity for well remunerated fellowship in best research facilities in their field in Europe and overseas.
- Exposure to work in non-academic sector.

## Supervisor's and Host Institution's Perspective

- Employ talented, well-funded researchers in any field.
- Ensure potential applicants compare well against existing post docs.
- Foster international links.

# Results

|     | European (%) |      | Global (%) |      |
|-----|--------------|------|------------|------|
|     | 2014         | 2015 | 2014       | 2015 |
| CHE | 18.4         | 14   | 10         | 10.3 |
| ECO | 19.1         | 14.1 | 10.3       | 13.6 |
| ENG | 18.8         | 14.1 | 11.6       | 10.8 |
| ENV | 18.6         | 14.1 | 10.9       | 10.8 |
| LIF | 18.5         | 14.1 | 11.6       | 11.1 |
| MAT | 18.8         | 13.8 | 5.9        | 10   |
| PHY | 18.8         | 14.2 | 11.2       | 10.6 |
| SOC | 18.6         | 14.3 | 11.9       | 11.2 |
| CAR | 18.2         | 13.8 |            |      |
| RI  | 19           | 14.6 |            |      |

- 17.6% success rate in 2014 and 13.6% in 2015.
- Variation in success rates partly reflects available budgets. 2015 (€215m) and 2014 (€240m).
- Budgets available in 2016 (€218.5m) and 2017 (€248m).



# Mobility and Eligibility

## Standard European Fellowship

- At call deadline the researcher must not have resided or carried out their main activity in the country of their host **for more than 12 months in last three years.**
- **ReIntegration and Career Restart Panels & Society and Enterprise** - At call deadline researchers shall not have resided or carried out their main activity in the host country for 3 in the last 5 years AND researchers must be EU Member State or Associated Country nationals or long term residents.

## Global Fellowship

- At call deadline the researchers shall not have resided or carried out their main activity in the Third Country where their outgoing phase will take place, for more than **12 months in the last three years.** Mobility rule only applies to country outside Europe, no mobility rule for the return phase in MS/AC.
- Researcher must be a national or previous long-term residents (>5 years) of a MS/AC.

# Proposal Budget

| Researcher unit cost [person/month] |                    |                  | Institutional Unit Cost [person/month]  |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Living allowance*                   | Mobility allowance | Family allowance | Research, training and networking costs | Management and overheads |
| 4650                                | 600                | 500              | 800                                     | 650                      |

- Funding based on unit costs, multiplied by requested person months.
- Automatic calculation of budget when person months completed in application.
- \*Country co-efficient applies to living allowance.
- Allowances cover employer and employee contributions of NI and pension and are taxed.

**Requests for part-time working may be possible during grant negotiation / life-time of grant if for personal or family reasons. Professional reasons require suspension of award.**

# Proposal Budget Examples

| <b>European Fellowship Example</b><br>Researcher with family coming to UK for two years from an EU MS |   | <b>Global Fellowship Example</b><br>UK researcher, no family, going to US for 2 years and returning to Manchester for 1 year |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Living</b>   | $4650 * 24 * \text{UK coeff (120.3)} = 134254.80$ | <b>Living</b>  | $4650 * 24 * \text{US coefficient (99.4)} = 110930.40$<br>$4650 * 12 * \text{UK coefficient (120.3)} = 67127.40$ |
| <b>Mobility</b>   | $600 * 24 = 14400$                                | <b>Mobility</b>  | $600 * 36 = 21600$   |
| <b>Family</b>   | $500 * 24 = 12000$                                | <b>Family</b>  | 0  |
| <b><i>Contribution to researcher = €160654.80</i></b>   |   | <b><i>Contribution to researcher = €199,657.80</i></b>   |  |
| <b>Research &amp; training</b>  | $800 * 24 = 19,200$                               | <b>Research &amp; training</b>   | $800 * 36 = 28,800$  |
| <b>Overheads</b>  | $650 * 24 = 15,600$                               | <b>Overheads</b>   | $650 * 36 = 23,400$  |
| <b><i>Contribution to host = €34,800</i></b>  |   | <b><i>Contribution to host = €52,200</i></b>   |  |
| <b>Max grant = €195,454.80</b>  |   | <b>Max grant = €251,857.80</b>   |  |

# Submission – How to Apply

- All proposals are submitted electronically via the portal <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>
- Navigate to the call for all documents, templates, evaluation criteria.
- Be aware that you can create the proposal but the **supervisor should submit.**
- Find out who you should be talking to in **research support offices** and other offices, for example, **research development/training** at your host institutions.
- If applying for a GF you need to know the research support offices in both host institutions.

# Submission – Structure of Application

## **Part A – Administrative and Summary Forms (all completed online)**

1. General information including abstract
2. Budget (automatically completed)
3. Ethics

## **Part B – Proposal Details (download template from portal and upload)**

1. Excellence
2. Impact
3. Implementation

### **Section 1-3 has a 10 page limit**

4. CV
5. Capacity of Participating Organisations
6. Ethics

### **Section 4-6 sits outside of the 10 page limit**

**Please note this is the structure and page limits at 2016 and is subject to change for future calls.**

## What makes a successful proposal? Know the evaluation process

| Excellence   | Impact | Implementation |
|--|--------|----------------|
| <i>Scored on a scale of 0 to 5</i>   |        |                |
| 50%  | 30%    | 20%            |
| 1  | 2      | 3              |
| Overall threshold of 70% applies, but need to score 95+ to be successful ! |        |                |

Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Decimal points will be given. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 – Fair. Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. Proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 – Very Good. Proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – Excellent. Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

# What is Excellence?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1.1 Quality, innovative aspects and credibility of research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Have clear, focused research objectives and methodology and translate these into <b>work packages</b>.</li><li>➤ Show <b>novel, ground breaking nature</b> of project.</li><li>➤ Show <b>contribution</b> to research field and how will it <b>advance</b> the research field.</li><li>➤ Show how the project will open up <b>career and collaboration opportunities</b> for researcher.</li><li>➤ Highlight <b>inter and multidisciplinary</b> aspects.</li><li>➤ Don't forget <b>gender</b> aspects.</li></ul> |
| 1.2 Clarity and quality of transfer of knowledge/training   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Describe new knowledge and skills that the researcher will <b>develop</b>.</li><li>➤ Describe <b>existing</b> knowledge and skills that the researcher brings.</li><li>➤ Research project should be framed in context of training of the researcher.</li></ul>   |
| 1.3 Quality of supervision & hosting arrangements           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Show experience and <b>track record of supervisor</b> - participation in projects, number of postdocs and PhDs mentored.</li><li>➤ Describe how researcher will be <b>integrated</b> into the host institution.</li><li>➤ Describe research development <b>opportunities</b> at the host institution.</li></ul>  |
| 1.4 Capacity of researcher                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Researcher should have an <b>excellent track record</b> relevant to their career status – highlight publications, achievements.</li><li>➤ Show capacity for <b>independent thinking</b> and leadership.</li></ul>  |

# Excellence – Reviewers' Comments

The supervisor has established networks of international collaborations & demonstrates a good capacity to mentor

It is not made clear how the preliminary data justifies the credibility of the main hypothesis

The relevant training objectives have been articulated in detail

The research is novel and highly credible considering the supervisor's experience

The research objectives are not described in detail

The future fellow has a skill in securing travel grants which facilitated participation at international events during the PhD

The hands-on training activities for developing transferable skills are mentioned but not developed

How the supervision will be conducted e.g. frequency of meetings is not clearly presented



# What is Impact?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>2.1 Enhancing the potential and future career prospects of the researcher</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Detail the expected <b>impact on the researcher's career</b>, for example, learning new approaches, developing new skills, experience with different sectors.</li><li>➤ Specify career goals of the researcher and show how the project will help meet the goals.</li><li>➤ Show the <b>impact</b> of the project and its outcomes on European <b>society</b>, European <b>policy</b> objectives.</li></ul> |
| <p>2.2 Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the action results</p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Describe your exploitation and dissemination strategy and how it will impact on science, society, economy – for example, how will <b>research results be transferred</b> to potential users, scientists, society.</li><li>➤ Consider how the project might benefit EU citizens - does it fit with EU strategies and policies.</li></ul>   |
| <p>2.3 Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the action activities to different audiences</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Provide details on communication and <b>public engagement</b> strategy (include in the GANTT Chart) .</li><li>➤ Define your audiences and have a clear communication strategy for each of them – use the right medium.</li></ul>  |

# Impact – Reviewers' Comments

Excellent potential for a long-term collaboration between the outgoing and return host

The project has limited socio-economic value

The planned secondment would foster communication and knowledge transfer between practitioners and the researcher

They clearly identify different audiences that could benefit from the results.

The impact of the scientific outputs has not been sufficiently demonstrated

The fellowship is likely to have an excellent impact on the career prospects of the researcher

The communication measures are mostly limited to participation in a number of events that are not specifically related to the project

The cutting edge technologies and acquired skills mentioned seem already pre-existing and part of ongoing work

# What is Implementation?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 3.1 Overall coherence and effectiveness of the work plan                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Include a clear and realistic <b>GANTT chart</b>.</li><li>➤ Use <b>EC language</b> of work packages (research objectives, training, dissemination and management), deliverables and milestones., secondments.</li></ul>   |
| 3.2 Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Explain how the work plan and resources will ensure success.</li></ul>  |
| 3.3 Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Describe the project organisation and management structure – describe how progress will be <b>monitored</b>.</li><li>➤ Outline potential <b>risk and contingency plans</b>.</li></ul>   |
| 3.4 Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Describe the infrastructure, facilities that will be available to the researcher – make these <b>specific</b> to the researcher and the project.</li><li>➤ Describe the active contribution of the beneficiary and partners (if any secondments) – show why this is the <b>right host</b> for the project, highlight again the institution’s experience and track record of hosting Fellows.</li><li>➤ Note for a GF information needs to be provided about both the host institution and the third country. <b>The host in the third country will also need to add a letter of commitment.</b></li></ul> |

# Implementation – Reviewers' Comments

The administrative arrangements and support for the hosting of the applicant are sufficiently outlined

WPs are not adequately designed for the project and are insufficiently explained

The researcher will become a staff member of the host department and will join the work of three research clusters

The active contribution and commitment of the beneficiary and its scientist in charge is well documented

Deliverables are not focused enough and milestones are not clearly defined

Risk management is extensively presented, including contingency plans to be put in place should risk occur

The complementarity of the host lab and the company where the fellow will be seconded are not fully explained in the proposal

The timing of research and dissemination activities presented in the Gantt chart and descriptive part do not clearly correspond

# Hints and Tips

## Supervisor and Host

- Chose the right supervisor – have a joint ambition and shared vision.
- Involve the supervisor and host in writing the project.

## The Project – Research, Training and Impact

- Tell a clear story - have **training objectives** as well as research objectives and link these to work packages and deliverables.
- Make sure the project will expand your skills as a researcher.
- Be very specific when you describe and talk about impact.
- Highlight inter and multidisciplinary aspects.
- Include **valuable** secondments that will have an impact.

## Style and Presentation

- Make it accessible – evaluators will be experts but not at level of detail as you.
- Bring the project to life and easy to follow – include diagrams, images, tables.

## Don't Forget

- Sections 4-6 and profile of organisations.
- Ethics.
- Gender.

# Hints and Tips

## Do Your Research

Look at successful MSCA projects on  
[CORDIS](https://cordis.europa.eu/)

[http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/home_en.html)

Browse by Programme – H2020 – MSCA IF

Check if they have a website

Can read project abstract



The screenshot displays the CORDIS (Community Research and Development Information Service) website. The header includes the European Commission logo and the text 'CORDIS Community Research and Development Information Service'. A search bar is visible with a 'Search' button and a 'Sign in' link. The main navigation menu includes 'NEWS & EVENTS', 'PROJECTS & RESULTS', 'RESEARCH\*EU MAGAZINES', and 'PARTNERS'. The 'PROJECTS & RESULTS' section is active, showing a search bar with 'Free text' and a search button. Below the search bar, it indicates 'Results 1 - 10 of 2447' and 'Results/page: 10'. The results list includes two projects:

- smartCC** - Designing novel smart sensor interfaces based on a biologically abundant peptide motif: coiled-coils  
ID: 705857  
Start date: 2017-06-01, End date: 2019-05-31  
Smart interfaces alter their properties in response to an external trigger. Such devices open exciting opportunities for novel technologies with manifold applications. Electrical fields pose easily controllable triggers for smart interfaces and even allow a precise 'digital'...  
Programme: H2020-EU.1.3.2.  
Record Number: 201371  
Last updated on: 2016-03-17
- PaNDA** - Paleo-nutrient dynamics in the Eurasian Arctic Ocean  
ID: 709175  
Start date: 2016-09-01, End date: 2018-08-31  
Due to anthropogenic climate change, the Arctic Ocean (AO) is warming rapidly and sea ice is retreating dramatically with a loss of ~40% since 1980. Sea ice retreat will have complex effects on nutrient availability and, subsequently, primary productivity with implications for...  
Programme: H2020-EU.1.3.2.  
Record Number: 206312  
Last updated on: 2016-11-04

Read **Call Documents and Guide for Applicants** – this is the minimum and will all be on the [portal](#) when the call opens.

**Also** read EC documents for ideas on outreach, communication.

[Marie Curie Outreach Guidance](#)

[Online Manual – Dissemination and Exploitation](#)

[Online Manual – Communicating your Project](#)

[Communicating EU research and innovation guidance for project participants](#)

**Good Luck!**  
**Any Questions?**

