



European  
Commission



Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions  
A pocket guide:

**Your passport to a  
successful research career**

Education  
and Culture

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS

A POCKET GUIDE:

YOUR PASSPORT TO A SUCCESSFUL  
RESEARCH CAREER

2014

Horizon 2020

## MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS YOUR PASSPORT TO A SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH CAREER

Investing in innovative research is investing in Europe's future.

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) help to fund career development opportunities for researchers at all stages of their careers.

They encourage the development of skills for innovation in all scientific disciplines, through worldwide and cross-sector mobility.

The scheme offers high-quality and innovative research training and knowledge sharing opportunities in the academic and non-academic sectors. A strong emphasis is given to the employability of researchers and the enhancement of transferable skills, entrepreneurship, management and financing of research activities and programmes, management of intellectual property rights, ethical aspects and communication.

“ Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood. ”

Marie Skłodowska-Curie



The MSCA ensure attractive employment and working conditions for researchers. For instance, funded research projects must promote gender balance and equal opportunities in order to counteract previous barriers in these areas.

Funded beneficiaries are also required to undertake public outreach activities to bridge the gap between science and society, raising awareness of the impact of researchers' work on citizens' daily lives.

This booklet is designed to help you decide which MSCA grant is the right one for you.

### WHICH ACTION?

Compare the available research funding opportunities at a glance.

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Some useful basics before you dive in.

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## GOING FURTHER IN YOUR RESEARCH CAREER

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People interact with scientists in engaging ways at public events across Europe.

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	INDIVIDUALS APPLY	HOST	APPLIES	FUNDER APPLIES
	<b>IF</b> Individual Fellowships	<b>ITN</b> Innovative Training Networks	<b>RISE</b> Research and Innovation Staff Exchange	<b>COFUND</b> Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes
<b>Aims</b>	Enable talented researchers to work on projects within or outside Europe.	Promote innovative research and doctoral training in Europe. Develop researchers' skills for innovation within and outside academia.	Stimulate more interaction between academia and non-academia, in different countries and sectors. Enhance the international dimension of research and innovation.	Support regional, national or international programmes to foster excellence in human resources development in research and innovation.
<b>Profile of the researchers</b>	Experienced researchers of any nationality.	Early-stage researchers of any nationality.	All research and innovation staff of the participating organisations.	Early stage researchers in doctoral programmes and experienced researchers in fellowship programmes.
<b>Profile of the hosts</b>	Universities, research centres, companies including SMEs, other non-academic sector organisations.	At least 3 partners: universities, research centres, companies including SMEs, other non-academic sector organisations.	At least 3 partners: universities, research centres, companies including SMEs, other non-academic sector organisations.	Universities, research centres, companies including SMEs, other non-academic sector organisations.
<b>How does it work?</b>	Proposal submitted by researcher in liaison with host. Successful proposals receive up to 2 years' support (additional 1-year return phase in Global fellowships).	Successful proposals from a network receive funding for up to 4 years to cover researcher allowances, as well as the cost of research, training and networking activities.	A joint research and innovation project implemented by the exchange of individual staff for 1-12 months. The staff members return to their organisation after the secondment to ensure transfer of knowledge.	Successful proposals from organisations that fund or manage a doctoral or a fellowship programme receive a fixed amount for each supported researcher as a contribution to the total costs.

## MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS NEED TO KNOW

### Rights of the fellows

The MSCA provide a new set of rights to granted fellows. They must receive at least a minimum level of allowances. To know more about them, you can consult the Work Programme at the Participant Portal:

[ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/marie-sklodowska-curie-actions](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/marie-sklodowska-curie-actions)

The EU's policy to make research an attractive career includes two key documents: the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment.

Downloadable versions are available at:

[ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/brochure](https://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/brochure)

### Success stories

Outstanding Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows working within the best research groups around the world contribute to successful projects with a strong impact on science and society:

[ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/newsroom/551/503](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/newsroom/551/503)

### National Contact Points

The National Contact Point of your country or destination provides assistance and information about Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions:

[ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national\\_contact\\_points.html](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/national_contact_points.html)

## Research Executive Agency (REA)

The REA is an executive agency of the European Commission in charge of implementing Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. Over the course of your work under a project, the REA will be your main contact point: [ec.europa.eu/rea](https://ec.europa.eu/rea)

### Definitions

**Academic sector:** public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research organisations whose primary mission is to pursue research, or international European interest organisations.

**Non-academic sector:** any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation. A possible non-academic profile could be a profit-making organisation involved in research activities such as businesses, SMEs, multi-national companies, as well as NGOs, public sector entities, governmental bodies, charities, etc.

**Early-stage researchers:** researchers with less than 4 years of research experience (full-time equivalent) and who have not been awarded a doctoral degree at the time of their recruitment (ITN, COFUND) or secondment (RISE) by the host organisation.

**Experienced researchers:** in possession of a doctoral degree or at least 4 years of research experience (full-time equivalent) at the time of their proposal submission (IF), recruitment (COFUND) or secondment (RISE) by the host organisation.

**Mobility rules:** researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their host beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their proposal submission (IF), or recruitment by the host organisation (ITN, COFUND). Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account. This rule does not apply for hosting by international European interest organisations or international organisations, as long as the researcher has not spent more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment at the same host organisation.

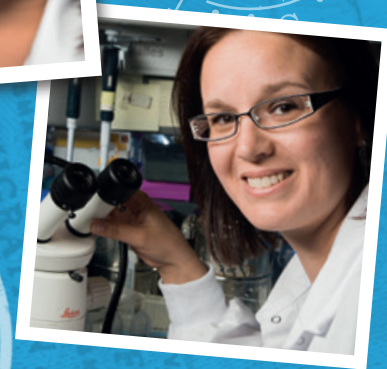
In the Career Restart Panel (IF) and the Reintegration Panel (IF), researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity in the country of their host organisation for more than 3 years in the 5 years immediately prior to the relevant deadline for submission of proposals.

**Staff members (in RISE):** are early-stage and experienced researchers or administrative, managerial and technical staff supporting the research and innovation activities of the project.

## » SECTION 01

# TRAINING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF RESEARCHERS

INNOVATIVE TRAINING NETWORKS (ITN)



# INNOVATIVE TRAINING NETWORKS

Looking for high quality doctoral training that combines scientific excellence with innovation skills to enhance your career prospects?

Innovative Training Networks (ITN) aim to train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative early-stage researchers.

The high quality joint research and doctoral training is delivered by international networks that bring together universities, research centres and non-academic organisations (companies, NGOs, charities, etc.) across Europe and beyond. They benefit from collaborating on innovative projects, with access to the best researchers and cutting-edge technologies.

ITNs can take **one of three forms**:

- » **European Training Networks (ETN):** Joint research training, implemented by at least three partners from in and outside academia. The aim is for the researcher to experience different sectors and develop their transferable skills by working on joint research projects. The organisations should be established in at least three different EU Member States or Associated Countries. Additional participants from any organisation anywhere in the world can also join a network.
- » **European Industrial Doctorates (EID):** Joint doctoral training delivered by at least one academic partner entitled to award doctoral degrees, and at least one partner from outside academia, primarily enterprise. Each participating researcher is enrolled in a doctoral programme and is jointly supervised by supervisors from the academic and non-academic sector, where they spend at least 50% of their time. The aim is for the doctoral candidates to develop skills inside and outside academia that respond to public and private sector needs. The organisations should be established in at least two different EU Member States or Associated Countries. A wider set of partner organisations from anywhere in the world may also complement the training.



» **European Joint Doctorates (EJD):** A minimum of three academic organisations form a network with the aim of delivering joint, double or multiple degrees. Joint supervision of the research fellow and a joint governance structure are mandatory. The aim is to promote international, intersectoral and multi/interdisciplinary collaboration in doctoral training in Europe. The organisations should be from different EU or Associated Countries. The participation of additional organisations from anywhere in the world, including from the non-academic sector, is encouraged.

The involvement of non-academic organisations is considered relevant for researchers to acquire training beyond the academic world. It will boost excellence in research and innovation by the transfer of knowledge and the creation of interactive collaborations between academic and non-academic organisations.

**Another feature of this action is to provide substantial training modules in key transferable skills common to all fields**, such as entrepreneurship, management and financing of research activities and programmes, management of intellectual property rights, ethical aspects and communication **to prepare researchers for current and future societal challenges.**

## Who can apply?

The lead **host organisation** submits a proposal in reply to a **call for proposals**. All open calls and related information can be found at the **Participant Portal**:

[ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal)

**Individuals** then apply for the specific positions created by these networks, using the Euraxess website: [ec.europa.eu/euraxess](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess)

## Which topics can be funded?

**Any research field** may qualify for ITN funding, apart from research areas covered by the EURATOM Treaty<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>These fields of research concerning nuclear energy are referred to in article 4 and Annex I of the Euratom Treaty:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:084:0001:0112:EN:PDF>

## What does the funding cover?

Grants cover:

- » **Recruitment and mobility** of each researcher for up to **three years** and 100% of costs. Researchers are hired under an employment contract and enjoy full social security coverage.
- » **Research costs, training costs and networking** including for organising joint activities such as conferences.
- » **Management and indirect costs.**

Successful proposals are typically funded for **four years**.

## Who decides?

All ITN projects are selected through **open competition and transparent, independent peer review**, using a series of pre-determined criteria.

## How do we apply?

The lead **host organisation** submits a proposal in reply to a **call for proposals**. All open calls and related information can be found at the **Participant Portal**:

[ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal)

## GOING FURTHER IN YOUR RESEARCH CAREER

INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS  
(IF)



# Individual Fellowships

Are you a talented researcher planning your next career move? Undertaking research in another country is an invaluable way to gain new knowledge and skills, expand your network and advance your career.

Individual Fellowships support the mobility of experienced researchers through European Fellowships and Global Fellowships.



There are **two types** of Individual Fellowships:

## European Fellowships

- » Held in EU Member States or Associated Countries
- » Open to researchers either coming to Europe or moving within Europe
- » Researcher funding is for one to two years
- » Can help you restart your research career after a break such as parental leave
- » Can help your reintegration if you are coming back to Europe

## Global Fellowships

- » Fund secondments outside Europe for researchers based in the EU or Associated Countries
- » Researcher funding is for two to three years
- » There is a mandatory one-year return period

European and Global Fellowships can also include a **secondment period** of up to three or six months in another organisation in Europe, where this would boost the impact of the fellowship.

## Who can apply?

The **best, most promising individual researchers** from anywhere in the world are encouraged to apply.

Fellowships are for **experienced researchers**. See definition page 11.

To apply you must submit a **research proposal**, including your CV, in response to the **call for proposals**. The proposal is **written jointly with your chosen host organisation(s)** (a university, a research centre or a company). All open calls and related information can be found at the **Participant Portal**:

[ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal)

## Which topics can be funded?

Any **research field** may qualify for IF funding, apart from research areas covered by the EURATOM Treaty<sup>2</sup>.

## What does the funding cover?

The grant is awarded to your **host organisation in Europe**. The grant provides an **allowance to cover your living, travel and family costs**. The **research costs and indirect costs of the host(s)** are also supported.

Successful proposals are typically funded for one to two years. In the case of a Global Fellowship, an additional twelve-month return phase to Europe is also financed.

## Who decides?

All IF projects are selected through **open competition and transparent, independent peer review**, using a series of **pre-determined criteria**.

Your proposal will be evaluated on its **research quality**, your **future career prospects**, and the **career development support offered by your host organisation**.

## How do I apply?

You submit a **research proposal**, written jointly with your chosen **host organisation** in response to the **call for proposals**. All open calls and related information can be found at the **Participant Portal**: [ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal)

<sup>2</sup>These fields of research concerning nuclear energy are referred to in article 4 and Annex I of the Euratom Treaty:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:084:0001:0112:EN:PDF>

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING ACROSS SECTORS AND BORDERS

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
STAFF EXCHANGE  
(RISE)



# Research and Innovation Staff Exchange

Collaborative interaction between academic and non-academic sectors can be a powerful catalyst for innovation. The Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) enables this interaction via staff exchanges among the two sectors. RISE also supports worldwide exchanges, irrespective of the sector.

These exchanges help research staff to develop careers that combine scientific excellence with exposure to international and/or intersectoral settings, contributing to the knowledge economy in Europe.

## Who can apply?

Both **academic and non-academic organisations** are eligible. In particular, the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is encouraged.

A RISE partnership is composed of at least three independent participants established in three different countries and must respect one of the following two conditions:

- » Two organisations are located in two different Member States or Associated Countries and one organisation is located in a Third Country, independently from the sector it belongs to, or
- » If all three independent organisations are from Member States or Associated Countries, at least one organisation should be from the academic sector and one from the non-academic sector.

Above these minimum requirements additional organisations established in Member States or Associated Countries and/or in other Third Countries can participate.

**Partners** get together and propose a **joint research and innovation project**. Proposals should highlight **networking opportunities, sharing of knowledge** and the **skills development** of staff members.

Staff members of **any nationality and any career level** can undertake a secondment. An eligible staff member must be engaged in or linked to research and innovation activities for at least six months prior to the secondment.

### Which topics can be funded?

Any research field may qualify for RISE funding, apart from research areas covered by the EURATOM Treaty<sup>3</sup>.

### What does the funding cover?

The grant offers appropriate funding for secondments of staff members **for one month to one year** as well as funding to support research, training and networking activity. Funding for a RISE project can last up to **four years**.

### Who decides?

All RISE projects are selected through **open competition and transparent, independent peer review**, using a series of pre-determined criteria.

### How do we apply?

**Organisations** submit a proposal in reply to a **call for proposals**. All open calls and related information can be found at the **Participant Portal**: [ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal)

<sup>3</sup>These fields of research concerning nuclear energy are referred to in article 4 and Annex I of the Euratom Treaty:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:084:0001:0112:EN:PDF>

## BROADENING HORIZONS

CO-FUNDING OF REGIONAL,  
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
PROGRAMMES  
(COFUND)



# Co-Funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)

Transnational mobility opens up new horizons for researchers.

COFUND offers additional funding for new or existing regional, national and international programmes for research training and career development. This extra funding enables the greater movement of researchers across borders and research sectors.

## Who can apply?

Applicants for COFUND should be **organisations that fund or manage doctoral programmes or fellowship programmes for researchers**. Each COFUND proposal will have a **sole participant**, e.g. a government ministry, regional authority, funding agency, university, research organisation, research academy or enterprise.

**Individuals** can find open calls and vacancies of co-funded programmes on the **Euraxess website**: [ec.europa.eu/euraxess](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess)

## Which topics can be funded?

**Any research field** may qualify for **COFUND** funding, apart from research areas covered by the EURATOM Treaty<sup>4</sup>.

COFUND programmes can cover several or all research fields or can be restricted to a specific domain. Programmes that prioritise specific research disciplines based on Smart Specialisation Strategies for regional investment will also be supported. For more information about Smart Specialisation Strategies, visit:

[ec.europa.eu/research/regions/index\\_en.cfm?pg=smart\\_specialisation](http://ec.europa.eu/research/regions/index_en.cfm?pg=smart_specialisation)

<sup>4</sup>These fields of research concerning nuclear energy are referred to in article 4 and Annex I of the Euratom Treaty:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C.2010:084:0001:0112:EN:PDF>

## What does the funding cover?

Individuals - **both doctoral candidates and experienced research fellows** - are supported in their research training and career development through the co-funding. Participating organisations receive a fixed amount for each supported researcher as contribution to the researcher's remuneration and to the management of the programme.

**Movement across borders** is a must. **Cross-sectoral mobility** is also encouraged.

Selected programmes will be co-funded for **three to five years**.

## Who decides?

All COFUND projects are selected through **open competition and transparent, independent peer review, using a series of predetermined criteria**. Collaboration with a wider set of partners, including from the non-academic sector, which may provide hosting or secondment opportunities or training in research or transferable skills, as well as innovative elements of the proposed programme, will be positively taken into account during the evaluations.

## How do we apply?

**Organisations** submit a proposal in reply to a **call for proposals**.

All open calls and related information can be found at the

**Participant Portal:** [ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal)

# SCIENCE CLOSE TO PEOPLE

European Researchers' Night  
(NIGHT)

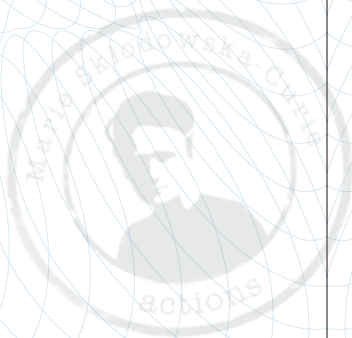




# European Researchers' Night

European Researchers' Nights are public events dedicated to bringing researchers closer to the general public, showcasing the diversity of science and its impact on our daily lives and stimulating young people to embark on scientific careers.

The events showcase what researchers really do for society, in interactive and engaging ways.



The NIGHT has dramatically grown in size and importance since its launch in 2005 in 20 cities in 15 countries. In 2013, this annual research outreach initiative took place in over 300 cities and 33 countries involving almost 1.3 million participants. The NIGHT is organised on the last Friday of September each year.

## Who can apply?

**European Researchers' Night** grants may be awarded to **any legal entity, established in an EU Member State or Associated Country**. This will usually involve coordinating local, regional, national or international partners.

**Possible beneficiary profiles could be private and public research organisations, companies, public authorities, schools, science museums, parent-teacher organisations, EU mobility centres for researchers, foundations and the media.**

## What can be funded?

Any action or event that boosts **public awareness of the positive role of research in society**, especially among **young people, is eligible for funding**.

## What does the funding cover?

You may use the funding to cover **any expenses linked to the organisation of a research outreach event**.

Grants can cover **up to two years**. Their value varies in line with the scale of the events proposed.

Activities that can be supported include:

- » **Hands-on experiments** conducted by researchers
- » **Science shows** with public participation
- » **Debates**
- » **Competitions** (science quizzes, games, puzzles, photo and art contests, etc.)
- » **Workshops** for children
- » **“Researchers’ dating”** (meet researchers and ask them questions)
- » **Science slams**
- » **Guided visits** of labs, research institutes, and other relevant places that are usually closed to the public.

This list is by no means exhaustive... be creative!

## Who decides?

All **NIGHT** projects are selected through **open competition and transparent, independent peer review, using a series of pre-determined criteria.**

## How do we apply?

**Organisations** submit a proposal in reply to a **call for proposals.**

Calls can be found at the **Participant Portal:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/>

For more useful information, check out the **European Researchers’ Night website:** [ec.europa.eu/researchersnight](http://ec.europa.eu/researchersnight)

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(\* The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

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## Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

Research training and career development; international and intersectoral mobility; partnerships between academic and non-academic organisations; doctoral programmes; staff exchanges; outreach activities. The EU's Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions fund all kinds of opportunities for researchers. So which is the right Marie Skłodowska-Curie action for you? This starter booklet gives you just enough information to make the right choice.

