



# How to write a successful MSCA-PF proposal

**Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF)- 2024**

## MSCA

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

*Developing talents,  
advancing research*



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*Marie-Curie PF Life Sc. proposal Evaluator (2020 - present)*

## DISCLAIMER

All information and suggestions in this presentation are not (EU) official but based on my experiences, expertise and acquired knowledge.

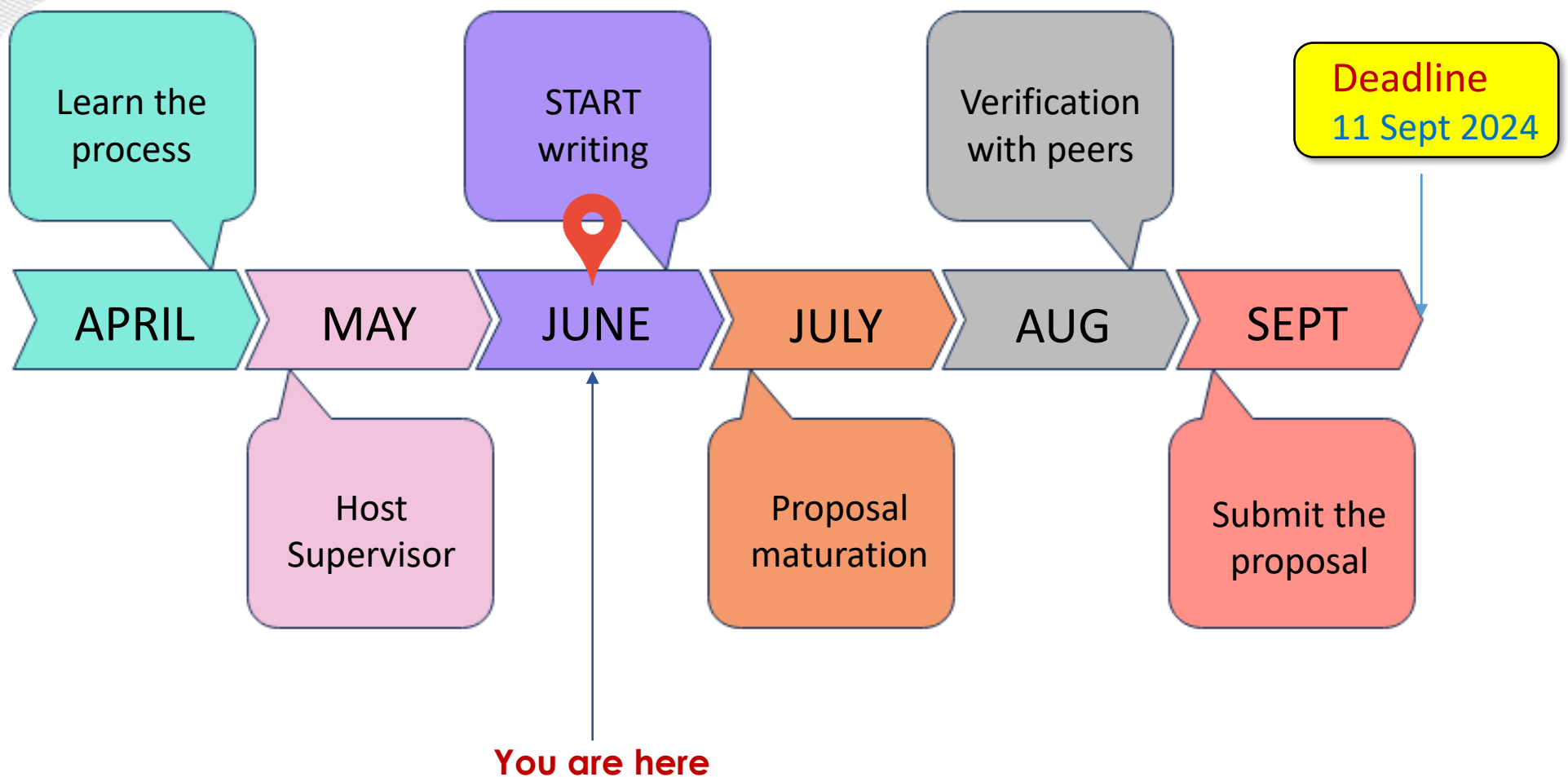


## Outline of my talk:

- Specific tips and tricks for a successful MSCA-PF proposal writing.
- General advice for proposal grant writing.



# Suggested timeline for the proposal writing



Link to the Official website:

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/calls/msca-postdoctoral-fellowships-2024>



The screenshot shows the top section of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions website. At the top left is the European Commission logo. At the top right is a 'Translate this page' button. Below this is a dark blue header with the text 'Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions' and 'Developing talents, advancing research'. A navigation menu follows with links for Home, About MSCA, Actions, Funding (highlighted), Jobs, Resources, What's new, and Science is Wonderful. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here: Home / Funding / MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024'. A button with a left arrow and the text 'See all opportunities' is positioned above the main content area. The main heading is 'MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024'. Below this, the reference 'HORIZON-MSCA-2024-PF-01-01' and the deadline '11 Sep 2024' are displayed. A horizontal line separates this from the introductory text, which states that MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships enhance the creative and innovative potential of researchers holding a PhD and who wish to acquire new skills through advanced training, international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships will be open to excellent researchers of any nationality.



**MSCA – PF Guide**


# **HAND-BOOK**

*(44 pages)*

## **For the applicants**

[https://msca-net.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MSCA\\_PF2023\\_handbook\\_final.pdf](https://msca-net.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MSCA_PF2023_handbook_final.pdf)

MSCA-NET 



**MSCA  
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS  
HANDBOOK  
CALL 2023**

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NETWORK OF THE MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS  
NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

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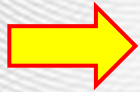
Task 3.4	Handbooks
Issued by:	Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (HR)
Issued date:	20 June 2023
Work Package Leader:	InnovationAuth (IL)

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# Proposal content and format

The proposals are composed of two parts, **Part A** and **Part B**:

**Part A** includes administrative and financial information of the host institution (beneficiary) and the researcher, as well as information on ethics and security.



**Part B** includes the description of scientific and training activities. It is further divided into:

> 85 %

- **Part B-1** describes three aspects Excellence, Impact and Implementation. **The maximum total length of this document is 10 pages.** Any excess pages (i.e. numerical page 11 and beyond) will not be available to the evaluators.

~15 %

- **Part B-2** contains **The researcher's CV**, a description of the participating organisations, and potentially information on ethical or security aspects and a letter of commitment (for GF and for non-academic placements). There is no page limit applied to Part B-2.

# MSCA Proposal evaluation criteria:

## Part B1 evaluation:

Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
Quality and pertinence of <b>the project's research and innovation objectives</b> (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art)	Credibility of the measures to <b>enhance the career perspectives and employability</b> of the researcher and contribution to his/her skills development	Quality and effectiveness of <b>the work plan</b> , assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages
<b>Soundness of the proposed methodology</b> (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)	Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise <b>expected outcomes and impacts</b> , as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities	Quality and capacity of <b>the host institutions and participating organisations</b> , including hosting arrangements
Quality of the <b>supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge</b> between the researcher and the host	The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the <b>expected scientific, societal and economic impacts</b>	
Quality and appropriateness of the <b>researcher's professional experience</b> , competences and skills		
<b>50%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>20%</b>

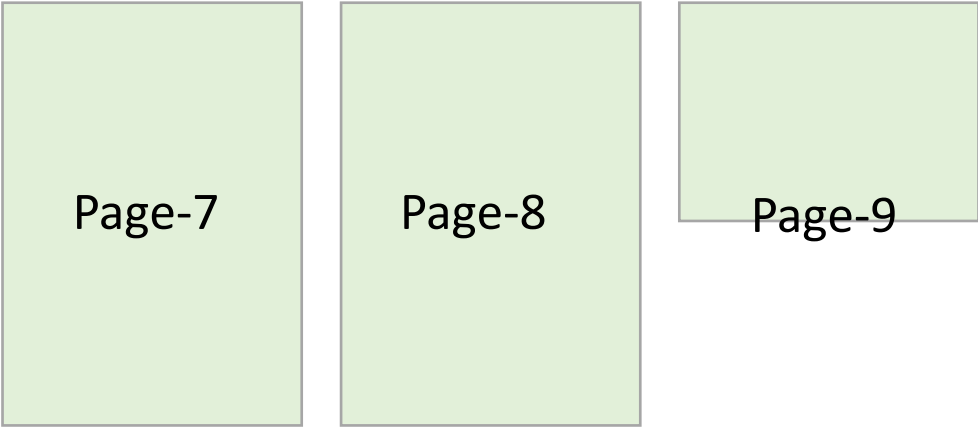


# Part B1 should be within 10 Pages...!!!

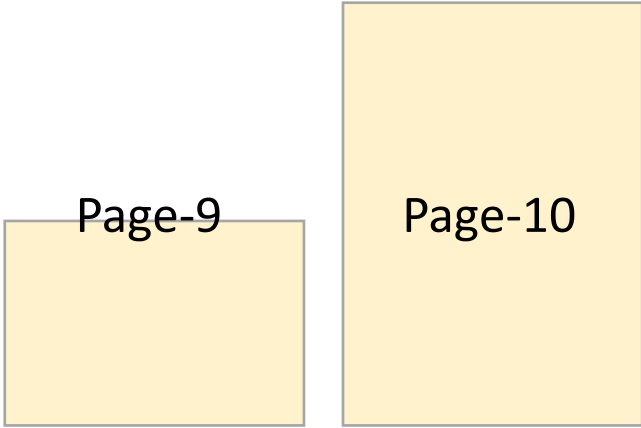
## Excellence: For 5-6 Pages



## Impact: For 2-3 Pages



## Implementation: For 1.5-2 Pages



# Part B1 should be within 10 Pages...!!!

## Excellence: For 5-6 Pages

**1** **Criteria 1 .1**  
Quality & Innovations of the research project.

**2** **Criteria 1. 2**  
Soundness of the proposed methodology.

**3** **Criteria 1 .3**  
Quality of the supervision, training & knowledge transfer.

**4** **Criteria 1. 4**  
Quality and appropriateness of the researcher.

## Impact: For 2-3 Pages

**1** **Criteria 2. 1**  
Credibility to enhance the career perspectives.

**2** **Criteria 2. 2**  
Dissemination, Exploitation & Communication plans

**3** **Criteria 2. 3**  
Expected scientific, societal and economic impacts.

## Implementation: For 1.5-2 Pages

**1** **Criteria 3. 1**  
Quality and effectiveness of the work plan.

**2** **Criteria 3. 2**  
Quality and capacity of the host institutions.



Excellence part is evaluated based on --

1

### Criteria 1 .1

**Quality and relevance of the project's** research and **innovation** objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious and go beyond the state of the art).

- *Short introduction, state the gap, what is your innovation and how will you fill the gap.*
- *Make objectives (3 to 4) realistically achievable, measurable and verifiable.*
- *If there is work being carried out by your supervisor or by you then mention.*
- *Pictorial representation of the main goal and ideas.*
- *Make **bold**/*italics*/underline/**bicolor** the vital statements/phrases whenever necessary.*





Excellence part is evaluated based on --

2

## Criteria 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)

- *How the research project will be carried out – Plan of work.*
- *Pictorial representation of workplan with the methodologies.*
- *Put in brackets the corresponding work package numbers with the research objectives.*
- *Connect to the Implementation section (section 3.1.)*
- **Highlight** or **bold** the critical/unique/novel experiments, techniques and equipment that will be used.
- *Talk about other collaborators (advisable) and secondment (encouraged) and justify it.*





Excellence part is evaluated based on --

3

### Criteria 1 .3

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

- *Write about your **supervisor's** key achievements: years of experience in the relevant field, examples of awards, Grants, publications, international and interdisciplinary collaboration.*
- *If you have co-supervisor, explain briefly.*
- *Planned training (technical or non-technical, soft-skills) activities.*
- *Two-way knowledge transfer activities are very important.*





Excellence part is evaluated based on --

4

#### Criteria 1 .4

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

- *Describe why you are the best person to do this fellowship, and the project.*
- *Adopt sentences from your CV and **highlight** relevant aspects in one paragraph.*
- *Researcher's CV in Part - B2.*





**Impact** part is evaluated based on --

1

### Criteria 2 .1

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

- *Clearly mention your career goal, Long-term plan (academic or non-academic).*
- *Describe how this project (Scientific output, training, collaboration, network, secondment) will help you achieving your career goal..?*
- *For example -- Now you are at 75% → the MSCA-PF gives you the missing 25%.*





**Impact** part is evaluated based on --

2

## Criteria 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

- *Be clear on the differences between Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation plans.*
- *Provide an indicative and a targeted plan for all three activities.*
- *Name some targeted journals, conferences and workshops.*







**Impact** part is evaluated based on --

3

### Criteria 2 .3

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

- *Write if your proposal have all the three impacts, but...*
- *Clearly mention the definitive Scientific impact.*





# Implementation

part is evaluated based on --



1

## Criteria 3 .1

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

- *How are you implementing your work plan, describe in detail.*
- *Divide them into Work-packages (Make a small table and give specific colors to each WPs) and WPs into Tasks.*
- *Always corelate your WPs to objectives, keep cite them in Excellence section..*
- *Mention the timeline, person-hour very meticulously in a Gantt Chart.*
- *Indicate the deliverables, milestones, dissemination and outreach programs in the Chart.*
- *Be realistic, do not be overambitious.*
- *Discuss the experimental or management risks and the contingency plans.*



Implementation part is evaluated based on --

2

### Criteria 3 .2

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

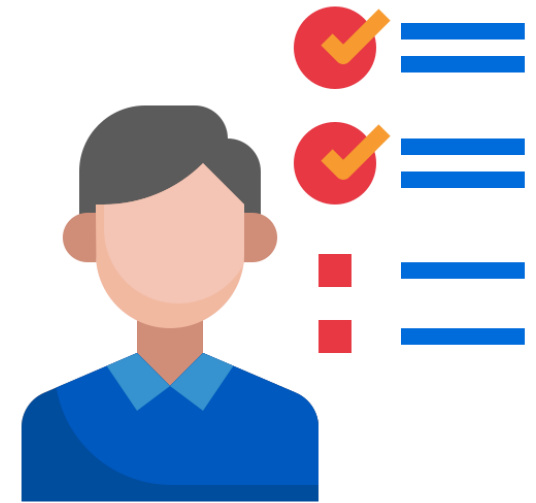
- *Write how the host institute is suitable for projects.*
- *Shortly describe the relevant infrastructure and the administration.*



TIPS  
AND  
TRICKS

MSCA or the Evaluators,

**WILL NOT JUDGE** your **SCIENCE**



BUT,

Your ABILITY of **DOING** Science based on  
“How meticulously you have described your  
ideas and presented your execution plan.”

# Important Tips for MSCA-Fellowship proposal writing

A

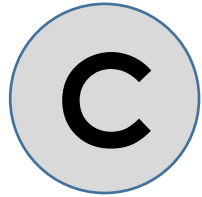
- Understand the MSCA fellowship policy very thoroughly. Read carefully the “**Handbook**” provided.
- Tailor your proposal accordingly.



**B**

Be honest with yourself, do not exaggerate or do not be overambitious.





Be specific, very precise and expressive



D

Take breaks in between writing.





# Important Tips for MSCA-Fellowship proposal writing

**E**

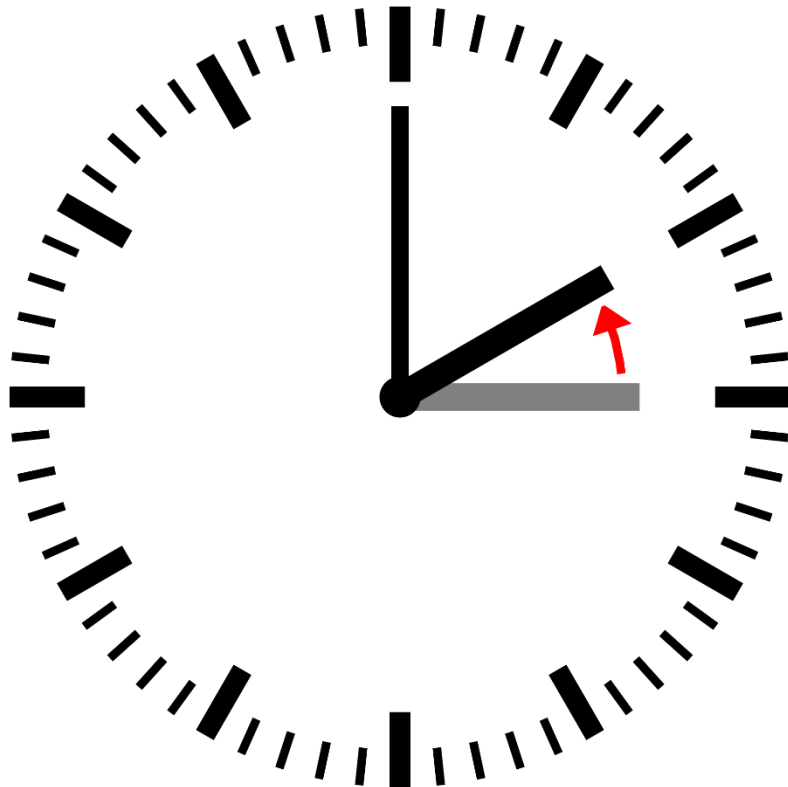
Write..., correct..., rewrite... but do not commit silly mistakes **at all..!!!**



# Important Tips for MSCA-Fellowship proposal writing



Start early & submit before.



# Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships 2023 Results

MSCA-PF-2023: Cumulative percentage of proposals above threshold, with a given score or higher (funding range marked in green)																	
Number of eligible proposals	1074 proposals	121 proposals	1016 proposals	750 proposals	1575 proposals	160 proposals	808 proposals	1580 proposals	57 proposals	8 proposals	73 proposals	84 proposals	130 proposals	9 proposals	76 proposals	397 proposals	
Cut off score for funding*	93.0	89.0	94.0	95.2	94.4	92.2	92.8	94.6	95.6	96.2	95.8	97.6	95.6	97.2	94.8	96.0	
Score equal to or above	EF-CHE	EF-ECO	EF-ENG	EF-ENV	EF-LIF	EF-MAT	EF-PHY	EF-SOC	GF-CHE	GF-ECO	GF-ENG	GF-ENV	GF-LIF	GF-MAT	GF-PHY	GF-SOC	
100	0.47%	1.65%	1.18%	1.33%	1.46%	0.00%	0.25%	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.19%	2.31%	0.00%	0.00%	3.02%	
99	1.02%	1.65%	1.87%	2.13%	3.17%	0.63%	1.24%	2.97%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.76%	3.08%	0.00%	3.95%	5.04%	
98	3.91%	2.48%	4.63%	5.87%	6.67%	3.13%	3.47%	6.77%	5.26%	0.00%	4.11%	15.48%	6.15%	0.00%	7.89%	8.56%	
97	6.33%	4.13%	6.89%	8.93%	8.44%	3.75%	4.83%	9.56%	10.53%	12.50%	8.22%	19.05%	10.00%	11.11%	9.21%	12.34%	
96	8.47%	4.96%	9.74%	12.93%	11.56%	5.63%	6.81%	12.22%	12.28%	25.00%	13.70%	27.38%	14.62%	11.11%	10.53%	16.88%	
95	10.34%	8.26%	12.30%	16.80%	14.48%	6.25%	10.27%	15.00%	21.05%	37.50%	21.92%	28.57%	20.00%	11.11%	15.79%	19.40%	
94	13.31%	9.09%	15.55%	19.33%	17.65%	10.00%	13.24%	17.66%	26.32%	37.50%	23.29%	38.10%	23.08%	11.11%	19.74%	24.69%	
93	15.92%	9.92%	18.60%	22.13%	19.75%	13.13%	15.47%	20.19%	29.82%	37.50%	28.77%	39.29%	27.69%	11.11%	26.32%	27.46%	
92	19.18%	10.74%	21.46%	25.07%	22.60%	18.13%	19.55%	23.16%	29.82%	37.50%	35.62%	42.86%	29.23%	11.11%	31.58%	29.97%	
91	21.97%	12.40%	24.02%	28.00%	26.41%	20.00%	23.64%	24.87%	33.33%	37.50%	42.47%	45.24%	32.31%	11.11%	34.21%	33.00%	
90	25.79%	14.05%	26.87%	31.07%	29.40%	24.38%	26.36%	27.28%	35.09%	50.00%	46.58%	45.24%	35.38%	11.11%	36.84%	35.26%	
89	28.49%	16.53%	29.92%	33.33%	31.87%	26.88%	28.47%	29.68%	36.84%	62.50%	49.32%	46.43%	42.31%	22.22%	42.11%	38.29%	
88	31.38%	16.53%	33.86%	34.93%	34.98%	29.38%	31.31%	32.03%	45.61%	75.00%	57.53%	46.43%	44.62%	33.33%	48.68%	40.55%	
87	34.45%	17.36%	35.73%	38.53%	38.29%	35.63%	35.15%	33.92%	49.12%	75.00%	61.64%	48.81%	48.46%	33.33%	52.63%	42.82%	
86	37.24%	19.83%	37.70%	41.47%	41.71%	37.50%	37.75%	37.03%	50.88%	75.00%	64.38%	52.38%	52.31%	33.33%	56.58%	45.09%	
85	40.22%	21.49%	39.86%	44.00%	44.83%	41.88%	41.34%	40.06%	57.89%	75.00%	65.75%	54.76%	56.15%	33.33%	59.21%	47.86%	
84	43.48%	23.14%	43.31%	46.67%	47.75%	43.13%	44.18%	42.22%	61.40%	75.00%	72.60%	54.76%	57.69%	33.33%	61.84%	51.13%	
83	46.37%	25.62%	46.46%	50.27%	50.67%	45.63%	48.02%	44.56%	64.91%	75.00%	73.97%	57.14%	60.00%	33.33%	63.16%	53.65%	
82	48.88%	32.23%	48.92%	51.73%	53.84%	48.75%	51.61%	46.84%	66.67%	75.00%	73.97%	60.71%	61.54%	44.44%	64.47%	56.17%	
81	51.68%	33.88%	51.67%	53.73%	56.06%	50.00%	53.96%	48.42%	66.67%	75.00%	76.71%	64.29%	63.85%	44.44%	68.42%	57.93%	
80	54.28%	38.02%	54.72%	56.27%	59.05%	53.13%	56.06%	51.08%	70.18%	75.00%	80.82%	69.05%	67.69%	44.44%	72.37%	59.45%	

Total Proposals MSCA-PF in the year 2022 = **8,039**

Selected for funding **1249** proposal with total €260 million;

On average **€ 200,000 per proposal**

**Life Sciences** out of **1575** proposals, **selected 341**

*Most of the projects selected are in—*

Social sciences and humanities (25.2%)

**Life sciences (21.7%)**

Chemistry (14.4%)

IT and engineering (13.3%)

# Good Luck



# Get the Fund...!!!