

What is it?

The objective of the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions is to support the career development and training of researchers – with a focus on innovation skills – in all scientific disciplines through worldwide and cross-sector mobility. For this, the MSCA provide grants at all stages of researchers' careers, from PhD candidates to highly experienced researchers, and encourage transnational, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility.

The MSCA follow a "bottom-up" approach, i.e. individuals and organisations working in any area of research can apply for funding. Several MSCA initiatives promote the involvement of industry in doctoral and post-doctoral research. Marie Curie Actions are implemented by **Research Executive Agency (REA)**.

There are four types of funding schemes:

1. Individual Fellowships (IF): Support for experienced researchers undertaking mobility between countries, optionally to the non-academic sector

IF support the mobility of researchers within and beyond Europe, also helping to attract the best foreign researchers to work in the EU.

Fellowships are either European Fellowships or Global Fellowships. European Fellowships are held in EU Member States or Associated Countries and are open to researchers either coming to Europe or moving within Europe. The researcher must comply with the rules of mobility in the country where the European Fellowship is held. Global Fellowships are based on a secondment to a third country and a mandatory 12 month return period to a European host. The researcher must comply with the rules of mobility in the country where the Global Fellowship secondment takes place, not for the country of the return phase.

The grant usually covers two years' salary, a mobility allowance, research costs and overheads for the host institution. Individual researchers submit proposals for funding in liaison with their planned host organisation. Proposals are judged on their research quality, the researcher's future career prospects, and the support offered by the host organisation. Fellows can also spend part of the fellowship elsewhere in Europe if this fact boosts the impact of the project. Those restarting their career in Europe benefit from special eligibility conditions.

2. Research Networks: Support for Innovative Training Networks (ITN)

ITNs support competitively selected joint research training and/or doctoral programmes, implemented by European partnerships of universities, research institutions, and non-academic organisations. Partnerships take the form of collaborative European Training Networks (ETN), European Industrial Doctorates (EID) or European Joint Doctorates (EJD). The research training programmes provide experience outside academia, hence developing innovation and employability skills. ITNs will include industrial doctorates, in which non-academic organisations have an equal role to universities in respect of the researcher's time and supervision, and joint doctoral degrees delivered by several universities. Furthermore, non-European organisations can participate as additional partners in ITNs, enabling doctoral-level candidates to gain experience outside Europe during their training.

3. Research and Innovation Staff Exchanges (RISE): Support for International and inter-sectorial cooperation

RISE support short-term mobility of research and innovation staff at all career levels, from the most junior (post-graduate) to the most senior (management), including also administrative and technical staff. It will be open to partnerships of universities, research institutions, and non-academic organisations both within and beyond Europe. In worldwide partnerships, academia-to-academia exchanges are permitted.

4. COFUND: Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes that finance fellowships involving mobility to or from another country

COFUND offers additional funding to regional, national and international programmes for research training and career development. COFUND programmes encourage the movement of researchers across borders and provide good working conditions. The scheme can support doctoral and fellowship programmes.

Specific Action: Researchers' Night

It is a Europe-wide public event to stimulate interest in research careers, especially among young people. The activities are focused on the general public and might take various forms such as hands-on experiments, science shows, debates, competitions or quizzes. The NIGHT takes place yearly, typically on the last Friday of the month of September.

Why should I do it?

MSCA endows you with new skills and a wider range of competences, while offering attractive working conditions. The MSCA will also seek to break the real and perceived barriers between academic and other sectors, especially business, which could be very interesting for you as a researcher.

Who can apply?

Marie Curie Actions are open to researchers of all ages and levels of experience, regardless of nationality, although they can be divided into two categories:

- *Early Stage Researcher*: Less than 4 years of research experience and without a doctoral degree
- *Experienced Researcher*: In possession of a doctoral degree or at least 4 years of research experience

Eligibility criteria for participants and researchers

For participants

Participants are organisations from the academic or the non-academic sector

- **In Individual Fellowships (IF)**, the beneficiary shall be a legal entity located in an EU Member State or Associated Country and employing the researcher during the project.

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- **Innovative Training Networks (ITN)** can take the form of collaborative European Training Networks (ETN), European Industrial Doctorates (EID) or European Joint Doctorates (EJD).
Networks must be created by at least three beneficiaries (or at least two for EID) located in three different EU Member States or Associated Countries. Above this minimum, the participation of institutions from any country or organization is possible under the conditions provided by the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation.
- Participants in the **Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE)** shall be established in at least three different countries of which at least two must be EU Member States or Associated Countries. If all participants are from the same sector (either only academic or only non-academic), at least one participant must be from a third country. Above this minimum, the participation of institutions from any country or organisation is possible under the conditions provided by the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation.
- Participants in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie **Co-funding** of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND) shall be legal entities established in an EU Member State or Associated Country that fund or manage doctoral programmes or fellowship programmes for researchers. International European interest organisations that fund or manage doctoral programmes or fellowship programmes for researchers can also participate in this action.

For Researchers

- Researchers may be of any nationality. Researchers receive support on the condition that they move from one country to another to broaden or deepen their competences.
- Global Fellowships and the Reintegration Panel in **IF** are open to nationals or long-term residents of EU Member States and Associated Countries. Long-term residence means a period of full-time research activity of at least 5 consecutive years. Supported researchers fall into two categories: early-stage or experienced researchers.
- Early-stage researchers (ESR) shall at the time of recruitment (ITN, COFUND) or secondment (RISE) by the host organisation, be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree.
- Experienced researchers (ER) shall, at the time of the relevant deadline for submission of proposals (IF), recruitment (COFUND) or secondment (RISE) by the host organisation, be in possession of a doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience.
- Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when a researcher obtained the degree which would formally entitle him or her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited or seconded, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is or was ever envisaged.

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How can I apply?

Find out the right MSCA grant and call for you. Inform yourself about the application timeline and familiarise yourself with the main guidance documents (work programme, information for applicants, specific rules, etc). Identify and contact your Host Institution early. As proposals must be submitted electronically, make yourself familiar with the Participant Portal Submission Service (PPSS) in time. For questions, get in touch with the Project Management Office at U.Porto or the National Contact Point for the MSCA.

When can I apply?

MSCA grant applications can be submitted only in response to a 'Call for Proposals'. Calls for the funding schemes are published on the Research and Innovation Participant Portal, your single-entry point for interactions with H2020. Check out this source regularly to see open or forthcoming Calls for Proposals.

How much funding can I expect?

The total budget for MSCA is €6.162 billion.

In the case of **IF** and **ITN** actions:

1. For Early-stage researcher category the reference unit cost is € 37.320/ year. . In addition to the living allowance, a mobility allowance of € 600/month and a family allowance of € 500/month will be paid for some categories of researchers. These unit costs will be subject to a funding rate of 100%.
2. For experienced researcher category the reference unit cost is € 55.800/year for living allowance. In addition to the living allowance, a mobility allowance of € 600/month and a family allowance of € 500/month will be paid for some categories of researchers. These unit costs will be subject to a funding rate of 100%.

The financial contribution to a **RISE** project is calculated on the basis of a unit cost. A unit cost is a fixed amount per person-month of secondment. The EU contribution is calculated by multiplying the unit cost by the number of completed secondment-months. The financial support is composed of a staff member unit cost of € 2 000 per month, plus an institutional unit cost of € 2 500 per secondment month. The institutional unit cost is split into research, training and networking costs of € 1 800 per month of secondment and management and indirect costs of € 700 per month.

The financial contribution to a **COFUND action** is calculated on the basis of a unit cost. The research unity cost per person per month is € 3.710/ month for early stage researchers and € 5.250/month for experienced researchers. These unit costs will be subject to a co-funding rate of 50%.