

**MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-  
CURIE ACTIONS (MSCA)  
INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP  
(IF)  
HANDOUT TIPS 2020**

**(BY IAD KKU 2020)**



# MSCA-IF 2020 TIPS

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## A. What is MSCA?

- The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) aim to support the career development and training of researchers in all scientific disciplines through international and intersectoral mobility. By funding excellent research and providing attractive working conditions, the MSCA offer high quality professional opportunities open to researchers of any age, nationality or discipline.

## B. What is MSCA-IF?

- MSCA IF is an Individual post-doctoral fellowship. The eligibility criteria are as follows:
  - PhD diploma or > 4 years equivalence of research experience.
  - Mobility rule: Relocation to another country, as long as the experienced researchers (ER) did not reside there for more than a year in the 3 years prior to the call deadline.
- The scheme supports bottom up research. This means all scientific disciplines and research topics are welcome. 100% funding rate (based on fixed amounts).
- The expected proposal length: is maximum 10 pages, plus CV and annexes.

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## **C. Goal of MSCA-IF**

- The goal of MSCA-IF is to enhance the creative and innovative potential of experienced researchers wishing to diversify their individual competence in terms of skill acquisition through advanced training, international and intersectoral mobility. Individual Fellowships provide opportunities to acquire and transfer new knowledge and to work on research and innovation in Europe (EU Member States and Associated Countries) and beyond. The scheme particularly supports the return and (re)integration of European researchers from outside Europe and those who have previously worked here, as well as researchers displaced by conflict outside the EU and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries. It also promotes the career restart of individual researchers who show great potential.

## **D. Types of MSCA-IF**

- There are two types of MSCA-IF funding schemes available:
  - 1) European Fellowship (EF): Mobility from any country to an European Member State (EU MS) /European Associated Country (AC), or within the EU, for a 12-24 months fellowship.
  - 2) Global Fellowship (GF): Mobility from an EU MS/AC to any country for a 12-24 months fellowship + a return phase of 12 months in the EU.

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## E. Indicative Timeable:

The MSCA-IF 2020 call is the last IF Call under Horizon 2020.

Opening of call	<i>08 April 2020</i>
Deadline for submission of proposals	<i>09 September 2020 at 17:00:00, Brussels local time</i>
Evaluation of proposals	<i>October - December 2020</i>
Information on the outcome of the evaluation	<i>February 2021</i>
Indicative date for the signature of Grant Agreements	<i>March - May 2021</i>
Possible start date of the Action	<i>1 March 2021 – 1 September 2022</i>

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## **F. Scientific Research Areas:**

- **Chemistry (CHE)**
- **Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)**
- **Economic Sciences (ECO)**
- **Information Science and Engineering (ENG)**
- **Environment and Geosciences (ENV)**
- **Life Sciences (LIF)**
- **Mathematics (MAT)**
- **Physics (PHY)**

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## G. MSCA-IF Fellowships Duration

MSCA Individual Fellowships		Duration
European	Standard	12 – 24 months
	Society & Enterprise	
	Reintegration	
	Career Restart	12 – 36 months
Global	Global Fellowships	24 – 36 months  (outgoing phase between 12 – 24 months followed by a <b>mandatory</b> 12-month return phase)

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## H. What types of monthly expenses are covered?

- Living, mobility and family allowances for the researcher
- Research, training and networking costs
- Management and indirect costs

	<b>Researcher unit cost in EUR</b>			<b>Institutional unit cost in EUR</b>	
	person/month			person/month	
	Living Allowance <sup>19</sup>	Mobility Allowance	Family Allowance	Research, training and networking costs	Management and indirect costs
<b>Individual Fellowships</b>	4,880	600	500	800	650

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## **H. What types of monthly expenses are covered? (Cont.)**

The living allowance is the EU contribution to the gross salary costs of the researcher and amounts to EUR 4,880 per month.

- In addition to the living allowance, a mobility allowance will be paid to recruited researchers amounting to EUR 600 per month. This allowance covers costs related to researcher's mobility (e.g. relating to travel and accommodation). It covers private costs of the researcher, not professional costs (which are covered by the category 'research, training and networking costs').
- A family allowance will be paid in case the researcher has family obligations. In this context, family is defined as persons linked to the researcher:
  - (i) by marriage,
  - (ii) by a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised,
  - (iii) as dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.



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## H. What types of monthly expenses are covered? (Cont.)

### **Institutional Unit Costs**

- This amounts to EUR 800 per month and is managed by the beneficiary to contribute to expenses related to:
  - costs for training and networking activities that contribute directly to the researcher's career development (e.g. participation in conferences, trips related to the project, training, language courses, seminars, lab material, books, library records, publication costs),
  - costs for research expenses,
  - costs for visa-related fees and travel expenses,
  - additional costs arising from secondments (e.g. travel costs, accommodation costs for optional secondments).
- **Management and indirect costs:** This amounts to EUR 650 per month, which is to be used for the management and indirect costs of the action. The unit cost for management and indirect costs should be used for the management of the action.

# MSCA-IF 2020 TIPS

## I. Evaluation scores

<b>IF - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships</b>		
<b>Excellence</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Quality and efficiency of the implementation</b>
Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects	Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship	Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including the appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources
Quality and appropriateness of the training and of the two way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host	Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results	Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management
Quality of the supervision and of the integration in the team/institution	Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences	Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)
Potential of the researcher to reach or re-enforce professional maturity/independence during the fellowship		
<b>Weighting</b>		
<b>50%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Priority in case of proposals with the same score (<i>ex aequo</i>)</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**NB: An overall threshold of 70% will be applied to the total weighted score.**

### The evaluation is based on the following criteria:

- ❖ excellence 50%
- ❖ impact 30%
- ❖ implementation 20%

### Scoring

- 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

### Evaluation panels and review process

The evaluation process of MSCA-IF applications begins with an eligibility check. The next step is forwarding the application to three individual experts for remote evaluation, followed by a joint discussion and ranking. When complete, the results and evaluation summary report (ESR) are sent to the applicants, generally about 5 months after the deadline.

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## J. Proposal Submission:

- Proposals must be submitted electronically, using the European Commission's Online.
- Submission Service accessible via the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal. (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/msca-if-2020>)
- The proposal should be prepared by the researcher in cooperation with the host organisation, which is represented by the main supervisor of the proposal. The experienced researcher and the supervisor must be two different people.
- Proposals can be created and submitted by the supervisor or the researcher. However, the submission of the proposal and other actions that follow this procedure (such as withdrawal) fall under the final responsibility of the host organisation as represented by the main supervisor.
- Proposals must be submitted before **Wednesday 09 September 2020, 17:00:00 Brussels time**. To avoid missing the deadline, we encourage you to submit your proposal as soon as possible, as it remains possible to reopen, edit and resubmit your proposal as many times as required before the call deadline. Only the last submitted version will be evaluated.
- Only one proposal per individual researcher may be submitted to this call. In the event of multiple submissions, the Research Executive Agency (REA) will contact in the same email both the supervisor(s) and researcher, who will then choose the proposal to be evaluated:
  - In case no reply is received, the first submitted proposal will be evaluated.
  - In case of disagreement between the supervisor and the researcher, the supervisor's opinion prevails.
  - In case of disagreement between the supervisors of the proposals, the first submitted proposal will be evaluated.
  - Any other submitted proposals involving the same researcher will not be evaluated.

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## **K. Important Points:**

1. Each beneficiary (and partner organisation for Global Fellowships) must have a Participant Identification Code (PIC) and the PIC code with a status “validated”.

2. Understand what is required for the submission

### **Administrative forms (Part A)**

- Part A constitutes an integral part of your Proposal; it is the part of the Proposal, where you will be asked for certain administrative details that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of your Proposal.
- Part B1 Template: Section 1. Excellence, Section 2. Impact & Section 3. Implementation
- PS. Part B1 will be used by the **Evaluators to undertake their assessment**. It is importance to familiarize yourself with the evaluation process as outlined in the MSCA-IF. The maximum total length for this document is 10 pages. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the submitted **PDF documents** are readable.

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## **K. Important Points (Cont.):**

- Part B2 template
  - Section 4. CV of the Experienced Researcher (5 pages)
  - Section 5. Capacities of the participating organisations (1 page for the overview and 1 page for each participating organisation)
  - Section 6. Ethical Aspects
  - Section 7. Letters of Commitment (GF only)
  - PS. Part B2 is not evaluated but used for further information for Part B1., No overall page limit will be applied to this document.

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## **L. Key tips for the proposal template and layout**

### **(1) General Points**

- Acronym: Use a self-explanatory title and a memorable acronym. Don't forget that you will not be able to change the Acronym once you created your proposal on the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal. If you want to change it before the deadline you have to re-create a new submission form.
- Ensure that the Acronym is short, easy to pronounce, easy to remember by the Evaluators, and that it cannot be construed as inappropriate in English or in another language.
- The proposal acronym and the fellowship type should be used as a header on each page. There is no cover page for the acronym & title.
- For resubmissions, don't just use Evaluation Summary Report from the previous submission.
  - Review the proposal as a whole to find room for improvement.
  - Your new proposal is not being evaluated in comparison with last year's.
  - Evaluators will have access to last year's ESR after they have marked this year's application.
  - Make sure that the state-of-the art is updated

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## L. Key tips for the proposal template and layout (Cont.)

### (2) Proposal Template

- Use the proposal template provided including the exact sub-headings: • It matches the evaluation template and helps you to put the right information in the right place for the evaluators to find it.
- Evaluators use a “checklist” approach to marking – if the information is not in the correct section, they will give you “zero” for that sub-criterion.
- Insert the proposal acronym in the Header
- Put Page Numbers (format Page X of Y) in the Footer

### (3) Proposal Layout

- Use charts, diagrams, text boxes, figures to explain aspects of the project. Do not just use blocks of text.
- If needed, use tables for illustrating the core text of the proposal. These break up the text and also save space (font size 8).
- Be aware that tables cannot be used to contain the core text itself (i.e. if you insert long chunks of text in tables for the sole purpose of saving space, REA might contact you after the deadline and ask you to transfer your information from the table into the core text).
- Use the correct font size (11), single line spacing and page margins (min 15 mm) as indicated
- Use highlighting where appropriate (bold, underline, italics) but don't overdo it!
- Literature references in footnotes, font size 8 or 9.

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## L. Key tips for the proposal template and layout (Cont.)

### (4) Proposal language & tips

- Avoid jargon. The evaluators might not be experts in your research area.
- Explain any abbreviations. Use simple clear text, make sure that it 'reads well'.
- Avoid long sentences.
- Avoid too much repetition. Sign-post to other parts of the proposal if necessary.
- Do not copy & paste information from other documents/websites. Instead tailor information to fit with your proposal.
- Do not provide web links to explain information (evaluators are not required to follow links). Instead place the relevant information into your text.
- Be consistent with terms used (for example, you can talk in 1st person (I, me), 3rd person (the researcher, the ER, the fellow), use the same term throughout



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## M. TEMPLATE – LETTER of COMMITMENT – GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP



Date: .../.../20xx

Subject: Letter of Commitment for Global fellowship application for **Dr./Mr./Ms. X**

Dear **Ms/Mr/Dr/Prof.**

This letter sets out our commitment to host and work with the researcher **xxx** on the project **xxx** in order to **xxx** (the aim of the project)

Hereby as an **academic / or non-academic organisation** we confirm our commitment to host **Mr/Mrs/Dr./Prof. xxx** in the project **xx**, to be submitted by **xxx**, in response to the H2020-MSCA-IF-2020 call, with a closing date of 9 September 2020.

**Our Organization / Department ( name)**

..... (paragraph about the institution: 3-4 sentences to describe main competencies and research/training activities).

If the MSCA-IF application is funded by European Commission, with the budget provided, we confirm that we will actively participate in the project and support the fellow (or the name of the fellow) in their professional career development, specifically through the following activities and measures:

- We will host the fellow (or the name of the fellow) and provide adequate research and training opportunities to him/her, including scientific and relevant non-scientific training with a dedicated supervisor(s) **name(s)**
- We will ensure adequate supervision to the fellow hosted at our organisation (note the name of the supervisor as well)
- **The fellow will have access to all necessary equipment**
- We will allow the fellow to leave for a **secondment to xxx institution (if applicable)**
- **The fellow will follow all relevant HR induction course, safety courses etc. and will benefit from the assistance of institutional supports - - - such as the TTO, Communications officer, Finance officer.**
- (It is expected that the text demonstrates the will to actively participate in the (identified) proposed action and the precise role. **So please add some more sentences about the precise role of the institution on your specific project.**)

We fully support this application and hope for a successful outcome. (or something similar)

Yours sincerely,

(Name, signature, stamp by legal representative)