



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and How to Apply

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1. The MSCA Approach



- **Key goal:** Increase researchers' employability and career prospects
- International **mobility**, **inter-sectoral** and **international** cooperation, and excellent training
- Promote attractive working and employment conditions
- Open to researchers of **all nationalities and all career stages**
- Open to **all fields of scientific research**: “bottom-up” approach
- Open to **research-performing institutions** in all sectors
- **Annual calls** and **competitive funding**

2. The MSCA and You

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions



ITN Innovative Training Networks

What does it offer?

High-quality research training delivered through international and interdisciplinary networks, industrial doctorates or joint doctorates

Who applies?

International networks of research organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors

Who is funded?

Researchers at doctoral level (less than four years of full-time research experience and no doctoral degree)

Multi-beneficiary
50% of MSCA budget



IF Individual Fellowships

What does it offer?

Opportunities to work on personal research projects by moving between countries and possibly sectors to acquire new skills

Who applies?

Individual researchers together with the host organisation

Who is funded?

Postdoctoral researchers

Mono-beneficiary
30% of MSCA budget



RISE Research and Innovation Staff Exchange

What does it offer?

The exchange of staff members involved in research and innovation to develop sustainable collaborative projects and the transfer of knowledge

Who applies?

International networks of research organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors

Who is funded?

Researchers, technical, administrative and managerial staff of any nationality and at all career levels

Multi-beneficiary
10% of MSCA budget



COFUND Co-Funding of Regional, National and International Programmes

What does it offer?

Regional, national or international programmes to foster excellence in researchers' training, mobility and career development

Who applies?

Organisations funding or managing doctoral programmes or fellowship programmes

Who is funded?

Researchers at doctoral and postdoctoral level

Mono-beneficiary
10% of MSCA budget

3. Who do the MSCA support?



Early Stage Researchers (ESR)

- ≤ 4 years FTE research experience
- No PhD

**ITN
RISE
COFUND**

Experienced Researchers (ER)

- ≥ 4 years FTE research experience
- or
- Have a PhD

**IF
RISE
COFUND**

Other staff

- Research managers, technicians, etc.

RISE

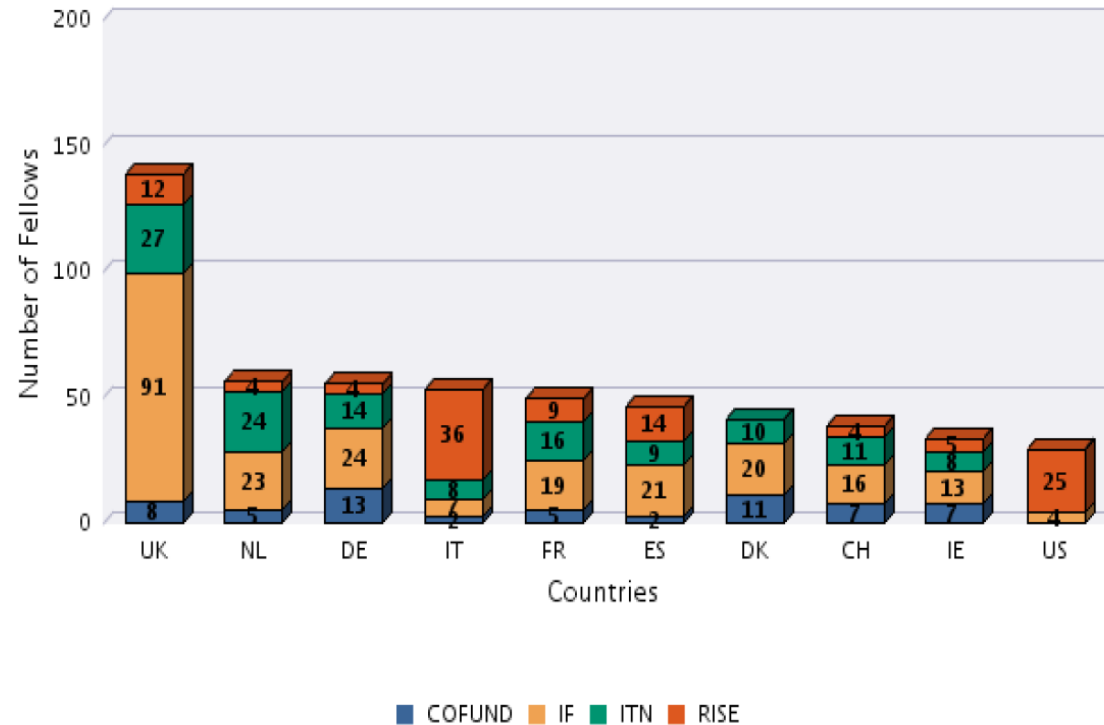
4. *EU Member States and H2020 ACs*



**Host beneficiary can be located in any EU Member State or
Horizon 2020 Associated Country**

5. *International Participation*

US fellows (nationals) grouped by country of destination (top 10 countries)



- MSCA is truly a **global programme**
- **37% of all MSCA researchers** are from outside the EU (140 countries represented)
- **704 US researchers** in MSCA so far (2014-20)
- **US is #1** non-EU/AC participating country by far (1272 participations)
- **University of Illinois: 9 IF & 14 RISE** researchers

6. *Innovative Training Networks - ITN*



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- **Multi-beneficiary networks** recruit and train Early-Stage Researchers (<4yr)
- Researchers apply to host institutions (3-36m) and work on **personalized projects**
- Strong **non-academic sector** component, e.g. European Industrial Doctorates
- **Secondments encouraged**, and possible globally
- **Success rate: 7%** (150 ITNs / 2000 researchers)

7. *Individual Fellowships - IF*



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- **One researcher**, one host (unless GF)
- **Experienced researchers:** PhD (or at least 4 years FTE research experience)
- **12-36 months duration** (24 months standard)
- **Secondments encouraged;** field work and short stays possible globally
- Success rate: **ca.15%** (1500 per year)
- **Short proposals** (max 10 pages)
- **Flexibility**, e.g. start dates, part-time work

8. *Research and Innovation Staff Exchange: RISE*



- Promotes **international** and **intersectoral cooperation**
- Multi-beneficiary research network sharing knowledge through **staff exchanges**
- **Application by network of host organisations** (max duration 4 years)
- Eligible researchers **must already be employed** at the host institution
- **EU funding covers mobility costs of staff exchange (periods of 1-12 months)**
- Success rate: **ca. 25%** (70-80 projects p.a.)

9. Cofunding of National, Regional and International Programmes - COFUND



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- Promotes **MSCA best practice** in different institutions and regions
- Single beneficiary **doctoral and post-doctoral** research training programmes
- Researchers apply **directly to host institution**
- **EU co-funding** (minimum income rule)
- **Success rate: ca. 25%** (ca 40 projects p.a. and ca. 1000 researchers)

10. Examples of MSCA Funding Levels (2020)

MSCA Programme	Researcher Unit Cost (Euro per person month)			Institutional Unit Cost	
	Living Allowance	Mobility Allowance	Family Allowance	Research, Training and Networking	Management and Indirect Costs
Innovative Training Networks (Doctoral)	3270*	600	500	1800	1200
Individual Fellowships (Postdoctoral)	4880*	600	500	800	650

*Gross amounts, subject to country correction coefficient, e.g. DE (97.0%), DK (135.0%), ES (95.4%), EL (88.7%), FR (115.7%), IE (115.6%), IT (104.4%), NL (107.9%), PL (75.5%), RO (68.8%)

11. How do I Apply?

ITN/COFUND

- Application to **host institution**
- Vacancies advertised on **EurAxess** jobs portal
- Project-specific requirements

IF

- Application **directly to EC**
- Must be **submitted with proposed host** in EU/AC
- Use your network!

RISE

- Application **by consortium**
- Researchers must **already be employed** at host institution
- Use your network!

International mobility requirement: you must not have resided / carried out main activity (studies, work) in the country of host beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to Call deadline.

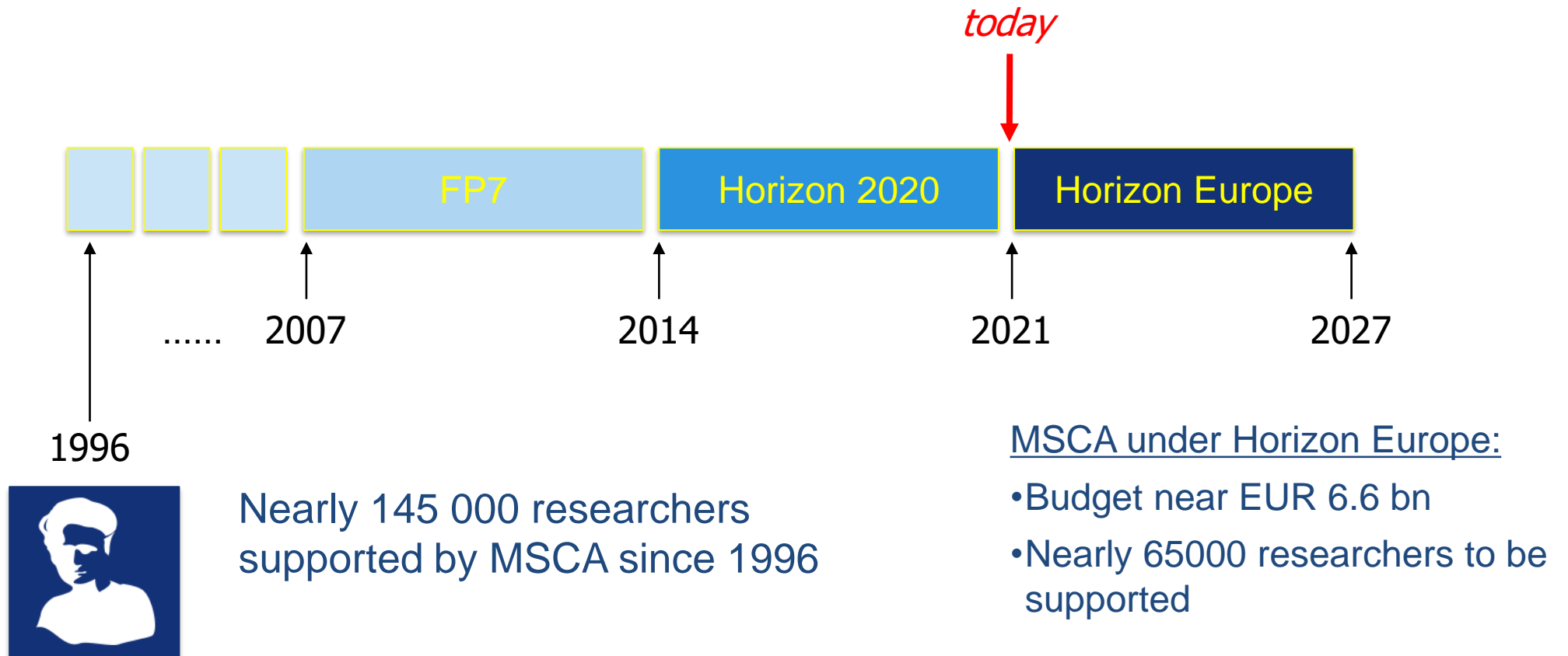
12. *The Evaluation*

- Specific **evaluation criteria** differ per action; structured around **Excellence** (50%), **Impact** (30%) and **Implementation** (20%)
- Quality, credibility and innovative aspects of proposal are key (see Work Prog)
- Proposals allocated to one of **8 Scientific Panels** (LIF, MAT, PHY, ENG, CHE, ENV, SOC, ECO); funding distributed according to no. of proposals received
- **Key words** chosen during application procedure
- **Single-stage evaluation**: each proposal evaluated by **at least 3 experts**

13. *Good to Know*

- **Time-to-Grant:** 5m + 3m (counted from Call closure date)
- **Flexible project start dates (for IF):** up to 24m after Call closure
- **Part-time work** is possible (subject to approval)
- **Secondments** encouraged (especially inter-sectoral)
- **EU Funding & Tenders Portal:** reference point for proposal submission, call documentation and for “partner search”

14. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) (1996-2021)



15. Horizon Europe (2021-2027)



- Evolution, not revolution
- Discussions still ongoing

But expect...

- Similar budget size, budget distribution, allowances
- Rebranding, simplification and harmonisation of actions (mobility rule, secondments)
- Demand management measures
- Stronger focus on supervision and career development

16. MSCA Rebranding

Horizon 2020		Horizon Europe
<i>Innovative Training Networks (ITN)</i>	➔	MSCA Doctoral Networks
<i>Individual Fellowships (IF)</i>	➔	MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships
<i>Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE)</i>	➔	MSCA Staff Exchanges
<i>COFUND</i>	➔	MSCA COFUND

17. MSCA Doctoral Networks

Goal: support excellent doctoral programmes, equip researchers with the right combination of competences to enhance their career perspectives

Significant changes

- Doctoral researchers only (mandatory enrolment in doctoral programme)
- One single action with incentives for Industrial or Joint Doctorates
- Maximum of 360 person months (i.e. 10 doctoral researchers) per project to be able to fund more projects
- Resubmission restrictions applying as of 2022 for applications receiving a score below 80%

18. *Postdoctoral Fellowships*

Goal: enhance the creative and innovative potential of researchers with a PhD and who wish to acquire new skills through advanced training and 3i mobility

Significant changes

- Doctoral degree: eligibility requirement
- Limit to applicants with max 8 years postdoctoral research experience with exceptions: years outside research, career breaks, time of research experience in third country before reintegration.
- Restrict resubmissions (where score <70%, as of 2022)
- Additional 6 month placements in non-academic sector
- Encourage secondments worldwide

19. MSCA Staff Exchanges

Goal: promote innovative 3i collaboration in R&I through exchanging any type of staff and sharing knowledge and ideas at all stages of the innovation chain

Significant changes

- Reduced size (max 360 person months)
- Inter-disciplinary secondments possible within Europe (max 1/3 of project's person-months)

20. MSCA COFUND

Goal: spread best practices of the MSCA by promoting high standards in the recruitment and working conditions, introduce sustainable structuring effects

Significant changes

- Target groups: doctoral candidates or postdoctoral researchers (PhD degree)
- The European Union's contribution increases to cover minimum remuneration and can be used more flexibly.
- Introduction of an MSCA Cofund Seal of Excellence

21. Next Calls

2021 Call	Preliminary planning*
MSCA Doctoral Networks	04 May 2021 - 16 Nov 2021
MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships	15 Apr 2021 - 15 Sep 2021
MSCA Staff Exchanges	07 Oct 2021 - 09 Mar 2022
MSCA COFUND	12 Oct 2021-10 Feb 2022

* *To be confirmed. Formal adoption of WP 2021-2022 and opening of first calls possibly for mid-April 2021*

** *ITN and COFUND projects selected in Horizon 2020 can publish vacancies during next months/years!!*

Consult the **European Commission's Funding & Tenders Portal**
for call documentation and to submit your proposal



22. MSCA Career in Science...



“If I hadn’t gotten [the MSCA IF funding] I would probably have dropped out.”

Professor Stefan W. HELL

Nobel Prize Winner, Chemistry 2014

MSCA-IF Fellow (Uni. Turku, 1996-1997)



23. MSCA Career in Science...

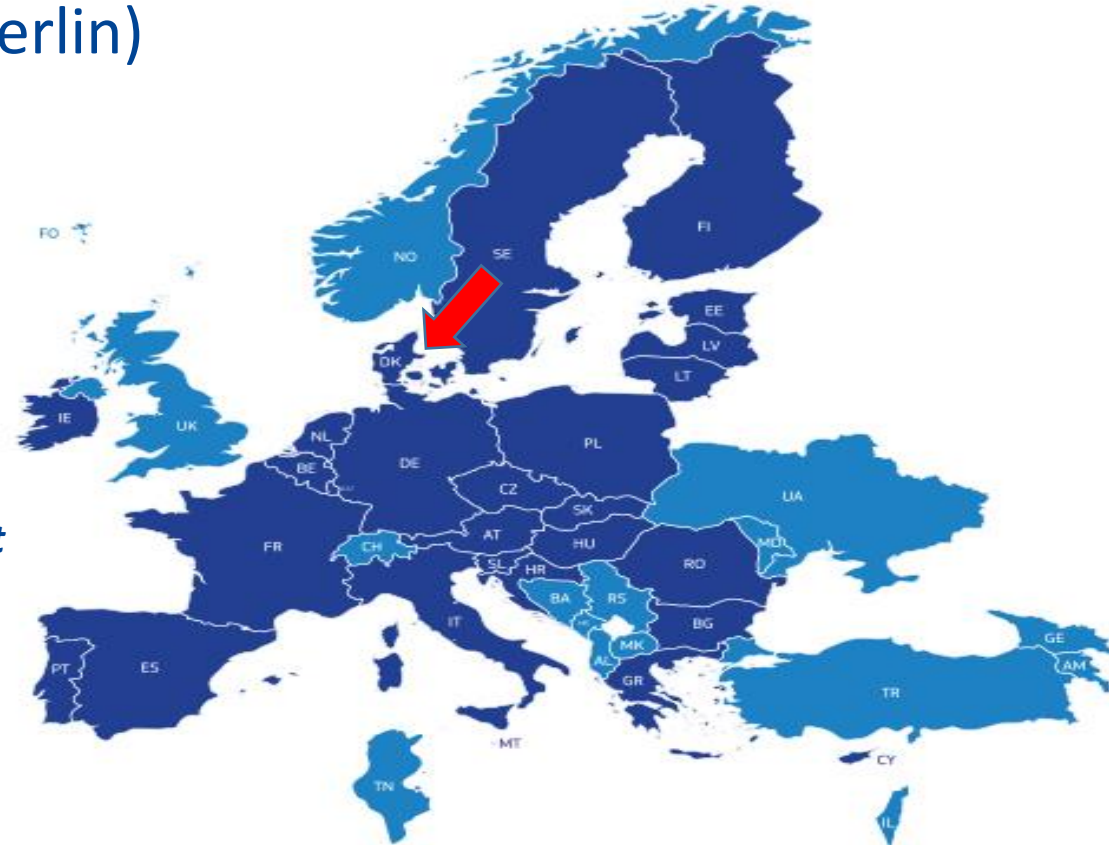
Alyssa FINDLAY, PhD



Associate editor, Nature Climate Change (Berlin)

IF SedSulphOx “Quantification of oxidative sulphur cycling in marine sediments”

“Thanks to EU funds, I had the freedom within my research to focus my interests and career goals, and acquired skills that benefitted not only my ability to conduct research on the particular subject of my project, but also my ability to judge and understand research on a variety of different topics”



AARHUS
UNIVERSITY

24. MSCA Career outside Science...



“[MSCA-IF] allowed me to choose my ideal research group, explore my own ideas and acquire and develop the skills and tools for my career as an independent scientist.”

Dr Tiago Brandão Rodrigues
Minister of Education of Portugal
MSCA-IF Fellow (2010-12)

Useful Links

Funding & Tenders Portal

For the Work Programme, Guides for Applicants, proposal templates, Evaluation Criteria, FAQs, Proposal Submission.
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

MSCA Website

Guide to different MSCA, Testimonials, Contact details
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>

MSCA Pocket Guide

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/758a6af6-82ad-11ea-bf12-01aa75ed71a1>

MSCA National Contact Points

For national-level advice, guidance and assistance on applications
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp>

Research Enquiry Service

For all Horizon 2020-related questions
https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/contact/research-enquiry-service-and-participant-validation_en

EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/>

MCAA (Marie Curie Alumni association) // North America Chapter

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu> // <https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/groups/north-america-chapter>

US country page

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_localsupp_usa_en.pdf

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Nothing in life is to be feared,
it is only to be understood.
Now is the time to understand
more, so that **we may fear less.**

– Marie Curie



Thanks!!