

# MSCA PF webinar series: 2

Criterion: Excellence

# Evaluation criteria

Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
Quality and pertinence of the <b>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 the <b>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 the <b>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, competences and skills</b>		50%

# Proposal for MSCA postdoctoral fellowships

## Part A administrative forms are filled on-line:

- General information
  - Title, scientific area, keywords, abstract, declarations
- Information on participants
  - Beneficiary, supervisor, researcher
- Budget (is generated automatically)
- Ethics and Security
- Other questions

## Part B of the proposal consists of two PDF documents:

- *Document 1 – max 10 pages*
  1. **EXCELLENCE: research, training, supervision, researcher**
  2. **IMPACT:** impact on career; scientific, economic, societal impact; dissemination and communication
  3. **IMPLEMENTATION:** work plan, infrastructures
- *Document 2 – no overall page limit*
  4. **CV OF THE RESEARCHER:** max 5 p
  5. **CAPACITIES OF THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS:** max 1 p for beneficiary and max ½ p for associated partner
  6. **ADDITIONAL ETHICS INFORMATION**
  7. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SECURITY SCREENING**
  8. **LETTERS OF COMMITMENT OF ASSOCIATED PARTNERS (GF + PLACEMENT):** *only for Global Fellowship and placement*

# Criterion: Excellence (1)

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

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

- Describe the quality and pertinence of the R&I objectives; are the objectives measurable and verifiable? Are they realistically achievable?
- Describe how your project goes beyond the state-of-the-art, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious.

# Some suggestions

- Start with an introductory paragraph that
  - States the overall aim and the main players in the proposal
  - Raises the interest of the evaluator, invites to read the proposal
- Add graphs or illustrations – but **only** if these help to convey your message
- Do not just state that your research is important and novel – add proof, arguments, examples, numbers that help the evaluator see and decide on its importance and novelty
- Master the balance between ambition and feasibility

# Objectives



Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound
Make sure your goals are focused and identify a tangible outcome. Without the specifics, your goal runs the risk of being too vague to achieve. Being more specific helps you identify what you want to achieve. You should also identify what resources you are going to leverage to achieve success.	You should have some clear definition of success. This will help you to evaluate achievement and also progress. This component often answers how much or how many and highlights how you'll know you achieved your goal.	Your goal should be challenging, but still reasonable to achieve. Reflecting on this component can reveal any potential barriers that you may need to overcome to realize success. Outline the steps you're planning to take to achieve your goal.	This is about getting real with yourself and ensuring what you're trying to achieve is worthwhile to you. Determining if this is aligned to your values and if it is a priority focus for you. This helps you answer the why.	Every goal needs a target date, something that motivates you to really apply the focus and discipline necessary to achieve it. This answers when. It's important to set a realistic time frame to achieve your goal to ensure you don't get discouraged.

# Criterion: Excellence (2)

**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)

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

- Overall methodology
- Integration of methods and disciplines to pursue the objectives
- Gender dimension and other diversity aspects
- Open science practices
- Research data management and management of other research outputs

# Some suggestions

- Details are the key – be precise and thorough
- Page limit is strict:
  - Never sacrifice readability!
  - Get rid of empty sentences
- The different parts of the proposal are interconnected and should be coherent. Methodology is the bridge between your objectives and your work plan and also serves as one of the bases for training.
- Identify already here the major methodological challenges and outline measures to overcome them
- Help the evaluator: they have to assess the interdisciplinary aspects, gender dimension and open science practices. Don't leave it up to them to find, assume, disentangle



# Criterion: Excellence (3)

## 1.3 Quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

- Describe the qualifications and experience of the supervisor(s). Provide information regarding the supervisors' level of experience on the research topic proposed and their track record of work, including main international collaborations, as well as the level of experience in supervising/training, especially at advanced level (i.e. PhD and postdoctoral researchers).
- Planned training activities for the researcher (scientific aspects, management/organisation, horizontal and key transferrable skills...).
- For European Fellowships: two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and host organisation.
- For Global Fellowships: three-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher, host organisation, and associated partner for outgoing phase.
- Rationale and added-value of the non-academic placement (if applicable).

# Supervision

- The better qualified the supervisor, the better – but it is not a competition of supervisors' seniority
  - Show the match between the proposed project and the supervisors' profile
  - Explain other qualities why the chosen supervisor (and the team) are the best match for your career development
- Be aware of the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions guidelines on supervision](#) and mention them (but not just superficially)
- This section is also the place to mention and explain the benefits of the non-academic placement

# Training plan

1.

- Where would you like to be, career-wise, in 2—5—10 years?

2.

- Evaluate your CV, find your strengths and gaps (skills, knowledge)

3.

- Write a training plan to fill the gaps

4.

- Describe, how the host will benefit from your strengths

# Criterion: Excellence (4)

## 1.4 Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills

- Discuss the quality and appropriateness of the researcher's existing professional experience in relation to the proposed research project.

# Some suggestions

- This section is assessed together with your CV
- Demonstrate that you have the skills and knowledge to carry out your project and develop into an independent researcher
- Don't repeat information given in the CV, but highlight, showcase, aggregate, put into context

# Comments of evaluators on Excellence

## POSITIVE

- The state of art and the literature review are properly detailed, with enough references to the related scientific literature. The novelty of the research is soundly demonstrated throughout the whole proposal.
- Relevant objectives are clearly outlined and case study choice is well justified as well as the need of the research to tackle existing knowledge gap.
- The methodology to be used is excellently thought through, with a very good and detailed experimental design and put in context with the objectives.
- The original and innovative aspects of the proposal are convincing. The choice of the case studies is well justified and presented against the background of the previous research and results achieved.
- This project is interdisciplinary in essence, strategically combining multiple research domains and involving a range of highly interdisciplinary methods that excellently complement each other.

## NEGATIVE

- The overview of the project and the state of the art are not presented with sufficient focus and clarity to demonstrate the credibility the proposed research.
- The three objectives of the project are overly ambitious and it is not convincingly demonstrated how they would be fulfilled.
- The overall objective is limited to a case study of the target country, so its contribution to a broader geographical area is insufficiently discussed.
- The proposed methodology, although detailed in the description of the tasks, does not sufficiently explain the techniques proposed or the justification for their selection. Most importantly, it is difficult to establish the relationship between the tasks in the methodology and the research objectives and how these will be achieved through the consecution of each task.
- The innovative aspects of the research project are not convincingly demonstrated as the proposal lacks the appropriate level of details.

# Series of webinars in 2022

1. Wednesday, **18 May**, at 15-17:  
Structure of the MSCA PF application. Ethics, Open science, gender aspects in research. CV.
2. Thursday, 19 May, at 15-17:  
“Excellence” chapter of the MSCA PF application.
3. Thursday, **26 May**, at 15-17:  
“Impact” chapter of the MSCA PF application.
4. Friday, **27 May**, at 15-17:  
“Implementation” chapter of the MSCA PF application.
5. Wednesday, **1 June**, at 14-16:  
Evaluators’ view on MSCA PF applications. Evaluators of MSCA PF proposals share their experience.