A proposal for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions in Horizon Europe

European Commission
DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
MSCA unit
MSCA key features

• **Support the mobility, training and career development** of researchers from **all over the world** through excellent doctoral programmes, postdoc fellowships and collaborative projects.

• Participation of **non-academic sector** strongly encouraged, especially industry and SMEs.

• For researchers at **every stage** of their career.

• Coverage for all domains of research (**bottom-up approach**).

• Promotion of **attractive working and employment conditions** (financing rate of up to 100%).
Horizon Europe: Preliminary structure

**Pillar 1**
Excellent Science

- European Research Council
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
- Research Infrastructures

**Pillar 2**
Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness

- Health
- Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry and Space
- Climate, Energy and Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

- Joint Research Centre

**Pillar 3**
Innovative Europe

- European Innovation Council
- European innovation ecosystems
- European Institute of Innovation and Technology

**Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area**

- Widening participation and spreading excellence
- Reforming and Enhancing the European R&I system

**Excellent Science (Pillar 1)**: reinforcing and extending the excellence of the Union’s science base
The MSCA in Horizon Europe

- Overall: **continuation**
- Creating **impact** on researchers, institutions, systems
- Building upon the strong **international** dimension of the programme and reinforcing its **inter-sectoral** and **interdisciplinary** characters
- **5 areas of intervention:**
  - mobility of researchers
  - training of researchers
  - strengthening human capital across the ERA (by spreading best practices across institutions and systems)
  - facilitating synergies
  - promoting public outreach

The Commission proposes a budget of **EUR 6.8 billion** for the MSCA.
The MSCA in Horizon Europe: Policy Background, Guiding principles and Priorities

- Contribution to the European Research Area (ERA) and European Education Area (EEA)
- Contribution to the EU external policy objectives
- Commitment to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers + Innovative Doctoral Training Principles
- Underlying Principles: Open Science, Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI)
- Contribution to the European Green Deal objectives
- Contribution to the Climate Action target of Horizon Europe (35% of budget)
Towards greener MSCA in Horizon Europe

• MSCA: bottom-up programme with a tangible impact at policy level by setting standards and driving structural change

• Objectives:
  • strive for a significant reduction in the carbon footprint of MSCA projects
  • increase awareness on environmental issues
  • promote sustainable behaviors and policies
  • support policy and decision making

• Possible actions:
  • MSCA portfolio analysis
  • Thematic clustering
  • MSCA Green Charter
  • Green edition of the Researchers’ Night
  • MSCA Green Awards
  • Guidance and training, etc.
Evolution in the MSCA’s implementation

- **Streamlined actions**, clearer identity
- **Simpler** rules, **fine-tuned** definitions, **harmonised** conditions
- Continuation and expansion of **simplified form of grants**
- **Demand management** to maintain high-quality and attractiveness
- Strengthen **structuring effects** on host institutions
- More guidance on **supervision** and **exposure beyond academia**
- Improved internal coherence between actions
- Reinforced synergies within Horizon Europe and between programmes: **Erasmus+**, **ERC**, **EIT**, **COST**, **EIC**, **Research Infrastructures**, …
- Synergies between funding instruments: **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**; **European Social Fund (ESF+)**

*The information in this presentation is still subject to change*
MSCA 2021-2027

1. MSCA Doctoral Networks → networks training doctoral candidates
2. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships → postdoctoral researchers
3. MSCA Staff Exchanges → any type of research(-related) staff
4. MSCA COFUND → co-funding training programmes
5. MSCA and Citizens → public outreach events
1. MSCA Doctoral Networks (1/2)

- MSCA will continue to support doctoral candidates and programmes

- Integrating objectives of 3 sub-actions into a single action
  - Incentives for industrial or joint doctorates
    - Increased number of person-months
    - Industrial doctorate possible between entities in one country
  - Pre-agreement for joint degrees required

- 4 years for project implementation (no change)
- All fellows enrolled in a doctoral training
- Funding for max. 36 researcher-months per individual doctoral candidate (no change)
1. MSCA Doctoral Networks (2/2)

- **Manage demand**, improve success rates
  - Reduced number of fellow-months in project
    - 360 person months
    - up to 540 in case of industrial or joint doctorates
  - Restricted resubmissions below quality threshold
    - Less than 80% in previous call evaluation
    - Resubmission: 70% of the consortium composition and 70% of the application text

- **Guidelines for supervisors**
2. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (1/2)

- Continue **supporting post-doctoral research** and careers

- Continue funding **all research domains** including areas of research covered by the **EURATOM Treaty**

- Clarify and simplify, a **single action**
  - **Two destinations**: European and Global
  - **Replacement of panels** (Career Restart, Reintegration, Society and Enterprise) with **incentives**

- **Duration** (no change): **European Destination**: 12-24 months (additional up to 6 months for non-academic sector)
  
  **Global destination**: 24 -36 (12-24 outgoing & 12 months return phase in Europe)

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2. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (2/2)

- Develop skills needed for academia and beyond
  - Intensify exposure/secondments to training in entities beyond academia
  - Improved guidance towards career development (plan & supervision)

- Managing the increasing demand to maintain high-quality selection & improve success rate
  - Limit research experience – up to 6 years of research experience after PhD (with possible exceptions)
  - Require PhD degree
  - Restrict resubmissions below quality threshold

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3. MSCA Staff Exchanges

- Lean and flexible tool to support **collaborative R&I projects**
- **Most international action** under MSCA
- Continue supporting staff exchanges, **open to any type of staff**
- **International, intersectoral, interdisciplinary** secondments
- Emphasis on the **added-value of the collaboration** itself
- **4 years** for project implementation (no change)

What’s new?

- Interdisciplinary secondments possible within Europe (max 1/3 of project’s person-months)
- Number of person-months reduced to 360 (to make projects more manageable)

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4. MSCA COFUND

- Continue **co-funding** national, regional, institutional schemes for doctoral training and postdoctoral fellowships
- Introduce **sustainable structuring effects**, spread best practice
- Greater focus on **new beneficiaries** and **new training programmes**
- Encourage **synergies** with Structural Funds
- **EU contribution:**
  - Simplification. It will cover **minimum remuneration** (70% living + mobility allowance)
  - Limited to **EUR 10 million** per beneficiary per call (unchanged)
  - Maximum duration: **60 months** (unchanged)
Simplification and harmonisation

• **Single mobility rule**
Researchers may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their (main) host organisation for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the applicable reference date.

• **Fine-tuned definitions**
Doctoral candidates (instead of ESR) & postdoctoral researchers (instead of ER)

• **1/3 maximum duration of secondments**
Harmonisation across the schemes

• **Alignment with the rest of Horizon Europe**
Associated partners (instead of partner organisations) & affiliated entities (instead of entities with a capital or legal link)
5. MSCA and Citizens

- Continuation of the European Researchers' Night
- **Extension** to existing outreach events
  - Supporting also other science festivals and outreach events with EU-added value

*in 2019: 1.6 million visitors*
Other activities

- **Study** analysing brain drain and propose appropriate solutions
- Researchers at Schools
- Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)
- Continued support to the MSCA NCPs network
- Researchers @ Risk
- MSCA international support
- Seal of Excellence for MSCA Postdocs and MSCA COFUND
Links

Marie Curie Actions Website
http://ec.europa.eu/mariecurieactions

Participant Portal (applications, documents)
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal

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