European Funding Opportunities for Postdocs in Horizon 2020

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships and ERC Starting Grants

Dunja Hofmann, KoWi
KoWi – EU Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations

information, consulting & training on EU research & innovation funding

service platform for our supporting association* focussing on universities

connected on European level offices in Bonn & Brussels

* Association for the Promotion of European and International Cooperation in Science e.V.

## Part I – Excellent Science
1. European Research Council (ERC)
2. Future and Emerging Technologies (FET)
3. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)
4. European Research Infrastructures, including e-infrastructures

## Part II – Industrial Leadership
1. Leadership in Enabling & Industrial Technologies (LEIT)
   - Information and Communication Technologies
   - Nanotechnologies, Advanced Materials, Advanced Manufacturing and Processing and Biotechnology
   - Space
2. Access to Risk Finance
3. Innovation in SMEs

## Part III – Societal Challenges
1. Health, demographic change and wellbeing
2. Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy
3. Secure, clean and efficient energy
4. Smart, green and integrated transport
5. Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials
6. Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies
7. Protecting freedom and security

## Part IV
- Spreading excellence & widening participation
- Science with & for Society
- Non-nuclear direct actions of the Joint Research Centre (JRC)

## Part V
- The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
Horizon 2020 Budget – Excellent Science

ERC: 13,1
MSCA: 6,2
FET: 2,6
RI: 2,4

Source: REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the European Fund for Strategic Investments

total: ca. 74.8 bn. (before EFSI cuts: 77 bn.)
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Aims

- Strengthening the European Research Area (ERA)
  - Encouraging people to embark on research careers in Europe
- Increasing Mobility through exchanging staff, knowledge and technology ("triple-i-dimension")
  - International
  - Interdisciplinary
  - Intersectoral
- Promoting the researchers’ career development
  - Providing training for key competences in science and industry
  - Creating fair and attractive working conditions
Marie Skłodowska-Curie

Individual Fellowships

Global Fellowship

European Fellowship
Horizon 2020: Open to the World

Funding from H2020

- EU Member States (MS)
- Associated Countries (AC): e.g. Switzerland, Turkey, Norway, Western Balkan
- Third Countries (TC): selected countries from Africa, Asia & Latin America

Participation without funding

- Third Countries: other industrialized countries (e.g. Japan, USA) and China, Brazil, Russia i.a.
Individual Fellowships – Principles

Who?
- Postdocs or Experienced Researchers with at least 4 years of full-time research experience ("experienced researchers – ERs")

What?
- Implementation of an independent research project in Europe (MS or AC) or in a Third Country (TC)

How?
- Fellow writes individual application jointly with Host Institution; proposal is submitted jointly with supervisor
- Research & skills training at Host Institution
- Optional secondment(s)
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Mobility Rule

Fellow has lived or worked $\leq 12$ months within the last 3 years in the potential host country.

A French researcher has lived in Germany for the last 4 years

Not eligible for a Fellowship in Germany!

Eligible for a Fellowship in France and other countries
# European Fellowships (EF)

Research project in Europe (MS/AC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Postdocs or researchers with at least 4 years of research experience (full-time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>No restrictions (except RI panel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility rule</td>
<td>May not have lived/worked more than 12 months within the last 3 years in host country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Secondments        | • Optional for 3 to 6 months to the academic or non-academic sector **in Europe** (MS/AC)  
                     | • Can be divided (e.g. 2 x 3 months)                                              |
| Project            | 1 – 2 years (3 years possible for CAR panel)                                      |
European Fellowships (EF): Multidisciplinary Panels

**Career Restart - CAR**
- Researchers who have **not been active in research** for at least 12 months within the last 18 months before the call deadline

**Reintegration - RI**
- Researchers **returning to Europe** after a research phase in a Third Country

**Society & Enterprise - SE**
- Applicants with a **non-academic Host** Institution

Fellow has lived or worked \( \leq 3 \text{ years} \) within the last \( 5 \text{ years} \) in the potential host country
Global Fellowships (GF)
Research project in a Third Country and Europe (MS/AC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Postdocs or researchers with at least 4 years of research experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>MS/AC nationals and long-term residents (must have lived/worked ≥5 years in MS/AC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility rule</td>
<td>May not have lived/worked more than 12 months within the last 3 years in host country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Secondments       | • Optional for 3 to 6 months to the academic or non-academic sector in Europe  
                    • Can be divided (e.g. 2 x 3 months)  
                    • 3 months start phase in Europe possible |
| Project           | 1 – 2 years in TC + 1 year mandatory return phase to Europe |
Basic Contract for IF*

European Commission

Grant Agreement

Beneficiary

Host Institution (MS/AC)

Work contract (usually 100%)

Fellow

* without partner organisations
## Financing

- **Living allowance ER**
  (*country correction coefficient*)
  - **Fellow**
    - 4.880 x 12 M
- **Mobility allowance**
  - **Fellow**
    - 600 x 12 M
- **Family allowance (if applicable)**
  - **Fellow**
    - 500 x 12 M
- **Research, training and networking**
  - **Host**
    - 800 x 12 M
- **Management & Overhead**
  - **Host**
    - 650 x 12 M

**Total project financing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EUR/Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fellow</strong></td>
<td>5.833.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Host</strong></td>
<td>71.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>89.160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employer’s gross**

- e. g. Belgium (*100%*)
  - 5.980 EUR/M
  - 71.760 EUR/Y

- e. g. Germany (*correction co-efficient 97,0%) = 5.833,60 EUR/M
How is the application process organised?

- **Call for proposals**
  - Annually
  - Specific deadline (next: 9 September 2020)

- **The proposal**
  - Submission by the Host Institution (supervisor)
  - Jointly with the researcher

- **Online submission**
  - Funding & tender opportunities portal:
    - [ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home](http://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home)
MSCA Evaluation Process

- Each proposal will be evaluated by at least three reviewers (selection by Research Executive Agency, REA)
- Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5
  - Excellence
  - Impact
  - Implementation

- 3 phases of evaluation:
  1. Individual evaluation
     Individual Evaluation Report + comments and points for each criterion (remote)
  2. Consensus phase + meeting
     Agreement of the experts + Consensus Report (remote)
  3. Panel review
     Evaluation Summary Reports + Panel Ranked List
MSCA Evaluation Criteria and Panels

**Excellence**
(weighting: 50%)

**Impact**
(weighting: 30%)

**Implementation**
(weighting: 20%)

Standard Panel - scientific areas
1. Chemistry (CHE)
2. Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)
3. Economic Sciences (ECO)
4. Information Science and Engineering (ENG)
5. Environment and Geosciences (ENV)
6. Life Sciences (LIF)
7. Mathematics (MAT)
8. Physics (PHY)
IF - Proposal in detail

Part B1

1. Excellence
2. Impact
3. Implementation

max. 10 pages

Part B2

4. CV Researcher
(max. 5 pages)

5. Capacities of the Organisations
List of Participating Organisations (1 page)

6. Ethical Aspects

7. Commitment Letter (GF)
Writing Tips – Structure and Layout

- Have a clear structure and readability (use templates)
- Pay attention to page limits
- Use the right font size, line spacing, margins
- Use visual highlights and illustrations (e.g. graphics and tables)
- Do not use colours
Writing Tips – Proposal Text

- Try to see your proposal from an evaluator's point of view
- Try to convince non-experts in your field of research
  - Scientific vocabulary vs. general comprehensibility
- Define scientific and career aims
- Describe your project objectives clear, concise and achievable
- Use the terminology of the Guide for Applicants
Preparation of the proposal

- Work Programme
- Guide for Applicants
- Template

Funding & Tenders Portal:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home
Funding & Tenders Portal
From Submission to Funding

Call opening (~ April)  
Proposal preparation  
Evaluation  
Grant preparation

Results (~ February)  
Signature (~ May)

ca. 8 months
## IF Success Rates 2017 & 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSCA</th>
<th>Proposals retained for funding 2017</th>
<th>Success rate 2017</th>
<th>Proposals retained for funding 2018</th>
<th>Success rate 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EF (ST)</td>
<td>1.029</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EF (RI)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EF (CAR)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EF (SE)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GF</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Commission
# MSCA IF Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget (million)</th>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>EUR 294.49</td>
<td>11 Apr 2019</td>
<td>11 Sep 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>EUR 328</td>
<td>8 Apr 2020</td>
<td>9 Sept 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Commission
Information online

Funding & Tenders Portal

The Funding & Tenders Portal is the entry point (the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area) for participants and experts in funding programmes and tenders managed by the European Commission and other EU bodies.

Find calls for proposals and tenders

What are calls for proposals?  
What are calls for tenders?  
How to participate in 5 steps

Calls for proposals by EU Programme

KoWi Website

EU Commission

NCP MSC

**Part I – Excellent Science**

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**Part III – Societal Challenges**

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7. Protecting freedom and security

**Part IV**

Spreading excellence & widening participation

**Part V**

Science with & for Society

**Non-nuclear direct actions of the Joint Research Centre (JRC)**

**The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)**
ERC Underlying Principles

- European funding of basic research ("frontier research")
- Development of funding schemes is science-driven (Scientific Council)
- Open to all fields of research: bottom-up, investigator-driven, annual calls for proposals
- Open for researchers of any age and nationality

➢ Scientific excellence is the sole criterion for evaluation!
ERC Funding Schemes

- **Starting Grant**
  - 2 – 7 years after PhD
  - Preparing ideas from ERC Grant for the market

- **Consolidator Grant**
  - 7 – 12 years after PhD

- **Advanced Grant**
  - 10 years track record

- **Proof of Concept**
- **Synergy Grant**
  - Teams of 2-4 PIs pursuing highly ambitious research goals
### ERC Starting Grants – Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target group</strong></th>
<th>2-7 years after PhD (extensions possible in exceptional cases; special rules for MD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>max. EUR 1.5 million for max. 5 years (exception: + EUR 1 million for major equipment, fieldwork or for PIs from Third Countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Host institution</strong></td>
<td>in EU Member State or Associated Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time commitment</strong></td>
<td>≥ 50% (≥ 50% in Europe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedure</strong></td>
<td>single submission of full proposal, two-step evaluation (incl. interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call</strong></td>
<td>annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prolonged Eligibility

- Calculation of the eligibility time window:
  - Time elapsed between date on the PhD certificate and 1 January of the call year
- Prolonged eligibility for documented parental leave
  - Mothers 18 months per child
  - Fathers documented time of leave taken
- Other reasons after PhD:
  - Documented elapsed time for long-term illnesses (> 90 days)
  - Clinical training (4 years maximum)
  - National service
ERC Funding Modalities

- Funding of individuals: Principal Investigator + project
- Support for researchers to start (StG) or consolidate (CoG) their own independent research team in Europe (MS or AC)
- Funding: 100 % + 25 %
  - All direct project costs: living allowance, travel expenses, consumables, publication costs (incl. Open Access), research-related costs, purchase of major equipment (within the limits of depreciation rules)
  - Additional financing of indirect costs: 25 % overhead
ERC Grantees – Profile Features

- Starting-Grantees usually have longer (and often several) “mobility experiences”
- Solid third-party funding (DFG, BMBF, EU etc.)
- Publications in the most high-ranking international journals
- Memberships in academies and editorial boards, review activities
- Distinct (inter)national research cooperation with leading scientists
How is the ERC application process organised?

- Calls for proposals
  - Annually
  - Specific deadline (next: 16 October 2019)
- The proposal
  - submitted by the PI
  - together with a Host Institution (Host Support Letter)
- Online submission
  - Funding and Tenders Portal of the European Commission:
    
    https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home
Evaluation Basics

- Peer-review: research field specific evaluation panels consisting of 1 panel chair and 10-15 members

- Three scientific domains:
  - Physical Sciences & Engineering (PE): 10 Panels
  - Life Sciences (LS): 9 Panels
  - Social Sciences & Humanities (SH): 6 Panel

- Applicants choose panel and indicate one or more keywords

- Up to 3 reviewers can be excluded in advance
Evaluation Process (StG, CoG, AdG)

Step 1
- Submission of full proposals
- Eligibility check
- Step 1 (remote) evaluation of proposal (B1) by panel members
- 1st Panel meeting
- Proposals passing to step 2

Step 2
- Individual assessment of full proposals by panel members & external referees
- 2nd Panel meeting, StG/CoG: INTERVIEWS of applicants
- Panel chairs’ meeting
- Consolidation of 3 main domains rank lists
- Proposals selected for funding

Source: ERC
Proposal Parts

Part A

Administrative Forms/Proposal Submission Forms
1 - General Information
2 - Participants & Contacts
3 - Budget + Resources
4 - Ethics
5 - Call-specific questions

Annexes
- Host Support Letter (Host Institution Binding Statement of Support)
- PhD-Certificate
- Ethics Self-Assessment (if applicable)
- Further documents (if applicable)

Part B

B1
- Extended synopsis 5 p.
- CV 2 p.
- Track record 2 p.

B2
- Scientific proposal 15 p.
Evaluation Criteria PI

Intellectual capacity and creativity:

- To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to conduct **ground-breaking research**?
- To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative **independent thinking**?
- To what extent does the PI have the **required scientific expertise** and **capacity** to successfully execute the project

Source: ERC WP 2020
Evaluation Criteria Project

- Ground-breaking research?
- Beyond the state-of-the-art?
- Important challenges?
- Novel concepts?
- Approaches across disciplines?
- High risk/high gain?

Feasibility:
- Methodology appropriate?
- Timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate?

Source: ERC WP 2020
First Reflections on Your Project

- Can you explain your project idea briefly and concisely?
- Which important (societal/scientific) challenges will you tackle?
- Which are the ground-breaking or novel aspects?
- What is the expected impact on your research field?
- Why are you the right person to carry out the project?
Tips on Abstract (A-forms) and Summary (B1)

- Catch the attention of the evaluators!
- Clear structure & readability (max. 2000 characters)
  - Current state of the art
  - Description of the scientific problem/questions
  - Include your preliminary work
  - Aims of the project
  - Methodology (not too technical)
  - Novel approach/innovative aspects
  - Scientific (and social) impact
- If funded: publication of abstract in ERC database
Tips on the Extended Synopsis (B1)

- Scientific vocabulary ↔ general comprehensibility
  - convince non-experts in your field of research
- Use selected ERC terminology
- Visual highlights and illustrations (graphs, tables etc.)
- Summary of the ground-breaking nature:
  - Still unsolved problem although many attempts have been made
  - The project aims at developing methods beyond the state of the art
- Short work plan (work packages), team composition and budget summary!
Important Documents

- ERC Work Programme
- ERC Rules for Submission and Evaluation
- Information for Applicants
- Research Proposal Template

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home
From Submission to Funding

- Submission (Deadline): Proposal preparation (~ 10 months)
- Result step 1: Evaluation (~ 90 days)
- Result step 2: Evaluation (~ 110 days)
- Signature GA: Grant preparation (~ 100 days)

Total: ~ 10 months
Resubmission for Call 2020 (StG, CoG, AdG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result step 1</th>
<th>2017 and before</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A at step 1 (passed to step 2): resubmit without limitations
- B at step 1: do not submit in the next call year
- C at step 1: do not submit in the next two calls years

Source: ERC WP 2020
## ERC Success Rates 2015-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting Grants</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>13.3 %</td>
<td>12.7 %</td>
<td>13.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidator Grants</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>13.8 %</td>
<td>13.2 %</td>
<td>12.2 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Grants</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>9.6 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>10.8 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Calls for Proposals WP 2020

Publication of Work Programme: 02 July 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding line</th>
<th>Reference date</th>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Budget (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting Grants</td>
<td>1 Jan 2020</td>
<td>17 July 2019</td>
<td>16 October 2019</td>
<td>677 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidator Grants</td>
<td>1 Jan 2020</td>
<td>24 October 2019</td>
<td>4 February 2020</td>
<td>657 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Grants</td>
<td>14 May 2020</td>
<td>26 August 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>492 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergy Grants</td>
<td>18 July 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 November 2019</td>
<td>350 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof of Concept</td>
<td>15 October 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>21 January 2020</td>
<td>25 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nationale Kontaktstellen (NKS)

Europäischer Forschungsrat (ERC)


Was wird gefördert?

Das Europäische Forschungsrat (European Research Council - ERC) ist die eine der Europäischen Kommission eingerichtete Instanz zur Förderung von grundlagenorientierter Forschung. Es wird von der Kommission und der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (EG) unterstützt.

- Startgrants: Fördert junge, unabhängige Forscherinnen und Forscher, die im Alter zwischen 7 und 15 Jahren sind. Sie erhalten bis zu 1,5 Mio. Euro über maximal fünf Jahre.
- Consolidator Grants: Fördert erfahrene wissenschaftliche Leiterinnen und Leiter, die in einem Alter zwischen 7 und 12 Jahren sind. Sie erhalten bis zu 2,5 Mio. Euro über maximal fünf Jahre.

National Contact Point (NCP)

European Research Council (ERC)
ERC Website: Funded Projects and PIs
Wrap-up and Take-Home Messages

- MSCA and ERC are open to all fields of research
- MSCA is promotion of mobility and career development
- ERC is promotion of excellent science
- Read the Guide for Applicants
- Start early and get in touch with consulting services
KoWi services for MSCA & ERC

(for ERC in cooperation with EU Bureau of the BMBF as National Contact Point for ERC)

**Information**
- Information events and workshops
- KoWi newsletter: [kowi.de/aid-newsletter](http://kowi.de/aid-newsletter)
- NCP ERC newsletter and FAQs: [nks-erc.de](http://nks-erc.de)

**Consulting**
- Individual consulting and support for applicants
- Tailored advice for small groups
- Advice on legal and financial project management

**Training**
- Workshops on application and grant management
- ERC Interview trainings for Starting und Consolidator Grants in Bonn + on-site support in Brussels
Follow us on Twitter!

@KoWi_EU

All about EU research funding – fast and simply delivered
MSCA KoWi-Team

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Team Project Management
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Sebastian Claus
Yvette Gafinen
Benedikt Springer

The National Contact Point ERC is a cooperation between the EU-Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (EU-Büro des BMBF) and the European Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations (KoWi).

Please contact:
https://www.eubuero.de/erc-germany.htm
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