



Horizon Europe Programme

Guide for Applicants

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – ‘Choose Europe for Science’

Version 3.0 – September 2025

Disclaimer: This guide aims to support potential applicants to the Choose Europe for Science 2025 call. It is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources. Neither the European Commission nor the European Research Executive Agency (or any person acting on their behalf) can be held responsible for the use made of this guidance document. Note that the guidance provided in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement and in the Horizon Europe MSCA Financial Guide shall prevail in case of discrepancies.



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History of Changes

Version	Date	Change
1.0	02/06/2025	Initial Version
2.0	07/07/2025	Second Version
3.0	05/09/2025	Third Version

Note:

National Contact Points (**NCPs**) have been set up across Europe and beyond by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to Horizon Europe applicants in their native language. The mission of the NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on Horizon Europe funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the *preparation, submission and follow-up* of the grant applications. For details on the NCP in your country please consult [the National Contact Points page](#).

1. MSCA CHOOSE EUROPE FOR SCIENCE – A FEW DEFINITIONS

Important Note:

All main definitions (not included in this guide) are available in the [MSCA part of the Work Programme](#). Links to other official documents (e.g. [Horizon Europe General Annexes of the Work Programme](#), [Horizon Europe Unit Model Grant Agreement](#), [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#)) are provided in the [call page on the Funding and Tenders Portal](#).

Beneficiary is the sole signatory to the Grant Agreement, which receives the EU funding, claims costs, and takes complete responsibility for the proper implementation of the proposed Programme. The Beneficiary must be a legal entity established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country that funds or manages Programmes for researchers.

Associated Partners are entities which participate in the action (e.g. providing training or secondments), but without the right to charge costs or claim contributions. Associated Partners may not employ the researchers under the action.

Supported researchers should be in possession of a doctoral degree at the vacancy notice deadline.

Academic sector means public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research organisations ⁽¹⁾ and International European Research Organisations (IERO) ⁽²⁾.

Non-academic sector means any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon Europe Rules for Participation ⁽³⁾.

Gender equality plan: Having a gender equality plan is an eligibility criterion for public bodies, higher education establishments and research organisations from Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Be aware that if the proposal is selected, having a gender equality plan will be necessary before the Grant Agreement signature; this requirement concerns legal entities applying as beneficiaries. [Please refer to the Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans](#).

⁽¹⁾ If requested by the granting authority, institutions with self-declared research organisations status must provide evidence that their main objective is to carry out research and/or technological development. An assessment will be made on the basis of indicators such as share of research budget, volume of scientific publications and/or registered patents.

⁽²⁾ 'International European Research Organisation' (IERO) means an international organisation, the majority of whose members are EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries, and whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe (see Article 2(15) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination).

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of 28 April 2021 (OJEU 12.05.2021, L170, p.1).

2. MSCA CHOOSE EUROPE FOR SCIENCE IN A NUTSHELL

Overview:

Programme	Postdoctoral
Minimum number of recruited researchers	3
Number of Beneficiaries	1
Associated Partners	No restrictions
Maximum duration of the action	60 or 72 months ⁽⁴⁾
Duration of Fellowship	48 (24+24) or 60 (36+24) months
Funding modality	2 Phases 1st Phase: 24 or 36 months phase where Choose Europe for Science allowance is provided and a minimum gross monthly remuneration is set at EUR 6 700 and 2nd Phase: 24 months phase where the Beneficiary covers all costs and sets the salary that is attractive and competitive at national level
Choose Europe for Science allowance	EUR 6 700/researcher ⁽⁵⁾
Maximum co-funding	EUR 3.5 million / Beneficiary / call
Total budget	EUR 22.5 million
Eligible researchers	at the vacancy notice deadline, researchers: - must be in possession of a doctoral degree - may not be permanently employed by the Beneficiary - comply with the MSCA mobility rule ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ The maximum duration of the action must be 60 months from the starting date set out in the grant agreement for a 48-month fellowship and 72 months for a 60-month fellowship. It also includes the time that is needed to select and recruit the researchers.

⁽⁵⁾ During the first phase

⁽⁶⁾ Details in Section 3 - Eligibility and Supported Researchers

Participating Organisations			
Summary of Tasks			
Role in the Programme	Recruitment and hosting of researchers	Training and/or hosting of researchers during secondments	Directly claim Choose Europe for Science allowance
Beneficiary	✓	✓	✓
Associated Partner	x	✓	x

2.1. Structure of MSCA CHOOSE EUROPE FOR SCIENCE

The MSCA Choose Europe for Science action supports regional, national and international Post-doctoral Programmes that focus on tackling precarity in research careers and promoting brain gain, while spreading best practice in terms of working conditions, as well as promoting excellence in research, innovation and teaching activities.

These Programmes must follow MSCA's good practice in terms of international recruitment and minimum standard of employment for the recruited researchers as described in the [European Charter for Researchers](#) ⁽⁷⁾. The impact on the enhancement of human resources in research and innovation at regional, national or international level should be demonstrated by the proposed HR practices.

MSCA Choose Europe for Science Programmes will recruit and train researchers at post-doctoral level with a vision to employment beyond the project period. On top of compulsory international mobility, applicants are encouraged to include elements of cross-sectoral mobility and interdisciplinarity into their Programmes.

Researchers are expected to write their own proposals in response to the vacancy call. Within MSCA Choose Europe for Science Programmes, researchers will be able to develop a chosen research topic while receiving training relevant to the career prospect offered, as well as in key transferable skills and competences common to all fields, fostering innovation.

The recruitment is carried out solely by the beneficiary, while researchers may be seconded within the partnership mentioned in the proposal (to Associated Partners).. However, with the European Research Executive Agency (REA) project officer's prior approval, it may be possible to add more Associated Partners during project execution. Researchers who are already permanently employed by the organisation hosting them cannot be funded by the MSCA Choose Europe for Science call.

(7) [The new European Charter for Researchers](#) which also integrates the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers was published in December 2023, as [Annex II to the Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe](#).

2.2. Overall EU contribution per Grant Agreement

A Beneficiary can only receive a maximum EU contribution of EUR 3.5 million per call. If an applicant submits two or more successful applications totalling more than EUR 3.5 million within one call, the applicant will be required to decide which of these proposals to implement at the GAP (Grant Agreement Preparation) phase.

2.3. Participating organisations

Participating organisations in MSCA Choose Europe for Science are legal entities that fund or manage Programmes for researchers, or that recruit, supervise, host or train researchers. Participating organisations (Beneficiary and Associated Partners) can be from the academic sector or the non-academic sector.

2.3.1. The Beneficiary

MSCA Choose Europe for Science is a mono-Beneficiary action. Only one legal entity established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country can apply as Beneficiary to the Choose Europe for Science action through the Funding and Tenders Portal.

International organisations with headquarters in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country will be deemed to be established in this Member State or Associated Country.

2.3.2. Associated Partners

Associated Partners are entities which participate in the action (e.g. providing training or secondments), but without the right to charge costs or claim contributions. They contribute to the implementation of the action, but do not sign the Grant Agreement. Associated Partners may not employ the researchers under the action.

Associated Partners can be established anywhere in the world and can be from any sectors.

If the Associated Partners are not known at the time of application, these may be added during the lifetime of the project, with the REA project officer's prior approval.

2.4. Partnership Agreement

If the proposal is funded, and Associated Partners are involved, the signature of a partnership agreement between the Beneficiary and all Associated Partners is strongly recommended to regulate the internal relationship between all participating organisations. **The partnership agreement(s) must comply with the grant agreement.**

2.5. Letters of Commitment

Associated Partners are not required to provide a letter of commitment.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND SUPPORTED RESEARCHERS

Recruited researchers can be of any nationality and must comply with the following mobility rule: they must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of

the recruiting Beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the deadline of the vacancy notice.

Researchers **must be in possession of a doctoral degree at the vacancy notice deadline.** Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as researchers at post-doctoral level and will be considered eligible to apply. A medical doctor degree ⁽⁸⁾ will be accepted only when it corresponds to a doctoral degree or if the researcher can demonstrate their appointment in a position that requires doctoral equivalency (e.g. professorship appointment).

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION

MSCA Choose Europe for Science Programmes will include two phases: a first phase with a duration of 24 or 36 months, where the Beneficiary of the action will receive the Choose Europe for Science allowance of EUR 6 700, for each recruited researcher. This amount is the minimum monthly gross remuneration (i.e. salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs or compulsory deductions under national legislation linked to remuneration) applicable for researchers recruited under the Programmes and is inclusive of the mobility allowance. If the Beneficiary decides to use the allowance for covering part of the institutional costs (costs related to the training, research expenses, activities related to networking of researchers and transfer of knowledge, costs of managing the action and indirect costs), then it must use other sources for topping up the minimum monthly gross remuneration of EUR 6 700.

Complementary funds to implement the project can be fully or partially funded through other sources including EU Programmes other than Horizon Europe, such as the Cohesion policy funds, provided that double funding is avoided.

During the second phase, with a duration of 24 months, the Beneficiary will cover all costs and set the researchers' remunerations at a level competitive at national level.

5. DURATION OF THE ACTION

The minimum duration of each fellowship (on the basis of full-time employment) must be 48 months (24+24 months) and the maximum duration is 60 months (36+24 months). The maximum duration of the action must be 60 months from the starting date set out in the grant agreement for a 48-month fellowship and 72 months for a 60-month fellowship. It also includes the time that is needed to select and recruit the researchers. After the first phase (24 or 36 months), the researcher will be offered recruitment by the Beneficiary to implement the second phase of 24 months, as planned.

6. SECONDMENTS

Secondments of the researcher to Associated Partners are encouraged, but should be relevant, feasible and beneficial for the researchers, and in line with the project objectives. As they form part of training and career development, any secondments planned in the project must be described in the proposal.

⁽⁸⁾ Medical doctor degrees corresponding to basic medical training as defined in Annex V of Directive 2005/36/EC will not be considered a doctoral degree.

The duration of the secondments should be limited to a maximum of one third of the actual months spent implementing the research training activities under the action in alignment with the MSCA's calls under Postdoctoral Fellowships and COFUND Postdoctoral Programmes.

7. EVALUATION, SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS

The selection procedure for researcher candidates must be open, competitive, merit-based and with a transparent international peer-review in line with the [European Charter for Researchers](#) ⁽⁹⁾. The vacancy notice (to be widely advertised, including on the [EURAXESS website](#)) should mention all selection criteria and the gross salaries applicable to the two Programme phases (net salary + employee's taxes and contributions).

The applicant Beneficiaries, in their proposals to the MSCA Choose Europe for Science call, must ensure that there will be NO conflict of interest and NO preselection of researchers during the selection/recruitment process.

Supervisors MUST NOT have any role in the selection/recruitment process, drafting the proposal or decision-making process. However, applicants may contact a supervisor during the application process: for scientific advice, to discuss the research being proposed, obtain information about expertise/infrastructure available. NO prior approval of the application (from either the proposed supervisor/host organisation) can be required as part of the submission process.

Researchers must be recruited within the first 12 months of the action duration, if possible, through a single call. The call planning should be clearly explained in Part B of the proposal.

There must be substantial involvement of independent international evaluators based in other countries, with no conflict of interest, for each submitted application, and at all stages of the evaluation process. Selection of the candidates will be done by the selection committees, whose members include international independent evaluators from outside the partnership. Moreover, the members must have an adequate gender balance and possess the relevant expertise and experience to assess the candidates.

A good balance between evaluators related to the Beneficiary and international independent evaluators from outside the partnership (based in other countries) must be ensured in the selection committee.

8. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING PART A AND B OF THE PROPOSAL

Applications must be complete and contain all parts and supporting documents. Applicants must fill in the submission forms online that will become Part A of the proposal and upload Parts B1 and B2.

A proposal will then consist of an administrative part (**Part A**, filled in online via the submission forms) and a narrative **Part B** composed of two separate PDF files (Part B1 and Part B2), which must be uploaded as separate PDF files:

⁽⁹⁾ Previously this was included in the [Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#) but it has been integrated in the updated European Charter for Researchers dating to December 2023, published as [Annex II to the Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe](#).

1. **Part B1**, containing a maximum of 34 (thirty-four) A4-sized pages (out of which 30 pages for the actual application). Any excess pages (i.e. numerical page 35 and beyond) will not be available to the evaluators.
2. **Part B2**, with no strict page limit for A4-sized pages but applicants should respect the instructions given per section.

Associated Partners known at the proposal stage must be included under the participants section in the Part A of the proposal as well as in the relevant section in the Part B2 (section 5).

In Part A, it is not required for the Beneficiary or the Associated Partners to fill in the following sections: researchers involved in the proposal; the list of up to five publications or significant infrastructure. The list of previous projects should be filled in only if applicable.

The MSCA Choose Europe for Science proposal template (Part B1 and Part B2) can be downloaded from the [call page on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal](#) and the [REA website](#). All instructions for completing Part B1 and B2 of the proposal as well as requirements with regard to the minimum font/margin sizes allowed are embedded in the template, which must be strictly respected by all applicants.

These instructions must be removed before proposal submission. A clean version is also available at the end of the template.

We strongly encourage you to submit your proposal as soon as possible. It remains possible to reopen, edit and resubmit your proposal as many times as required before the call deadline.