MSCA-ITN European Training Network 2017

Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions: European Training Network (a form of Innovative Training Network)

Deadline: 10 January 2017

Guide for Applicants:

The Innovative Training Networks (ITN) aim to train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial and innovative early-stage researchers, able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit. ITN will raise excellence and structure research and doctoral training, extending the traditional academic research training setting, incorporating the elements of Open Science and equipping researchers with the right combination of research-related and transferable competences. It will provide enhanced career perspectives in both the academic and non-academic sectors through international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility combined with an innovation-oriented mind-set.

ITN supports competitively selected joint research training and/or doctoral programmes, implemented by partnerships of universities, research institutions, research infrastructures, businesses, SMEs, and other socio-economic actors from different countries across Europe and beyond.

Partnerships take the form of collaborative European Training Networks (ETN), European Industrial Doctorates (EID) or European Joint Doctorates (EJD).

- The largest share of the ITN call budget is made available for ETN. These networks have the objective of training highly-skilled researchers and stimulating entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation in Europe. An ETN must be composed of at least three beneficiaries established in at least three different member states or associated countries (see definitions). Above this minimum, the participation of other organisations, including international European interest organisations and those from third countries is possible under the conditions provided by the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation. There is no pre-defined size for these multi-partner networks. However, it is recommended to keep the size of the consortium between 6 and 10 beneficiaries since previous experience has shown this to be a manageable size.

- Although not a formal eligibility requirement, it is expected that beneficiaries will be drawn from different sectors and that ETN proposals will offer intersectoral and interdisciplinary research training as well as high-quality supervision arrangements.

- The duration of the project is limited to 48 months from the start date of the project. The recruitment of each individual ESR (early stage researcher) will be supported for a minimum of 3 months and up to a maximum of 36 months. However, researchers enrolled in a doctoral programme are expected to be appointed for the maximum 36 months. Given the time required at the beginning of the project to advertise the vacancies and to recruit researchers, the 48 month duration of the project offers a sufficient margin to ensure that the researchers can remain in place for the full 36 month period. Each beneficiary must host at least one ESR.

- The ETN may charge a maximum of 540 person months (15 students at 36 months each maximum for the whole network)

- The programme should exploit complementary competences of the participating organisations, and enable sharing of knowledge, networking activities, the organisation of workshops and conferences.
Training responds to well identified needs in defined research areas, with appropriate references to inter- and multidisciplinary fields and follows the EU Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training.¹ It should be primarily focused on scientific and technological knowledge through research on individual, personalised projects.

In order to increase the employability of the researchers, the research training should be complemented by the meaningful exposure of each researcher to the non-academic sector.

Secondments of the researcher to other beneficiaries and partner organisations are encouraged.

Substantial training modules, including digital ones, addressing key transferable skills common to all fields and fostering the culture of Open Science, innovation and entrepreneurship will be supported.

In order to reflect on the changing nature of research, training should prepare early-stage researchers for an increased research collaboration and information-sharing made possible by new technologies (e.g. collaborative tools, open access, raw data, etc.).

Attention is paid to the quality of supervision and mentoring arrangements as well as career guidance. Joint supervision of the researchers is encouraged in ETN.

As essential part of any ETN is the involvement of organisations from different sectors. Such involvement must be meaningful and appropriate to the implementation mode and research field.

In ETN ESRs can be seconded to other beneficiaries and/or partner organisations for a duration of up to 30% of their recruitment period.

Topic of the project: all MSCA have a bottom-up approach. Applicants will be required to define in the proposal the scientific and technological area within which the individualised research projects of the recruited researchers will be developed.

All researchers recruited in an ITN must be Early-Stage Researchers and undertake transnational mobility. For all recruitments, the eligibility of the researcher will be determined at the time of their first recruitment in the project. Mobility Rule: at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of their host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the reference date. Researchers can be of any nationality.

Financial aspects:

The financial support for ITN projects is calculated on the basis of eligible person-months and takes the form of grants covering up to 100% of the costs. Funding is exclusively in the form of unit costs.

Unit costs are fixed amounts and apply to all categories of eligible costs. They are measured by the number of months which are implemented by the eligible researchers in the project. The unit costs are determined ex-ante in the Work Programme, specified in Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement, and cannot be modified. The grant reimburses 100% of the project’s eligible unit costs.

The details of the European Union contribution and rates under this action are set out in MSCA Work Programme. There are two types of unit costs:

- Researcher unit costs;
- Institutional unit costs.

One unit is defined as the work of one researcher in the project for a period of one month.

Researcher Unit Costs:

Monthly Living Allowance

This refers to the basic, gross amount for the benefit of the researcher to be paid to the researcher in monthly instalments. For MSCA calls launched in 2016-2017, the amount for an ESR is €3,110 per month (€37,320/year).

Mobility Allowance: EUR 600 per month

Family Allowance: EUR 500 per month if the researcher has a family.

Institutional Unit Costs:

Research, Training and Network Costs

Research, Training and Network Costs are a unit cost of €1,800 per person-month managed by the host beneficiaries to contribute to expenses related to, for example:

- the participation of researchers in training activities;
- expenses related to research costs;
- execution of the project;
- contribution to the expenses related to the coordination between participants;
- costs for visiting researchers;
- tuition fees (where applicable).

Management and Overheads:

Management and Overheads refers to a unit cost of €1,200 per person-month that is to be used towards the management of the project. As with Research, Training and Network costs, these amounts may later on be re-distributed among the consortium. For example, the consortium may agree in the Consortium Agreement that all beneficiaries will contribute to the costs that the coordinator incurs for the management of the whole project. However, this is left to the consortium to decide.

Expected Impact:

At researcher level:

- Increased set of skills, both research-related and transferable ones, leading to improved employability and career prospects both in and outside academia (leading in the longer-term to more successful careers)

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2 Management costs: the ETN will need to consider any costs a beneficiary will not incur but which the Coordinator of the ETN will need to pay. These include: any PI time spent on overseeing the project (not on PhD supervision or RTD activities but on coordinating the project/writing the periodic reports if need be). 10% would be reasonable. This is not mandatory; Administrative/Project management support: some projects employ a Project manager at RA level. The Project manager’s salary can be charged to the grant up to 60 days after the project end date to finalise reporting; ROO time can also be costed, to support the coordination of the grant (typically 5% of the time of Catherine Hill, EC Coordinator Grant Manager); Management and kick-off meetings could also be charged to the Management costs budget. How this works: each beneficiary receives 1,200 EUR per ESR per month and the Coordinator beneficiary can capture some of this along terms agreed with consortium members. 650 EUR per month is becoming an unofficial accepted standard minimum amount for overheads/management for beneficiaries, leaving up to 550 EUR per person per month to the Coordinator to fund management costs. With an ETN of say, 10 ESRs, each enrolled for 36 months, that would mean 360 person months, each generating 550 EUR. Hence 198,000 EUR management costs could be recovered by the Coordinator approximately over the course of the network’s existence.
• Increase, in the longer-term, in higher impact R&I output, more knowledge and ideas converted into products and services
• Greater contribution, in the longer term, to the knowledge-based economy and society

At organisation level:
• Enhanced cooperation and better transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines
• Improvement in the quality of training programmes
• Creation of new networks and enhanced quality of existing ones
• Boosting R&I capacity among participating organisations
• Increased internationalisation of participating organisations

At system level:
• Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers in Europe
• More structured and innovative doctoral training, enhanced implementation of the European Charter and Code and the EU Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training
• Stronger links between the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), notably through supporting the knowledge triangle between research, innovation and education
• Improvement in the working and employment conditions for doctoral candidates in Europe
• Increased societal and economic relevance of European higher education
• Strengthening Europe's human capital base in R&I with a new generation of more entrepreneurial and highly-skilled early career researchers
• Increase in Europe's attractiveness as a leading research destination, accompanied by a rise in the numbers of talented researchers retained and attracted from abroad
• Better quality research and innovation contributing to Europe's competitiveness and growth

**Beneficiaries** = full participants of the network, responsible for recruiting, supervising, hosting and training researchers. They may provide secondment opportunities. They sign the grant agreement, receiving funding.

**Partner organisations** = complement the research training programme but do not recruit any researchers. They provide additional research and transferable skills training and/or secondment opportunities. They can be academic or non-academic. They do not sign the grant agreement and cannot directly claim costs from the project. Instead the beneficiaries would need to reimburse the partner organisation for their activities in the research training programme.

**Example**: a consortium composed of universities in Greece, Israel, Malta, Turkey, the UK and Italy, and a manufacturer of radiocarbon dating equipment based in France, proposes an ETN in the field of archaeology examining trading routes in ancient Europe. Partner organisations in Lebanon, Cyprus and Egypt will complement the training and offer secondment opportunities. Each fellow will receive training in advanced radiocarbon dating techniques at the industrial partner, and will undertake secondments to the associated partners for their field work, up to a maximum of 30% of their recruitment period. In addition to local training courses at the fellows’ respective hosts, the consortium will offer network-wide training modules, including transferable skills training. Two Summer Schools will provide in-depth training and networking opportunities, while a final conference will offer dissemination and outreach opportunities.

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