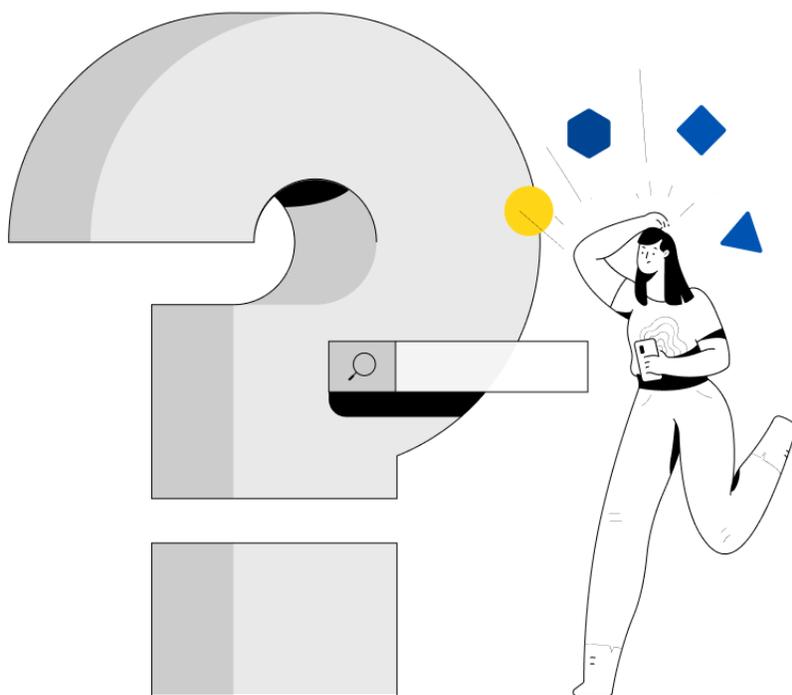


# MSCA POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS 2022 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Update August 2022



August 2022

Document elaborat de Unitatea Horizon Europe NCP din cadrul UEFISCDI ©. August 2022.

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## **MSCA POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS UPDATE AUGUST 2022**

### **Funding opportunities, calls**

#### **Q1. Under topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-TALENTS-03-01, what is the difference between ERA talents and ERA fellowships?**

- ERA Fellowships are aligned in content and procedure with the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, a Training and Mobility Action targeting individual postdoctoral researchers with a host organisation in a widening country.
- ERA Talents projects are Coordination and Support Actions, targeting consortia of regional or national funders with academic and non-academic entities, developing a joint intersectoral exchange programme that focusses on researchers, innovators and/or other research & innovation talents.

#### **Q2. Under MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), the researcher lives in Denmark and wishes to carry out his/her fellowship in a Swedish institution 30 minutes away from his/her residence. Is it possible to continue living in Denmark and work in Sweden?**

In the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, as long as the beneficiary hosts the researcher at its premises in the specified host country, as required by Annex 5 of the MSCA-PF Grant Agreement, the researcher can reside on the other side of the border.

**Q3. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), what is the difference between subcriteria 1.4 and 2.1?**

Under subcriterion 1.4 (Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills), applicants should demonstrate how the researcher's existing professional experience is appropriate in relation to the proposed research project.

Under subcriterion 2.1 (Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to his/her skills development), the proposal should explain the expected impact of the planned research and training on the career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship.

**Q4. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), can a researcher have multiple supervisors within the same host organisation?**

There must be only one supervisor per host organisation. The supervisor is the senior researcher appointed at the beneficiary to supervise the researcher throughout the whole duration of the action. European Fellowships have one host organisation and thus one supervisor. For Global Postdoctoral Fellowships, an additional supervisor should also be appointed for the time spent at the associated partner for the outgoing phase.

**Q5. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), the researcher has been living in country A for more than one year. Is the researcher eligible to apply for a Postdoctoral Fellowship in this country?**

The researcher would not be eligible for an MSCA-Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF) in country A. The application of the eligibility criteria for the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships is very strict and includes compliance with the "mobility rule": they must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the beneficiary (for European Postdoctoral Fellowships), or the host organisation for the outgoing phase (for Global Postdoctoral Fellowships) for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the call deadline.

As a result, if the researcher has resided or carried out the main activity in country A for more than 12 months during the 3 years prior to the deadline for submission of proposals, they would not be eligible to apply for an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship in this country.

**Q6. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), can researchers of any nationality participate?**

Researchers of any nationality can participate in European Postdoctoral Fellowships. However, Global Postdoctoral Fellowships are restricted only to nationals or long-term residents of Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Long-term residence means a period of legal and continuous residence within EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries of at least five consecutive years. Periods of absence from the territory of the EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country will be taken into account for the calculation of this period where they are shorter than six consecutive months and do not exceed in total ten months within this period.

**Q7. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), may a supervisor have multiple fellows awarded with Postdoctoral Fellowships?**

For MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, the Supervisor may supervise two or more fellows, as long as the obligations of the beneficiary institution stipulated in the HE Model Grant Agreement for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship are respected. In particular, the beneficiary must ensure that the researcher is adequately supervised (see Article 18 of the Model Grant Agreement).

**Q8. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF): is a researcher who already received MSCA funding eligible to apply for a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship?**

If the researcher fulfils the eligibility conditions for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship, they can apply with a different and original research project even if they already

received funding from another MSCA call. In this case, the added value and originality of the research activity under the new action must be explained in the proposal. Please note that a researcher cannot benefit from two Marie Skłodowska-Curie action grants at the same time and that the same project cannot benefit twice from different European funding programmes.

## **Proposal submission and evaluation**

**Q9. Under MSCA-PF, would a proposal that scored below 70% in MSCA-IF-2020 be eligible in MSCA-PF-2022 if involving the same individual researcher and recruiting organisation (and if Global Fellowship, also the Associated Partner hosting the outgoing phase)?**

The proposal would be considered as eligible for resubmission, provided the other eligibility conditions are respected. This rule only applies to the new Horizon Europe Framework Programme, therefore the only comparison is with the MSCA-2021-PF call and not with proposals submitted under previous Horizon 2020 calls.

**Q10. Under MSCA-PF, would a proposal that scored below 70% in MSCA-PF-2021 be eligible in MSCA-2022-PF if submitted by the same individual researcher and federated recruiting organisation (i.e. CNRS, CSIC, MPI, CNR...) but implemented at different premises?**

The proposal would be considered as ineligible for resubmission. The [MSCA Work Programme](#) specifically refers to the recruiting organisation, therefore even if the researcher was hosted by another institute/site, the main recruiting organisation would be the same.

**Q11. Under MSCA-PF, would a proposal submitted as a European Fellowship having received a score below 70% in MSCA-2021-PF, be eligible in MSCA-2022-PF if involving the same recruiting organisation and individual researcher but a different supervisor?**

The proposal would be considered as ineligible for resubmission. The MSCA Work Programme specifically defines as ineligible for resubmission a European Fellowship proposal that has the same recruiting organisation and individual researcher, independently of the supervisor.

**Q12. Under MSCA-PF, would a Global Fellowship proposal that scored below 70% in MSCA-2021-PF, be eligible in MSCA-2022-PF if involving the same recruiting organisation and individual researcher but a different Associated Partner for the outgoing phase?**

The proposal would be considered as eligible for resubmission, provided the other eligibility conditions are respected. The MSCA Work Programme definition of a resubmission for a Global Fellowship proposal is that it has the same recruiting organisation, individual researcher and outgoing phase host of the previous proposal.

**Q13. Under MSCA-PF, would a proposal that received a score below 70% in the MSCA-2021-PF be eligible in MSCA-2022-PF, if submitted by the same recruiting organisation and individual researcher but with a completely different scientific content?**

The proposal would be considered ineligible for resubmission. The provisions related to resubmissions in the MSCA Work Programme do not refer to the scientific topic/contents of the proposal but to the recruiting organisation and individual researcher only.

**Q14. Under MSCA-PF, would a European Fellowships proposal that received a score below 70% in MSCA-2021-PF be eligible if submitted as a Global Fellowship in MSCA-2022-PF (or vice-versa) by the same recruiting organisation and individual researcher?**

The proposal would be considered eligible for re-submission, provided that the other eligibility conditions are respected. A proposal previously submitted under MSCA-2021-PF-EF and subsequently submitted under MSCA-2022-PF-GF (or vice-versa) is not considered as a re-submission.

**Q15. I am a PhD student finishing my PhD and would like to apply for the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships. I will have my PhD thesis defence (Viva) but not the PhD award before the call deadline. Am I eligible to apply for the MSCA-PF call for proposals?**

In order to be eligible under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships, one of the conditions is that the supported researchers must be postdoctoral researchers at the date of the call deadline, i.e. in a possession of a doctoral degree.

Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis before the call deadline but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as postdoctoral researchers and will be considered eligible to apply.

In such cases, the researcher/beneficiary should be able to provide on request (for example, to auditors) a formal document from the PhD awarding institution confirming the date of the successful PhD thesis defence.

**Q16. I finished my fellowship and subsequently spent 6 months writing papers resulting from my work. When applying to a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship, does the 6-month period count towards research experience?**

No. Experience in research means periods where the researcher is employed or holding a scholarship in research.

**Q17. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), in case of multiple degrees, which one counts to determine eligibility?**

In the case of multiple doctoral degrees, the date of the first PhD will be considered in determining eligibility. However, no supporting documents should be added in the proposal application but they should be readily available in case of audit.

**Q18. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships, can the time spent during a Master's degree be counted for as research experience?**

No. A period spent at university is counted as research experience only if you are employed (or if you are the holder of a scholarship agreement) as a researcher at the university.

A mere enrolment in a Master degree is considered as a “mere association” to a university, and not as research experience.

Examples of “mere association” are:

- using the facilities of the university;
- being sent to a conference by or on behalf of the university;
- being enrolled in a non-research related degree at the university.

**Q19. Under Horizon Europe MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, can periods spent outside research be deducted from the calculation of research experience if my PhD was awarded more than 8 years prior to the call deadline?**

The limit of 8-years full-time research experience at the call deadline is determined based on the date of award of the first PhD.

To be considered valid, extensions (for instance maternity leave, paternity leave, career breaks, research experience in non-associated third countries) MUST:

- fall between the date of the first PhD award and the call deadline (i.e. they don't have to be in the 8 years immediately prior to the call deadline) and
- fulfil the conditions indicated in the Work Programme and the Guide for Applicants.

Any valid extension can be encoded for as a deduction at the proposal submission stage, in Part A of the forms. Supporting documents are not required in the proposal application but should be kept readily available in case of an audit.

**Q20. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), are years of experience in research in Switzerland considered as time spent in third countries?**

For nationals or long-term residents of EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries who wish to reintegrate from a third country to pursue their research career by applying for MSCA-PF, any working time in research spent in Switzerland will not count towards the 8 years eligibility rule.

In relation to Switzerland, all exploratory talks regarding the association of Switzerland to the next generation of EU programmes are currently on hold. Therefore, Switzerland is not treated as an Associated Country and has the status of Third Country.

**Q21. Is it possible to receive feedback on the fulfilment of eligibility criteria to apply for funding to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF)?**

The European Research Executive Agency (REA) will perform the eligibility assessment of submitted proposals only after the call deadline. For this reason, we refrain from clearing eligibility scenarios for any applicants (researchers and institutions) before the call deadline.

Applicants are solely responsible for checking the fulfilment of all eligibility criteria and providing the correct information in the submission forms.

Guidance can be provided by contacting your respective National Contact Point (NCP).

**Q22. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral European Fellowships (MSCA-EF), how will the mobility rule be applied to periods of remote working/teleworking, when assessing eligibility?**

In order to be eligible, the researcher cannot be in either of the two following situations:

- have resided in the country of the beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to the call deadline,
- have carried out his/her main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to the call deadline. Please take note that in case of remote work performed from country A for an employer located in country B, the place of main activity is considered as country B.

Example: A researcher started a contract with a Belgian university in January 2020. However, the researcher has not been able to move to Belgium until March 2021 and worked for the Belgian university remotely from France. As per the mobility rule in MSCA-EF, the researcher will be ineligible for institutions located in both countries (Belgium and France).

**Q23. Under MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how should the research experience be taken into consideration when calculating the 8-year full-time equivalent research experience if the work experience after the PhD degree is not 100% focused on research?**

The maximum of 8 years after PhD can be extended for the time spent outside research, including teaching. The time not spent on research and related activities can be deducted from the 8-year calculation provided that it can be documented by e.g. work contract/job description and quantified based on documentation/proof which the host organisation (beneficiary) needs to keep for their records (not to be included in the proposal). Note that a wizard accompanied by instructions on how to make these calculations is made available through the "Horizon Europe MSCA - How to apply" page and in the Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 call page (see "Call updates"; call update dated Aug.19, 2021).

**Q24. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how should applicants address the questions of Part A (Role of Participating Organisations) and Part B (Capacity of the Participating Organisations)?**

In European Fellowships (MSCA-PF-EF), Part A (Role of participating organisation) is relevant only for the beneficiary.

In Global Fellowships (MSCA-PF-GF), Part A (Role of participating organisation) is relevant for the beneficiary and Associated Partner hosting the outgoing phase. If there is a non-academic placement, this question also applies to the Associated Partner where the placement is taking place.

Part B (Capacity of the Participating Organisations) is relevant to all Participating Organisations in the action: Beneficiary, Associated Partner linked to the beneficiary (if applicable), Associated Partner for outgoing phase (only for Global Fellowships), Associated Partner for secondment (if applicable) and Associated Partner for non-academic placement (if applicable). For a definition of the different types of participating organisations, please see 2.3.1 Annex 2 of the Horizon Europe Work Programme.

Applicants should ensure full coherence between Parts A and B.

**Q25. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how is the non-academic placement encoded in the application form?**

The non-academic sector placement must be encoded in Part A of the proposal and described in Part B. In Part A of the submission wizard, the name of the associated partner where the non-academic placement will take place must be encoded as a participating organisation ("associated partner") in the tab "Participants". The Associated Partner needs to have a PIC number. In Part B1, the relevance and added-value of the non-academic placement period will be assessed by the evaluators and may therefore impact the final score awarded to the proposal. In Part B2, the associated partner must provide an up-to-date letter of commitment, to be submitted with the application, confirming their precise role and active participation in the proposal. Secondment hosts should not be encoded as Associated Partners; this is only intended for non-academic placement hosts and associated partners for the outgoing phase for Global Fellowships. More

clarifications about the difference between optional secondments and placements can be found in the answer of Q27.

**Q26. What is a non-academic placement in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF)?**

Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships, the non-academic placement is an additional period of up to six months to support researchers seeking a placement at the end of the project to work on R&I projects in an organisation from the non-academic sector established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. The placement needs to be in line with the project objectives and add significant value and/or impact to the fellowship. The request for a non-academic sector placement must be included in the proposal. However, proposals will not be penalised for not including a non-academic placement.

Note that the non-academic placement is not a secondment. More clarifications about the difference between optional secondments and placements can be found in the answer of Q27.

**Q27. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), will the 18-month period for each child born after the PhD award be acknowledged even though the female researcher was employed part-time?**

For maternity, for each child born within the 8-year eligibility period (i.e. after the PhD award date), a fixed amount of 18 months (548 days) can be deducted by the applicant from the experience in research, unless the applicant can document a longer parental leave prior to the call deadline. This applies also for those working part-time.

**Q28. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), can a researcher apply with a host institution established in the United Kingdom?**

Only legal entities established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country are eligible for funding under the MSCA-PF action. Under Horizon Europe, the UK is treated as an Associated Country subject to the entry into force of the association agreement.

Association to Horizon Europe takes place through the conclusion of an international agreement between the EU and the non-EU country. Association agreement negotiations are currently ongoing with 18 countries including the United Kingdom. While negotiations are taking place, transitional arrangements apply under which the legal entities established in these countries are eligible to participate in the call for proposals. Therefore, institutions in the United Kingdom shall be treated in the evaluations as if they were based in an Associated Country from the launch date of the programme (subject to the entry into force of the association agreement with the United Kingdom by the time of signature of the grant agreement).

**Q29. Under MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), what kind of documents does the applicant have to submit in order to justify career breaks (e.g. due to maternity/parental leave) that would not count towards the maximum amount of research experience?**

No supporting documentation demonstrating the researcher's eligibility will have to be submitted to the Research Executive Agency (REA) at the point of proposal submission. However, if the proposal is successful, it is an obligation for the beneficiary (the entity signing the grant agreement) to ensure that all of the necessary supporting documentation relating to the researcher's eligibility (mobility, years of experience in research, etc.) are requested, verified and kept on file in case of audit. REA may request supporting documents to the beneficiary applicant to assess the eligibility after the call deadline.

**Q30. Is the Gender Equality Plan required for the proposals submitted under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF)?**

The Gender Equality Plan is applicable for calls with a deadline in 2022, even if they are published in 2021. Therefore, the Gender Equality Plan is not required for proposals submitted under the call MSCA-PF-2021-01, as the deadline is in 2021.

**Q31. For Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), are years of experience in research in the UK considered as time spent in third countries?**

Under Horizon Europe, the UK is treated as an Associated Country, subject to the entry into force of the association agreement. Association to Horizon Europe takes place through the conclusion of an international agreement between the EU and the non-EU country. More details are provided in the Horizon Europe programme guide.

**Q32. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how will the non-academic sector placement be evaluated?**

The additional non-academic sector placement is optional and no penalisation will be applied to applicants that do not propose one. The request for such a placement must be an integral part of the proposal, explaining the added-value for the project and for the career development of the researcher, and will be subject to evaluation. It must be substantiated by a letter of commitment from the European non-academic organisation where the placement takes place. This will be scored under the Excellence criterion.

**Q33. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how is the 8-year limit for research experience determined?**

The limit of 8-years full-time research experience is determined based on the date of award of the (first) PhD. In specific cases, researchers exceeding this limit can declare deductions, for example for maternity leave, paternity leave, career breaks, research experience in third countries (full list

in the Work Programme and Guide for Applicants). Such deductions should be declared in Part A of the submission forms. No supporting documents should be added in the proposal application, but they should be readily available in case of audit.

**Q34. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how will the proposal be assessed if the applicant has not yet been awarded a PhD? In case of multiple degrees, which one counts to determine the eligibility?**

The PhD date is considered to be the date the doctoral degree was awarded. In those cases that the PhD was successfully defended - but not formally awarded - before the MSCA-PF call deadline, the applicant should indicate the date of their viva (PhD defence). In the case of multiple doctoral degrees, the date of the first PhD will be considered in determining eligibility. No supporting documents should be added in the proposal application but they should be readily available in case of audit.

**Q35. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), must a separate application be made for the ERA fellowships (only relevant for European Fellowships)?**

Although the ERA Fellowships are technically a different call with a different funding mechanism, it is not possible to apply directly to the ERA call. All applications should therefore be sent to MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships where the proposals will be evaluated and ranked. Any MSCA-PF-EF application from a host in a widening country can express their wish to also be considered for funding under the ERA fellowships call. This option is not available for applicants to Postdoctoral Global Fellowships.

**Q36. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), what is the difference between secondment and non-academic placement?**

The non-academic placement is not a secondment.

An optional secondment is a temporary transfer to another entity in any sector, anywhere in the world at any time during the action, typically to perform part of the research or to gain experience. Secondments do not have a separate budget and can take place for up to a maximum of one third of the standard duration of the project.

Placements also involve mobility to another entity, located in an EU member state or Associated Country, but can only take place to an organisation in the non-academic sector and after the end of the regular duration of the project. Placements have a dedicated budget.

Both secondments and placements are expected to include supervision, to bring a clear added value to the research proposal, and should be covered by the employment contract with the beneficiary. Further information can be found in the Guide for Applicants.

**Q37. A researcher wants to apply to a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF) together with an institution based in a country that is not associated to Horizon Europe. Is this possible?**

Only legal entities established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country are eligible for funding under MSCA-PF. Association to Horizon Europe takes place through the conclusion of an international agreement between the EU and the non-EU country. Association agreements with 18 countries are currently under negotiation and transitional arrangements apply. The legal entities established in these countries are eligible to participate in the call for proposals and shall be treated in the evaluations as if they were based in associated countries from the launch date of the programme (subject to the entry into force of the association agreement with the third country by the time of signature of the grant agreement). Note that legal entities established in Switzerland are currently not covered by these transitional arrangements. More details are provided in the Horizon Europe programme guide.

**Q38. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), are there equivalence criteria for doctoral degrees in terms of eligibility (for example medical research)?**

Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis on or before the call deadline but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as postdoctoral researchers and will be eligible to apply. A medical doctor degree will be accepted only when it corresponds to a doctoral degree or if the researcher can demonstrate his/her appointment in a position that requires doctoral equivalency (e.g. professorship appointment). 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.

**Q39. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), will stays for medical reasons be taken into account for the mobility rule?**

This depends on the duration of the stay for medical reasons. Short stays for medical reasons will not be taken into account for the assessment of the mobility rule. However, if the researcher had to relocate to a different country in order to obtain medical care during a significant period of time, this long stay will be taken into account.

**Q40. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Global Fellowships (MSCA-GF), how will the mobility rule for the outgoing phase be applied to periods of remote working/teleworking, when assessing eligibility?**

In order to be eligible for a MSCA-GF, the researcher cannot be in either of the two following situations:

- have resided in the country of associated partner hosting the outgoing phase for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to the call deadline,
- have carried out his/her main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of associated partner hosting the outgoing phase for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately prior to the call deadline. Please take note that in case of remote work performed from

country A for an employer located in country B, the place of main activity is considered as country B.

Example: A researcher started a contract with a US university in January 2020. However, the researcher has not been able to move to US until March 2021 and worked for the US university remotely from Germany. As per the mobility rule in the MSCA-GF, the researcher will be ineligible for outgoing phase in an institution located in the US.

**Q41. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), how are researchers compared during the evaluation with regard to their different levels of experience?**

The assessment of the researcher is a key element of the 'Excellence award' criterion 1.4 "Quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills". The fellowships will be awarded to the most talented researchers as determined by the proposed research, the researcher's track record (Curriculum Vitae, part B-2), and in relation to their level of experience.

**Q42. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), are there any flexibility measures for eligibility due to the postponement of the MSCA-PF-2021-01 call?**

The eligibility of a researcher will still be determined based on the official call deadline (12 October 2021).

**Q43. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), should extensions to the 8-year limit for research experience be in the 8 years immediately prior to the call deadline?**

Any valid extensions (such as for maternity leave, paternity leave, career breaks, and other reasons specified in the Work Programme and Guide for Applicants) can be encoded as long as

they fall between the date of (first) PhD award and the call deadline. They do not have to be in the 8 years immediately prior to the call deadline.

**Q44. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), will all sections of the proposal Part B be evaluated, or only those sections to which the page limit is applied?**

All sections of the proposal will be included in the evaluation. The 10-page limit is applied only to part B1 - sections 1 to 3 (combined). The reason for this is not to cause disadvantage, for example, to researchers with more experience and hence a longer CV, who may otherwise have reduced space to write sections 1 to 3.

**Q45. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), can a researcher submit the proposal on his/her own?**

Proposals can be created and submitted by the supervisor or the researcher. However, the submission of the proposal and other actions that follow this procedure (such as withdrawal or, if successful, grant agreement signature) ultimately fall under the responsibility of the host organisation as represented by the main supervisor.

Therefore, it is not advisable for a researcher to submit a proposal on his/her own.

**Q46. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), may a proposal that was rejected under a previous MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship call be re-submitted?**

Applicants will be allowed to re-submit a proposal that was rejected under the previous Horizon Europe MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship call, unless the proposal scored below 70%. Note, however, that this restriction will not apply to the call MSCA-PF-2021-01.

**Q47. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), which scientific panel should the researcher choose for his proposal? Must it be in the field of their highest degree diploma?**

Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions have a bottom-up approach, meaning that proposals from all scientific areas (including those covered by EURATOM) are eligible for funding. The proposal should be submitted to one of the 8 main scientific areas, defined in the MSCA Work Programme, in which the proposal best fits. It is not compulsory to choose the same field as the applicant's PhD.

For example, if the researcher has a PhD in chemistry and the proposal is mainly focusing on bio-chemistry the researcher can freely choose to submit the proposal in CHE (chemistry) or LIF (life sciences). The list of descriptors are available via the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship call page of the Funding & Tenders Portal.

**Grant preparation, signature, reporting**

**Q48. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), if the researcher's family status changes during the project, can a family allowance be granted and the maximum EU contribution increased?**

Under Horizon Europe, if the recruited researcher acquires family obligations during the implementation of the project (marriage, or relationship with equivalent status, or dependent children), the family allowance can be requested and added. This is different to Horizon 2020 calls whereby the researcher's family status remained fixed for the duration of the action.

**Q49. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), if the host institution receives an operating grant in the framework of another EU funding programme, is there an impact on the MSCA grant?**

Yes, there is an impact. Indirect costs are already reimbursed by the operating grant so the budget of the Postdoctoral Fellowship must be reduced accordingly, in order to avoid double funding of

indirect costs, unless the beneficiary can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any (direct or indirect) costs of the action.

**Q50. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), can EU funds be transferred to a third country, including the funding intended to cover indirect costs?**

The EU contribution must be directly managed by the beneficiary established in an EU Member State or Associated Country. According to Article 9 of the MSCA-PF Grant Agreement, the beneficiary may call upon associated partners to implement part of the action (e.g. hosting and training the researcher during a secondment or the outgoing phase of a Global Fellowship). Associated partners participate in the action but do not sign the grant agreement and do not have the right to charge costs or claim contributions. Only the beneficiary can claim contributions. The beneficiary retains sole responsibility for implementing the action and complying with the grant agreement, including an obligation to ensure that certain contractual obligations also apply to associated partners. It is highly encouraged to define these obligations as well as financial arrangements between the beneficiary and associated partners, according to the needs of the project, in a partnership agreement. For a definition of “associated partner”, please see 2.3.1 Annex 2 of the Horizon Europe Work Programme.

**Q51. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), does the researcher have to justify his/her family status?**

If the proposal is successful, it is a contractual obligation for the beneficiary (the entity signing the grant agreement) to ensure that all the necessary documentation demonstrating the researcher’s family status is correct and is kept on file in case of audit.

**Q52. While implementing an MSCA-PF, the researcher has been awarded a permanent academic position within an organisation that is not the host institution. Can he/she nevertheless participate in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship?**

No, he/she cannot. According to Article 18 of the Model Grant Agreement for Unit Grants, the researcher must work exclusively on the action, unless part-time for professional reasons is allowed and has been approved; additionally, the researcher cannot receive incomes other than those received from the beneficiary for the activities carried out in the frame of the MSCA.

**Q53. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), is the participation of third parties in the action allowed?**

For MSCA-PF, the rules of the General Model Grant Agreement (Article 8) on the involvement of affiliated entities do not apply. MSCA-PF (Article 9) allows the beneficiary to use entities with a capital or legal link to it and/or associated partners to carry out work under the action.

"Associated partners linked to a beneficiary" are entities that have a link with the beneficiary, in particular, a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. Associated partners linked to a beneficiary may be used for the hosting and research training of researchers, and can even implement all those activities under the action. However, associated partners linked to a beneficiary cannot recruit the researcher (only the beneficiary can) and cannot host secondments (only associated partners can). They also cannot claim costs separately. Their involvement must be clearly described in Annex 1 (in particular, the name of the entity, the type of link with the beneficiary, and tasks to be carried out).

"Associated partners" are third parties involved in the action without a (capital or legal) link to the beneficiary. They may be used to provide training and host researchers during a secondment. A beneficiary using third parties remains fully responsible for them under the Grant Agreement.

**Q54. Is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF) transferable, so that a researcher could change host organisation during the action?**

The rules for the transfer of a grant to a new beneficiary are described in the Model Grant Agreement for Unit Grants, Article 41. It must be noted that the request to transfer the research training activities can only be made by the beneficiary of the grant, meaning the host organisation located in a Member State or Associated Country. To request a transfer of organisation, there must be serious reasons which affect the capacity of the beneficiary to implement the action.

**Q55. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), is it possible to work part-time?**

As a rule, in MSCA-PF the researcher must be employed full-time. Part-time employment can however be accepted on personal or family grounds, after the start of the action. Part-time for professional reasons in order to pursue supplementary activities can also be requested provided that it is agreed beforehand together with the supervisor and beneficiary and has received the prior approval of the European Research Executive Agency (REA). However, the researcher cannot be involved in two MSCA grants at the same time. In case of part-time work for professional reasons, the researcher must dedicate at least 50% of their working time to the MSCA-PF action.

For Global Fellowships, part-time work due to engaging in supplementary activities cannot take place during the outgoing phase. Supplementary activities include, for example, creating a company, pursuing another research project, engaging in advanced studies not related to the MSCA grant.

**Q56. Under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), may a researcher remain under an existing contract at the host institution during a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship?**

If the researcher is already employed at the host institution at the start of the fellowship, an additional contract is not required provided that all of the conditions of the Grant Agreement are respected in the original contract.

**Q57. Under a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF), the researcher has already accepted external funding for the same research/costs. Can the researcher dedicate part of the MSCA-PF grant as a top-up to the current grant?**

No, it is not possible because the other grant would generate a profit under the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship. According to the Financial Regulation (Article 192), grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action (no profit principle). The MSCA Grant Agreement provisions clearly state that the researcher should be employed full-time and be working exclusively for the action.

**Q58. During an MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF), the researcher requires additional funding for personnel and lab equipment that is not covered by the MSCA grant. Is it possible to apply for another grant in that respect?**

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) scheme does not prevent the host institution from receiving additional funding as long as the same costs are not reimbursed by both grants, and the researcher does not receive (for activities carried out in the frame of the action) other incomes than those received from the beneficiary.