



Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellows (IF)¹

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This document complements the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*² with information on the conditions of appointment and remuneration specifically for those holding an MSCA Individual Fellowship (IF).

I. Your employment contract and social security

Organisations recruiting IF fellows have an obligation to appoint each one under an employment contract (or other direct contract with equivalent benefits) with full social security coverage, including:

- Sickness, parental, unemployment and invalidity benefits
- Pension rights³
- Benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases

In exceptional cases, national law prohibits the possibility of employing fellows under a regular employment contract/other direct contract with equivalent benefits. In this situation, you may instead be offered a fixed-amount fellowship with remuneration equal to 50% of the funding rate for the living allowance paid to those on to full employment contracts. If you are being recruited under a fixed-amount fellowship agreement, you are nevertheless entitled to receive minimum social security coverage. This must cover sickness, parental, and invalidity benefits, as well as benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases, at the same level that other workers receive.

Part-time employment (limited to a maximum of 50% of the time spent under the project) is also possible, due to professional, personal or family reasons and subject to prior approval by your host organisation and the Research Executive Agency (REA) of the European Commission. The same conditions apply in those cases as with full employment contracts, with all payments adjusted in proportion to the agreed part-time workload. Part-time employment for professional reasons can be requested during the project implementation⁴ in order to pursue supplementary activities, such as creating a company, pursuing another research project, engaging in advanced studies not related to the MSCA grant, etc. but cannot be combined with participation in another MSCA grant. If not agreed upon, a suspension of the research training activities for professional reasons can be requested.

¹ This document is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources. Neither the European Commission nor the Research Executive Agency (or any person acting on their behalf) can be held responsible for the use made of this information note.

² Downloadable from https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/sites/mariecurie2/files/information-package-msca-fellows-1.2_en_0.pdf

³ You may also wish to check whether you are eligible for RESAVER, a single European pension arrangement designed for researchers that preserves supplementary pension benefits when moving between different countries. Please see <http://www.resaver.eu/>

⁴ Except during the outgoing phase for Global Fellowships.

The most essential document with which to be familiar is your employment contract (or equivalent, see above). It should generally include:

- Your financial entitlements, including the currency in which they will be paid
- The starting date and duration of your research activities
- The name of your supervisor(s)
- Arrangements related to intellectual property rights regarding research results

Your employer should provide you with the resources and equipment required to conduct your work. Should it be necessary for you to use the infrastructure or premises of other organisations in order to conduct your research, this should be outlined in the grant agreement. Therefore, secondments to other organisations must be agreed in advance with your supervisor and/or employer.

Please note that your employment contract could also include further provisions, for example related to ethics, requirements to be present in the lab, rules in place for requesting holiday or sick pay, etc. As with any contract, non-respect of the provisions could result in consequences, for example the contract's termination. It is therefore important to be clear regarding what is required of you during the period of your employment. Moreover, your work contract with your beneficiary is signed under national law in the country of your appointment. Your contract is therefore solely with your employer; you do not have a contractual relationship with either the European Commission or the Research Executive Agency.

II. Salary and other financial benefits

A clear statement of your salary and allowance amounts is one of the most important pieces of information to look for in the contract that you will be offered. The minimum salary amounts and additional allowances vary across different MSC actions - below you can find the details for IF.

Your employer has a legal responsibility to inform you about your employment status, rights and obligations, including specific financial arrangements and your obligations stemming from the grant agreement with the European Commission.

Your employer may decide to pay you an additional amount on top of the EU contribution. Furthermore, for certain expenses, the employer is recommended to use the funding that it has received to cover the research, training, and networking costs or management and indirect costs. This would be the case if extra health insurance is required to ensure that you are covered in all countries where you will work during the fellowship.

However, your employer may not use the funding provided for your living, mobility, or family allowance in order to pay, for example, tuition fees, healthcare costs (above compulsory social security contributions), or expenses of secondments (travel, housing, etc.). By the end of your fellowship, you must have received the amounts due to you as described below, minus only the statutory (legally required) deductions for taxation and social security (both employer and employee contributions).

A clear explanation of how your net salary is calculated should be provided by your employer. Note that the total amount received may vary from employer to employer, even within the same country. This is because employer as well as employee payroll taxes and social security costs can be deducted from the gross salary.

NB: Non-Eurozone Members: The project budget is calculated and paid in euro; beneficiaries must also report their costs in euro. Where your allowances are not paid in euro (i.e. because your

employer is not located within the Eurozone), the allowances you receive may consequently fluctuate due to exchange rate changes. Your employer is required to report the costs on the basis of an average of the daily exchange rates over the reporting period. It is permissible for an employer to slightly underpay a fellow on a monthly basis, as long as the fellow receives the correct amount by – at the latest – the end of their fellowship.

According to the applicable Horizon 2020 Work Programmes, the reference rates for living allowances of MSCA fellows in IF (i.e. your basic salary before taxation and other deductions) is **EUR 4 650 per month** under the 2014-2017 calls and **EUR 4 880 per month** under the 2018-2020 calls.

However, keep in mind that these are only the reference rates, meaning they are subject to:

- 1) **The Country Correction Coefficient (CCC)** – a multiplier which is applied to the reference rates in order to account for relative prices in the country where you are going to conduct your research (i.e. the country of your recruiting beneficiary in IF European Fellowships, while in the IF Global Fellowships this is the country of your host organisation 1) during the outgoing phase and 2) during the return phase. The CCC does though not change while you are seconded to other participating organisations within the action duration). You may check the Country Correction Coefficient for a specific country in the MSCA Part of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme.
- 2) **Compulsory deductions** as defined by national legislation of your employer's country. These may include social security contributions (of both employer and employee), taxes, etc.

In addition to the basic salary, as an IF fellow you are eligible to receive a mobility allowance (for all fellows) and a family allowance (if you have family obligations⁵). Both allowances are paid as fixed monthly amounts (the Country Correction Coefficient is not applied) to the beneficiaries, who will pay them to you. Depending on the applicable national legislation, these amounts may be excluded from taxation. You could ask your employer to combine several months of mobility allowance into a large advance payment, in order to meet the high initial costs of moving country. Please also note that these allowances are gross amounts, subject to applicable deductions and taxation:

- Mobility allowance: EUR 600 per month
- Family allowance: EUR 500 per month

III. Career Development Plan

IF fellows should have a personal Career Development Plan developed jointly with your supervisor(s). The Plan is an outline of all the activities (such as planned publications and development of non-research skills) that you will undertake during your fellowship with the goal of improving your professional and academic standing for the long-term.

Your grant includes a contribution for your employer to cover the costs of the research, training, and networking that you will do. Your employer may use this funding to support the costs of any career development activities that are mutually agreed with you.

Any activities specified in the description of your project that is annexed to the grant agreement are a condition of the grant and must be implemented.

⁵ Family is defined as persons linked to you by (i) marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) dependent children who you are actually maintaining. The family situation is determined at the deadline of the relevant call for proposals.