



# Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie staff members in Staff Exchanges

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# **Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie staff members in Staff Exchanges**

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# Information note for participants in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Staff Exchanges (SE)

This document provides information on the conditions for, and the financing of, secondments as part of a Staff Exchanges (SE) projects and complements the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*.

## 1. What is the Staff Exchanges (SE) scheme?

The SE scheme aims to promote inter-sector and international collaboration among organisations engaged in research and innovation (R&I) activities via the exchange of R&I personnel (staff members), to bring knowledge and ideas from research to market (and vice-versa).

SE involves R&I organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (in particular SMEs), based in Europe (EU Member States [MS] and Horizon Europe Associated Countries [AC]<sup>1</sup>) and outside Europe (third countries). The organisations constituting the partnership contribute directly to the implementation of a joint R&I project by seconding and/or hosting eligible staff members.

## 2. SE Staff Members

### 2.1. Eligibility

To be eligible for secondment within an SE project, you must – at the date of secondment – be:

- Either doctoral or post-doctoral researcher staff<sup>2</sup>; or
- a technical, managerial, or administrative staff supporting the R&I activities of the project; and
- actively engaged in or linked to research and/or innovation activities **for at least one month (full-time equivalent) at the sending institution before the first period of secondment.**

## 3. What are my rights as a SE staff member?

### 3.1. Conditions during the secondment

Your sending organisation must ensure that your rights and obligations remain unchanged during the secondment. You must be able to enjoy at least the same standards and working conditions at the place of the implementation of the secondment as those applicable to local persons holding a similar position. Throughout your secondment, you should be covered by an adequate medical insurance scheme. After your secondment, you should be reintegrated at your sending organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> [list-3rd-country-participation\\_horizon- Euratom\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> See key terms

The participating organisations (sending/hosting) must ensure that you are seconded on a full-time<sup>3</sup> basis. You are therefore not expected to work on other R&I activities during the period that you are receiving SE funding. Equally, your sending/hosting organisation cannot require or insist that you work on other R&I activities except those of the SE project.

### 3.2. Relationship between the staff member and the sending organisation

The type of relationship (employment contract, fellowship or other) between you and your sending organisation is not pre-defined by the SE project. However, this relationship must comply with national law and internal practices and, during the secondment, confer to your sending organisation the necessary legal means in terms of controls and instructions to ensure the proper implementation of the R&I activities in line with the grant agreement. If this is not the case, the sending organisation must conclude a contract or a supplementary agreement with you which will allow this before the secondment.

### 3.3. Assistance

The participating organisations (sending/hosting) are required to assist you in all administrative procedures related to your secondment within the project<sup>4</sup>, for example in obtaining a visa, finding local accommodation, etc. They are also required to inform you about your rights and obligations under the grant agreement (GA), including when and for how long your secondment shall last and the allowances you are entitled to receive.

### 3.4. Hosting

During the secondment, your hosting institution should provide you with the resources and equipment required to conduct your work. Note that your host institution may be required to prove that your secondment took place as declared<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.5. Supervision

Your host institution should be able to ensure adequate supervision of your research to allow you to satisfactorily complete your research project while on secondment (see [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#)).

## 4. Allowances

The financial contribution provided to your sending organisation for the purposes of implementing the SE action is calculated based on unit contributions. A unit contribution is a fixed amount **per month of secondment** (called “person-month”).

The unit contributions of a SE project are divided into two categories: those for the benefit of the staff member (“staff member unit contributions”), and those for the benefit of the organisation (“institutional unit contributions”). The EU contribution is

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<sup>3</sup> Article 18 of the model grant agreement for SE

<sup>4</sup> Article 18 of the model grant agreement for SE

<sup>5</sup> Article 18 of the model grant agreement for SE

calculated by multiplying the amount per unit by the number of implemented person-months.

## 4.1. Staff member contributions

The staff member unit contribution is a **top-up allowance** (EUR 2.300 per person-month of the secondment) to be fully used to support your travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs during the secondment. Please note that your salary or any other type of remuneration that you might be receiving is not covered by the EU contribution. Therefore, your sending organisation is expected to continue paying your salary (or any other type of remuneration) during your stay abroad.

## 4.2. Institutional contributions

These allowances are divided into two categories:

- **Research, training, and networking contributions:** This is a fixed amount of EUR 1 300 per person-month of the secondment. Although administered by the beneficiary, this amount is intended to cover the costs associated with your participation in the project, for example attending training courses, conferences, workshops, coordination meetings and networking activities. This amount should also help to cover the cost of your research (e.g., consumables), as appropriate. Note, however, that the beneficiary is responsible for the proper use of this amount.
- **Management and indirect contributions:** This is a fixed amount of EUR 1000 per person-month of the secondment in order to cover the host institution's costs of involvement in the project.

## 4.3. Special needs allowance

This allowance contributes to the additional costs for the acquisition of special needs items and services for researchers with disabilities, whose long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments are certified by a competent national authority, and of such nature that their participation in the action may not be possible without them (e.g., assistance by third persons, adaptation of work environment, additional travel/transportation costs). These special needs items or services must not have been funded from another source (e.g., social security or health insurance). This special needs allowance should be requested when the need arises. The beneficiary where the staff belongs will contact the Project Officer at REA.

# 5. Specific Issues

## 5.1. Ethics and Research Integrity

The project must comply with ethical principles, including the highest standards of research integrity as set out in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>6</sup> and, all applicable international, EU and national law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols. Any specific

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<sup>6</sup> <https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf>

ethics requirements will be outlined in the Description of the action (Annex 1 to the grant agreement). Should any ethics concerns that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or project coordinator arise during project implementation, please refer to the complaints procedure below.

## 5.2. Complaints

Your project should have an internal complaints procedure in place, and it should be clear to whom you should refer to in case of complaints. Should any concern arise during project implementation that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or the project coordinator, please refer to the guidance on complaints in the “Supervision and career guidance” section of the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*. The REA Project Officer responsible for your project will also attend the mid-term review meeting and will offer you the opportunity to discuss any concerns that may arise.

## 5.3. Inform your Sending and Hosting Organisation

During the secondment, you are requested to inform your sending and hosting organisation of any events or circumstances likely to affect the planned R&I activities as soon as possible. These could include, for example, encountering difficulties with your research or seeking changes in your secondment plan.

## 5.4. Suspensions

Secondments cannot be suspended. However, stays at the hosting organisation may be split into several periods. Please note that to be eligible for funding, the overall duration of a secondment (e.g., summing up all the split stays) must be at least one month, and not last longer than 12 months.

## 5.5. Teleworking/virtual mobility

Teleworking from the country of the sending organisation (i.e., no mobility) is not allowed.

## 5.6. Intellectual Property Rights

The participating organisations must give you and, where appropriate, their partners in the project, royalty-free access to the background and results necessary for your research work. "Background" means any data, know-how or information that is held by an organisation *before* it signs the GA, and which is needed to implement the project or exploit its results. "Results" means any tangible or intangible output generated by the project, such as data, knowledge, or information.

## 5.7. Confidentiality

You must maintain all necessary confidentiality relating to your research work. If the project involves, uses, or generates information that should not be made public (e.g., commercially sensitive information, business or trade secrets, confidential market data, valuable results not yet protected by intellectual property rights, security-



sensitive information, etc), it should be identified and handled as 'sensitive' in accordance with the provisions of the Model Grant Agreement<sup>7</sup>.

## 5.8. Submission of Questionnaires

Based on Article 18. of the grant agreement, funded MSCA fellows are requested to submit two questionnaires about their experience: one immediately following the completion of the fellowship ("Evaluation Questionnaire") and one two years later ("Follow-up Questionnaire"). Please note that, as a MSCA Staff Exchange participant, you should complete **each form only once**, immediately after and two years **after your last secondment**.

We strongly value the opinions of all participants funded through the programme and your responses to these questionnaires will help us shape the future design of the MSCA.

## 5.9. How do I submit a Questionnaire?

The Evaluation Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#) and the Follow-up Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#). You will need to enter project related information, including your project number and acronym.

## 6. After your secondment

After your secondment period, you should be reintegrated into your sending organisation to share the knowledge you have gained.

You might consider other EU funding opportunities once you have completed your project.

### 6.1. MSCA Doctoral Networks (DN)

Doctoral Networks (DN) are competitively awarded, multi-beneficiary, international research and training networks providing post-graduate training in specific and interdisciplinary scientific fields. They bring together networks of research-performing institutions – both from the academic and non-academic sectors – around a common research and training programme to strengthen the career perspectives of doctoral candidates and to support entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation in Europe and beyond.

Vacancies in DN projects are advertised and published internationally, including on the [Euraxess website](#). The recruitment procedure is open, transparent, impartial, and equitable. Therefore, the final decision is taken based on the applicants' scientific skills, the relevance of their research experience, the impact of the proposed training on their career, and ensuring a fair gender representation.

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<sup>7</sup> Article 13 of the model grant agreement for SE.

## 6.2. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

These are individual research fellowships awarded to the best or most promising researchers of any nationality looking to enhance their career development and prospects by working abroad. Two types of fellowship are funded: **European Fellowships**, whereby researchers must either move to or within Europe (Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country), and **Global Fellowships**, in which the fellow is seconded to a third country for a maximum of two years and then must return to a European host institution for a mandatory 12-month period. To be eligible, fellows must be postdoctoral researchers at the date of the call deadline, i.e., in a possession of a doctoral degree.

Funding is available for a period of between 12-24 months for European Postdoctoral Fellowships and 24-36 months for Global Postdoctoral Fellowships. More information is available in the MSCA Work Programme and the respective PF Guides for Applicants.

## 6.3. The Marie Curie Alumni Association

As an MSCA researcher, you are also eligible to join the MCA Alumni Association. Established as a not-for-profit organisation in 2014, the Association offers opportunities for networking and peer exchange, an alumni directory, job offers, an events calendar, and other services of potential interest to researchers. The MCAA is free to join and is open to all MSCA-supported researchers, past and present.

## 6.4. Other opportunities

A number of other ideas for opportunities after you have completed your fellowship, as well as several online resources are listed in the general information package for MSCA fellows under section 11: “Looking ahead: Opportunities after your fellowship”.

## 7. Key terms

- **Beneficiary:** every participating organisation that signs the Grant Agreement (GA) with the European Research Executive Agency (REA) is a "beneficiary". Each beneficiary contributes directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by supervising, hosting, training and/or seconding staff members.
- **Associated Partner** organisations contribute directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by hosting, supervising, training and/or seconding staff members but do not sign the GA.
- **Staff members** are either doctoral candidates (i.e., not in possession of a doctoral degree) or post-doctoral researchers (i.e., in possession of a doctoral degree), as well as administrative, managerial, or technical staff supporting R&I activities under the action. They have been actively engaged in or linked to research and innovation activities for at least 1 month at the sending organisation prior to the secondment. They have a legal link (e.g., employment contract) with the sending organisation. They have the proper expertise and skills to implement the R&I activities in the project.
- **Full-time equivalent** is the total time, according to national law, you have been working on R&I activities measured from the date when your legal link (i.e., contract) entered into force and without interruption.
- **Secondment period** means the period(s) spent by the *staff member* in a host organisation (including travel periods) for the purpose of the action and in line with the provisions of the GA, for at least 1 month and no longer than 12 months, and between different countries. Secondments between Member States and/or Associated Countries must be interdisciplinary if in the same sector (1/3 rule – SE)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Same-sector secondments that meet the interdisciplinary conditions between institutions in EU Member States / Horizon Europe Associated Countries are eligible for funding for up to 1/3 of the project's total eligible person-months funded by the EU.

Secondments are considered as interdisciplinary if the activities performed during the secondment integrate aspects (information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, or theories) from two or more different scientific disciplines.

