

Matchmaking Workshop for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Funding in Horizon Europe

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Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2023-24 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Between 2014 and 2020, the MSCA have supported 65,000 researchers in Europe and beyond.

- Increasing the quality of researchers' training and supervision offered.
- Strengthening research capacity (e.g., ability to attract funding).
- Improving human resources practices and procedures, and providing fairer and more attractive working conditions for researchers, including through career guidance and development.
- Building new and sustainable international and inter-sectoral partnerships and networks; better transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines, enhancing their global reputation and visibility.

International collaboration – Malaysian institutions

Main Actions in MSCA 2023-2024

1. Doctoral networks (Opening 29 May 2024, Deadline: 27 Nov 2024)
2. Postdoctoral Fellowships (Opening 10 Apr 2024, Deadline: 11 Sep 2024)
3. Staff Exchanges - innovative international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration in research and innovation through exchanging staff and sharing knowledge and ideas (Opened 5 Oct 2023, Deadline: 24 Feb 2024)
4. COFUND - co-finances new or existing doctoral programmes and postdoctoral fellowship schemes (Opened 10 Oct 2023, Deadline: 8 Feb 2024)
5. MSCA Staff Exchanges

The scheme fosters a shared culture of research and innovation that welcomes and rewards creativity and entrepreneurship and helps turn ideas into innovative products, services or processes. It is open to research, technical, administrative and managerial staff supporting R&I activities.

Increase international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility of research staff within Europe and beyond through collaborative research networks and activities.

Scope - MSCA Staff Exchanges

It involves organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (including SMEs) from across the globe. Here we focus on mobility between European and Malaysian institutions.

- Mobility through secondments: international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary.
- Skills' development.

Expected Outcome - MSCA Staff Exchanges

For members under exchange:

- Increased set of research and transferable skills and competences, leading to improved employability and career prospects within and outside academia.
- More knowledge and innovative ideas converted into products, processes and services.
- More entrepreneurial mind-sets, testing new and innovative ideas.
- Increased international exposure leading to extended networks and opportunities.

- Enhanced networking and communication capacities with scientific peers, as well as with the general public that will increase and broaden the research and innovation impact.

For participating organisations:

- Innovative ways of cooperation and transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines.
- Strengthened and broader international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaborative networks.
- Boosted R&I capacity.

Eligibility

- Participating organisations - consortium including at least 3 legal entities in 3 different countries, two of which in a different EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.
- Secondments must be between different countries (e.g., between two UK-MUC members in both countries).
- Secondments within European Member States must be between different sectors (academic and non-academic), except for interdisciplinary secondments, which must be limited to a maximum of one third of the total months spent under the action.
- Secondments must be performed on a full-time basis.
- Associated partners (e.g., UKM/ UTM/ UM) must include a letter of commitment in the proposal.
- Researchers at any career stage, as well as administrative, managerial and technical staff supporting R&I activities.
- The maximum duration of the project: 48 months.
- Maximum EU contribution: 360 person-months (i.e., €1.692m).
- Secondments: min. 1 month & max.12 months for each member.

Link to funding call: <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/calls/msca-staff-exchanges-2023>

MSCA Staff Exchanges 2023

Reference: HORIZON-MSCA-2023-SE-01-01

Deadline: 28 Feb 2024

MSCA Staff Exchanges involve organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (including SMEs) from across the globe.

Support is provided for international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility of R&I staff, leading to knowledge transfer between participating organisations.

Mobility through secondments

The organisations constituting the partnership contribute directly to the implementation of a joint R&I project by seconding and/or hosting eligible staff members.

Such a project must explore activities that can be based on previous work but should go beyond and generate or strengthen long-term collaborations.

Secondments must always take place between legal entities independent from each other.

Award criteria

1. Excellence - Quality and pertinence of the project's research/innovation objectives; soundness of the proposed methodology; quality of the proposed interaction. 50% - Threshold (e.g., 3.5 out of 5), Weight (e.g., 50.00%)
2. Impact - new and lasting research collaborations, achieving transfer of knowledge; credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives of staff members and contribution to their skills development; suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts; scientific, societal and economic impacts. 30% - Threshold (e.g., 3.5 out of 5), Weight (e.g., 30.00%)
3. Quality & efficiency of the implementation - work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages; Quality, capacity and role of each participant. 20% - Threshold (e.g., 3.5 out of 5), Weight (e.g., 20.00%)

Eight 'main evaluation panels'

1. Chemistry (CHE)
2. Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)
3. Economic Sciences (ECO)
4. Information Science and Engineering (ENG)
5. Environment and Geosciences (ENV)
6. Life Sciences (LIF)
7. Mathematics (MAT)
8. Physics (PHY)

The distribution of the indicative budget will be proportional to the number of eligible proposals received in each panel.

What is included in a proposal

1. Excellence

- 1.1. Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives
- 1.2. Soundness of the proposed methodology
- 1.3. Quality of the proposed interaction between the participating organisations

2. Impact

- 2.1. Developing new and lasting research collaborations, achieving transfer of knowledge
- 2.2. Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives
- 2.3. Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts
- 2.4. The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to impacts.

3. Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation

- 3.1. Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages
- 3.2. Quality, capacity and role of each participant, including hosting arrangements and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise

Delivery – MSCA Staff Exchange

- Report on-line.
- Annual/periodic reports – time consuming.

- Mid-term review.
- Limited 'check': 'easy' to spend?
- Based on trust in many cases.

Another opportunity - MSCA COFUND

COFUND – Doctoral & Postdoctoral Programmes

Co-finances new or existing doctoral programmes and postdoctoral fellowship schemes at national, regional or international level.

- Enhanced quality and sustainability of research training.
- Increased global attractiveness, visibility and reputation of the participating organisation(s).
- Stronger R&I capacity and output among participating organisations.
- Increased contribution of the participating organisations to the local, regional and/or national socio-economic ecosystems.
- Regular feedback of research results into teaching and education at participating organisations.

COFUND allowance

For costs of the researchers and costs related to the training, research expenses, etc.

- Doctoral programmes - EUR 2800 / month
- Postdoctoral programmes - EUR 3980 / month
- Duration: maximum 60 months

Eligibility

- Applications must be submitted by a single entity established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.
- The beneficiary may provide financial support to third parties (e.g., Malaysian UK-MUC institutions). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants (MSCA unit contributions).

Examples of Previous Projects with UK-MUC members - MC Staff Exch.

RESET - Reliability and Safety Eng. and Technology (€1,417,500, led by LJMU) with UKM and UTM each receiving €162k.

PRIGeoC - Partnership for Research In Geopolymer Concretes (€517,500, LJMU as a partner) with UNIMAP receiving €108,000.

i-Weld - Integration of advanced experiments, computation and data (€506,000, led by LJMU) with UM receiving €110k.

SynAM - Integration of Advanced Experiments, Imaging and Computation (€795,800, LJMU as a partner) with UTM receiving €124.2k.

ice-Link - Integration of Advanced Experiments, Computation and Data (€607,200, led by LJMU) with UM receiving €73,600.

Key elements for a successful application

- Complementary expertise and experience.
- Can enhance chances substantially
- Industrial application

- Follow EU's vision
- A high quality proposal in line with EU's assessment criteria
- Excellence.
- Impact.
- Implementation.

Presentation in the proposal

- Make it easy for reviewers to rate
- Address all assessment criteria.
- Make it 'believable'
- Preliminary results and track records.
- Make it short
- Underline or highlight key statements.
- When we review a proposal, what do we look at?

Some tips

- Attending international conferences and any network opportunities.
- Be positive.
- Keep an eye in opportunities.
- Be brave to take on research activities.
- Be positive and pro-active when managing a project (e.g., contact your UK or EU partners to see if any of them would like to take the lead in project preparation).
- Seek for UK or EU partners with complementary expertise and experience.
- Typically the number of a consortium ranges from 6 to 10 (e.g., 4 European and 4 third country members).

How do European institutions select their third partners?

- Leading researchers.
- Website (finding partners or apply as an individual)
- Complementary skills.

Justify the collaboration

- Bring a lot to the table.
- Industrial contacts, hosting researchers, organising activities, etc.
- Reliability.
- Thinking about the delivery.
- Personality
- Reputation in the circle.
- Your willingness to collaborate
- Approaching potential European researchers/ beneficiaries.

Why to collaborate with UK-MUC institutions via MSCA Staff Exc.?

- They can benefit from working with you.
- They have already heard of your research.
- Comparatively easy to prepare and resubmission allowed.

- Their reputation can be enhanced.
- They desperately need partners from third countries with the expertise and experience they need.
- Flexibility of using funds.
- They also need funds.

Research agreements between European & Malaysian institutions

- Mutual recognition.
- Easy bank transfer.
- Willingness of both sides.
- Mutual benefit.
- Possible challenges
- Sometimes slow approval process in both sides.
- Difficult to find a coordinator from an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country to lead the application.

Worth noting

- Key elements to enhance the chances
- Collaborations
- Industrial support
- Follow EU's vision
- A high quality proposal
- Many European proposals are often unsuccessful in their first submission.

Good luck and thank you for listening!