Service Partenariat et Valorisation – Délégation Provence et Corse

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowships (IF) 2020

Annotated B1 Template

*A guide to help IF candidates and their supervisors write a successful proposal*

Disclaimer: this annotated template will help you understand what is expected from the panels in each question, based on previous project evaluations. However, the official template has comprehensive guidelines that you must follow closely.

Call 2020 – Deadline 09/09/2020
1. Excellence

1.1 Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects

Successful proposals are selected for the originality of the research, the timeliness and the innovative aspects, with potential progress in the field.

The research objectives must be clearly defined, relevant and ambitious. Ambitious but attainable in order to remain credible (remember the fellowship only lasts 24 months).

The proposed research methodologies must be detailed and comprehensive; include relevant preliminary research, recent developments in the field.

If relevant, you need to emphasise the multi-disciplinary aspect of the project.

If there is a gender dimension, it will have to be sufficiently detailed to show you address the question seriously.

Keywords: objectives/ aims of the proposal, state of the art, methods, techniques, case studies, addresses the question of ...

Weaknesses of previous proposals:

- The theoretical dimensions of the project are not adequately elaborated.
- The methodology presents some unclear aspects. The case study selection is not well justified. The methods for the data analysis are not explained adequately.
- The interdisciplinary aspects are not well addressed, as the proposed perspectives from the various fields are described only in a generic manner.
- Some parts of the experimental design and data analysis are not presented with sufficient clarity and detail to be convincing.
- The proposed research methodology and approaches are not addressed at the appropriate level of detail.
- The gender dimension lacks the necessary detail.

1.2 Quality and appropriateness of the training and of the two way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host

The two-way transfer is what you as a post-doc will learn/ gain from the host institution, and what you will bring to the host institution/ team. At this stage, you are an experienced researcher and therefore the benefits for both you and the host institution need to be clearly visible.
Describe specific training courses that you have identified in the host institution (scientific and other transferable skills – please refer to the list in the template of what is expected).

Emphasise the part of your scientific background and your know-how/ skills that are currently missing in the host institution, and that you will bring.

**Keywords:** bi-directional exchange, strongly benefit, scientific collaborations, expertise of the candidate in, active supervision, guidance of the supervisor,

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**Weaknesses of previous proposals:**

- The transfer from the researcher to the host institution is limited in scope.
- The specific training on complementary transferable skills has not been properly outlined.
- The training activities the researcher will pursue are described in insufficient detail.
- Training in transferable skills is inadequate to be effective.
- It is unclear how the knowledge transferred from the researcher to the host will complement the existing methodological repertoire of the host.

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### 1.3 Quality of the supervision and of the integration in the team/institution

The section on the supervisor must follow the guidelines of the template. The evaluation is not purely based on the reputation of the supervisor as an experienced researcher in the field. His/her qualities as supervisor will be scrutinised and his/her track-record is relevant to the project. The supervisor will be administratively responsible for the project within the host institution.

Likewise, follow the guidelines in the template: seek information from the host lab (other teams and renowned scientists from lab, the campus, the international networking opportunities it offers and how it fits with your career plans.

**Keywords:** outstanding expertise, leader in the field of, manages team with X persons / supervised number of people: X PhD (who graduated with an average of more than X papers in high ranked journals), X Post doc, etc. Many of them are pursuing a successful academic career (eg: ..), managed successful grant applications, actively mentors trainees in...

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**Weaknesses of previous proposals:**

- The supervisor's experience in mentoring postdoctoral researchers is insufficiently described.
- The proposal insufficiently describes the international networking opportunities at the host institution.
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1.4 Potential of the researcher to reach or re-enforce professional maturity/independence during the fellowship

This is a description of your CV and how this project will help you towards scientific independence and professional maturity. It is not to be confused with the Impact section. Here, the panel expects to see your own career initiatives and your track record, and how this project fits into your career path:

- list international publications, with the impact factor (without your thesis supervisor) also providing the h-index,
- experience in management or supervision or mentoring,
- experience in the organisation of scientific events,
- if you have already written/secured some of your research/travel grants and fellowships,
- your contribution to the implementation of projects,
- experience in the non-academic sector (with SMEs and Industries) and/or foreign country (country mobility).

Key words: Managing this project, develop my leadership in, enhance career prospect, excellent track-record, research experience,

Weaknesses of previous proposals:

- It is described insufficiently how the proposal will contribute to professional maturity of the applicant (e.g. the proposed research relies strongly on methods and questions available in the host lab and it is not sufficiently clear how transition to independence would be helped by the proposed experience).
- The proposal does not demonstrate that there would be many opportunities for leadership roles.
2. Impact

This section needs to be well-structured and convincing, and discussed with the host lab to make sure it is feasible. Remember you are marked out of 5 for this section so it needs to be as convincing as the scientific part of your proposal. Here are some tips:

There should be a dissemination plan that includes publications, conferences, seminars and contributions to popular scientific journals and websites, and exploitation plan and a wide variety of communication measures (e.g. Wikipedia, hackathons, website, newsletter) that is understandable for a BROADER audience. We suggest you present this section clearly, either in a table or with bullet points and a clear structure, consider using a colour code with links to the Gantt chart which you will insert in section 3.

2.1 Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship

This is about how the fellowship will strengthen and improve your employability, emphasising not only scientific skills but also transversal skills, you can separate it into sections such as:

Scientist in the field of ...
Project Management, leadership and visibility
Collaboration
Long-term strategic planning

NB: If you plan to apply for further European funding following the project mention the calls you have identified on the Participant Portal

Key words: academic job market, career prospects, transferable skills, proposal writing, leadership, track-record, scientific profile, open-access journals, responsibility, long-term career goals, future projects, career development, expand/consolidate skills, new connections

Weaknesses of previous proposals:
- Not clearly explained how potential networking opportunities will be used to develop new projects and collaborations.
- The proposed work is very ambitious and the proposal does not show how partial fulfillment of the research goals would still be beneficial for the researcher.
- Even if the research project would strongly reinforce the future career prospects of the researcher in the specific topics and areas of the proposal, it is not clear which new knowledge and skills would contribute to broader career perspectives after the fellowship.
2.2 Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results

Here you need to make a dissemination and exploitation plan which is clearly reflected in the Gantt chart.

Make sure to show you understand the difference between dissemination and exploitation.

**Exploitation** refers to the use of the results. It doesn’t necessarily mean commercialisation, it may refer to further research activities. In brief, **exploitation** is allowing somebody else to access your results to study and use them. That is why dissemination is important as this is the action of making those results available. **Dissemination** is not to be confused with communication (which communicates about the project in general, its objectives, who is involved, etc.). Once you have generated the first results and you’re going to send them out to universities or companies that would like to license that is **dissemination**.

You can separate this part into 2 sections:

**Exploitation Strategy should include:**

- The purpose of the results
- How they might be exploited, when and by whom
- IPR exploitable measures taken or intended – what form of IPR
- Further research required, if any
- Potential expected impact (quantifiable)

**Different forms of IPR:**

- Patent (inventions)
- Utility Model (inventions)
- Trade Marks (distinctive signs)
- Industrial Design (on the appearance of products)
- Copyright (literary, artistic..)
- Confidentiality (Know how)
- Trade secret

Mention the SPV department at the CNRS that provides support for intellectual property rights and patenting. Are there any industrial partnerships envisaged? How will this impact European leadership in the field?

**Dissemination strategy should include:**

- Who will be targeted (scientific, industry and other actors, professional organisations, policy makers, etc.)
- What channels of dissemination will you use (publishing in journals (specify if high-impact), conferences, workshops…) – indicate them in the gantt chart
- What is the content of the dissemination?
- What level of dissemination is planned (local/national/European/international)?
- How many publications, what frequency, will they be open access?
NB: When talking about publications, make sure, with the help of the host lab, that they are realistic, ask which conferences and workshops you can attend in the field and note them in this section.

Keywords: visibility, high-impact journals, international conferences, IPR office

Weaknesses of previous proposals:
- The management of Intellectual Property Rights is not sufficient given the nature of the proposed action
- Lacks the necessary detail for exploitation and dissemination activities aimed at relevant stakeholders
- The proposal has not sufficiently recognized the potential for exploitation of results derived from the project.
- The measures to disseminate the project results are not described at the appropriate level of detail. It is not sufficiently clear nor justified what the publications, panels, and workshop more specifically are aiming at (e.g. content and journal/conference), and at which level.

2.3. Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences

You need to show your capability of reaching a wider audience with new ideas and techniques to make the public aware of your research activities.

Firstly, check which activities are running in the lab, then discuss with the lab to see what new activities you could propose. Try to classify different activities by target audience and focus on extending the activities to a variety of target audiences using a range of techniques (e.g. traditional and new media). Here you should have a bigger focus on outreach than in the Dissemination Section of 2.2. The proposal template confirms:

*The type of outreach activities could range from an Internet presence, press articles and participating in European Researchers’ Night events to presenting science, research and innovation activities to students from primary and secondary schools or universities in order to develop their interest in research careers.*

Communication strategy:
- Who will be targeted?
- Which activities will you use to reach them?
- What innovative communication techniques will you use to make your science accessible?

Key words: outreach activities, web page, social media, patient’s groups, lectures, hackathons, team-building days, communication office, communication tools, broader community, develop interest in science among, Fete de la Science, future events
A dissemination and communication matrix is attached as Annex 1.

**Weaknesses of previous proposals:**

- The plan for the communication of the proposal lacks target audience specificity.
- Communication activities are not sufficiently detailed in the Gantt chart.
- The description of the measures to reach different target audiences lacks sufficient detail to be convincing of its effectiveness, for example, it is insufficiently described how social or written media will be used to disseminate the results to the general public.
3. Quality and Efficiency of Implementation

This is an opportunity to show how your project is clearly structured and planned out in order to succeed and that it can be successfully implemented in the host lab. Separate the project objectives into Work Packages and tasks within each work package. A communication work package can also be included. Make sure your Gantt chart includes the project Work Packages and tasks and the milestones, deliverables and all dissemination, exploitation and outreach activities.

3.1 Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources

You must present the structure in Work Packages, the tasks, the human resources involved at the host lab or elsewhere and what are the milestones and deliverables. Explain the reasons for the allocation of person-months to each task.

Key words: work packages, objectives, milestones, deliverables, person-months, tasks, timely implementation, proper follow-up, supervision, project management tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses of previous proposals:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Allocation of Person-months to work packages and tasks is not convincingly justified</td>
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<td>- The project deliverables are not always presented in a project-stage-relevant manner</td>
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<td>- The feasibility of completing the planned work within a 2-year research program with no additional personnel clearly involved is not shown convincingly</td>
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<td>- The individual work packages are not described in sufficient detail.</td>
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<td>- The definitions of deliverables and milestones displayed in the Gantt chart are not clearly provided in the text.</td>
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<td>- Measures to implement the training programme are not sufficiently specifically outlined or clearly included in the work packages.</td>
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<td>- Outreach activities insufficiently planned in the Gantt chart</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The benefits that a secondment would bring to the project are not adequately addressed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Essential training activities have not been precisely indicated in the Gantt chart.</td>
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1 **Milestones** are control points in the action that help to chart progress. Milestones may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable, allowing the next phase of the work to begin. They may also be needed at intermediary points so that, if problems have arisen, corrective measures can be taken. A milestone may be a critical decision point in the action where, for example, the researcher must decide which of several technologies to adopt for further development.

2 A **deliverable** is a distinct output of the action, meaningful in terms of the action’s overall objectives and may be a report, a document, a technical diagram, software, etc. Deliverable numbers should be ordered according to delivery dates. Use the numbering convention <WP number>.<number of deliverable within that WP>. For example, deliverable 4.2 would be the second deliverable from work package 4.
3.2 Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management

You must discuss how the project will be managed and monitored (how often and with who you will have progress meetings), mention

- How often you will have meetings with your supervisor(s)
- the SPV department of the CNRS who will help with managing the budget
- the administrative support from the lab management team for purchases and financial matters

You must also prepare a section on risk management - define low, medium and high risk activities and the contingency plan/mitigation measures. This can be clearer if presented in a table format.

Risk management is often confused with administrative and project management issues. However, you must explain briefly the scientific risks you have identified in the project and potential solutions for them:

- delays due to XX tasks and how to compensate for these delays within the short period of the project (remember it is only 24 months),
- unable to do field work for X reason and plan B incase this happens,
- unable to do a task for X reason etc. and how this could affect this other tasks. How you can ensure to carry out the rest of the project despite this issue.

Key words: corrective measures, risk, assistance, internal lab meetings, bi-monthly/weekly progress meetings, evaluating risk, critical assessment

Weaknesses of previous proposals:

- The risk management procedures are addressed at an insufficient level of detail to ensure successful completion of the project. The proposal does not sufficiently indicate specific alternatives in case of failure to access the organisations where fieldwork is planned to be carried out.
- Insufficient attention is given to the identification of some experimental risks and to the elaboration of their mitigation strategies.
- The monitoring of the supervisor to analyze the progress and difficulties of the research plan should have been more clearly detailed.
- Risk plan too general, project depends on work carried out by collaborators which involves the risk that work cannot be carried out as planned

3.3 Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)

You must detail the facilities available to you at the host lab, why they are appropriate, if there are highly qualified personnel to help, expertise available, experience managing EU funded projects, international networks and collaborations, cooperation with research teams related to the topic, technical support, support for adapting to the new country and environment (accommodation and social activities).

Examples for presenting the CNRS host infrastructure:

- The National Centre for Scientific Research, or CNRS, is a public organization under the responsibility of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. As the largest
fundamental research organization in Europe, the CNRS carries out research in all fields of knowledge, through its ten institutes. (or)

- The National Centre for Scientific Research is an interdisciplinary public research organisation under the administrative supervision of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Present in all fields of knowledge, the CNRS ranks among the leading global research institutions for its excellent research and innovation achievements. With a budget of 3.3 billion, over 33,000 staff dedicated to research and 1,144 research laboratories in France and abroad, CNRS addresses the needs of society and industry with a high level of excellence (21 Nobel price, 12 Field price, etc.).

- The CNRS Grant Office (SPV) indeed provides expert assistance with grants and fellowships, offering beginning-to-end administration of externally awarded funds.

- The SPV will for instance, organize a kick off meeting between the SPV, the financial department (SFC) and the laboratory (researcher, administrative support). It will also take care of all the issues dealing with time sheets, financial supporting documents, and the financial reporting.

- The financial department (SFC) will be in charge of the reception of the grant from the EC, the setting up of the grant allocation and the payment to the partners if needed.

- CNRS was awarded the HRS4R label from the European Commission in 2017. The Human resources department (SRH) will be responsible for establishing employment contracts, and supporting the fellow in obtaining a resident permit, finding accommodation, in accordance with the HRS4R label.

**Keywords:** communication with supporting staff, support, monitoring, adapting, host

**Weaknesses of previous proposals:**

- The administrative and organizational support structure for Marie Curie fellows at the host institution, which could ensure that the action objectives are reached, is **not described in sufficient detail**.

- The research infrastructures of the host laboratory are **not described in sufficient detail**.

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