

Definitions used throughout this Guide:

Action: under Horizon 2020, "action" refers to the specific project to be implemented by the beneficiaries.

Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs) must, at the date of recruitment by the beneficiary, be in the first four years (*full-time equivalent research experience*) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree.

Date of Recruitment means the first day of the employment of the researcher for the purposes of the action (i.e. the starting date indicated in the employment contract or equivalent direct contract).

Full-Time Equivalent Research Experience is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree entitling him/her to embark on a doctorate (either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited, even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged).

Mobility Rule: researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date. Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays, and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention¹ are not taken into account. For international European interest organisations or international organisations, recruited researchers must not have spent more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date at the same appointing organisation.

Academic Sector means public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research institutes whose primary mission is to pursue research, and international European interest organisations as they are defined in Article 2.1(12) of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No. 1290/2013.

Non-Academic Sector means any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No. 1290/2013. This includes all fields of future workplaces of researchers, from industry to business, government, civil society organisations, cultural institutions, etc.

Member States (MS) are member states of the European Union (EU), including their overseas departments.

Associated Country (AC) means a third country which is party to an international agreement with the Union, as identified in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013. http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf

Non-Associated Third Countries (TC) are countries which are neither EU Member States (MS) nor associated to Horizon 2020 (AC). Some TC are included in the list of countries eligible for funding, provided in the General Annex A to the Work Programme.

Coordinator is the beneficiary which is the central contact point for the Research Executive Agency (REA) and represents the consortium towards REA.

Beneficiaries are the legal entities that sign the Grant Agreement and have the responsibility for the proper implementation of the action. They contribute directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by recruiting, supervising, hosting, training and seconding researchers.

Partner Organisations contribute to the implementation of the action, but do not sign the Grant Agreement. Partner organisations do not employ the researchers under the action.

¹ 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol.
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Guide for Applicants
Innovative Training Networks 2018

Entities with a legal or capital link are organisations with an established relationship with the beneficiary which is not limited to the action nor specifically created for its implementation. These entities implement certain action tasks described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement, i.e. hosting and training of researchers. Such entities may not employ the researcher under the action. The involvement of such entities must be clearly described in the proposal and will be assessed as part of the evaluation. Such entities don't need to supply any letters of commitment but need to be included in the list of participants (part B1) and in the participating organisations table (part B2)

MSCA Work Programme: Part 3 of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 ("Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions"), European Commission Decision C(2017)7124 of 27 October 2017. Applicants should also refer to the Introduction and General Annexes.

European Charter and Code for Researchers: Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, C(2005)576 of 11 March 2005.

NB: *Links to documents referred to in this Guide are provided in Annex 1*

country and not the number of person-months. Proposals not complying with this condition will be considered ineligible.¹⁴ The 40,0% is determined on the basis of the maximum grant amount (beneficiaries will not be penalised for the non-execution of person-months by other beneficiaries during the project implementation).

3. Implementation of an ITN

3.1 *The Topic of the Action*

All Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions have a **bottom-up approach**, i.e. proposals in all domains of research and technological development are eligible for funding, except for areas of research covered by the EURATOM Treaty. Applicants will be required to define in the proposal the scientific and technological area within which the individualised research projects of the recruited researchers will be developed.

All research activities supported by Horizon 2020 should respect fundamental ethics principles (see below).

3.2 *Recruitment*

European Training Networks (ETN)

- Every beneficiary must recruit, host at their premises and supervise at least 1 researcher;¹⁵

European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD)

Two possibilities exist:

- i. a researcher is employed 100% by a beneficiary and sent to other beneficiaries or partner organisations for the share of time foreseen under the implementation mode in question, or
- ii. a researcher is recruited separately by each beneficiary for the period of time they spend there.

For EID, however, recruited researchers must spend at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector. This inter-sectoral mobility must be international between beneficiaries.

For EJD, at least two-thirds of the supported early-stage researchers within an EJD must be enrolled in a joint, double or multiple degree within Europe, i.e. between two or more beneficiaries/partner organisations established in a MS or AC. The remaining supported researchers must also be enrolled in a programme that results in a degree awarded by at least one European participating organisation (MS/AC).

Note that the mobility rule (see point 3.4 below) applies to the beneficiary where the researcher is recruited. If the researcher has a recruitment contract with more than one beneficiary, however, the mobility rule will apply to the beneficiary where the researcher is recruited for the first time in the action.

The choice of recruitment option and location of the premises of the recruiting beneficiary will have an influence on the fellow's salary in view of the different country

¹⁴ Note that an EID proposal with 3 beneficiaries from 2 different MS/AC would therefore also be considered ineligible.

¹⁵ With the exception of entities with a capital or legal link to a beneficiary, as outlined in point 2.1 above, where researchers can be hosted. Note, however, that only beneficiaries can recruit researchers.
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Guide for Applicants
Innovative Training Networks 2018

correction coefficients (see Table 2 of the MSCA Work Programme 2018-2020). It may also affect the eligibility of the proposal (see 40.0% rule above).

The beneficiaries will be responsible for the selection and recruitment of the eligible researchers. An important aspect of the Commission's policy towards researchers is to improve their working and living conditions and to promote mobility in order to open up new perspectives for research careers within Europe. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions aim to act as a catalyst in this respect. The beneficiaries will therefore be required to meet certain conditions relating to the publishing of vacancies, recruitment and length of appointment of researchers and which should be in line with the principles set out in **the European Charter and Code for Researchers** (see [Definitions](#)). Note that a beneficiary may not recruit a researcher via an employment agency.

3.3 Eligible Researchers

All researchers recruited in an ITN must be **Early-Stage Researchers** (ESRs) and undertake transnational mobility (see point 3.4 below). For all recruitments, the eligibility of the researcher will be determined at the date of their **first recruitment** in the action. The status of the researcher will not evolve over the life-time of the action, even if they are re-recruited at another beneficiary.

3.4 Conditions of Mobility of Researchers

Researchers can be of **any nationality**. They are required to undertake physical, transnational mobility (i.e. move from one country to another) when taking up their appointment (see mobility rule in [Definitions](#)).

Nationality is therefore not a criterion. Rather the location of the researcher's residence or main activity during the 3 years prior to their recruitment is determining.

Example: French nationals can be eligible for recruitment at a beneficiary located in France if they have resided or carried out their main activity outside of France for more than 24 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment.

Note that the mobility rule applies to the (first) beneficiary **where the researcher is recruited**, and not to beneficiaries to which the researcher is sent or seconded. It is also **only determined at one point in time**: that of the fellow's first recruitment in the action (see also points 3.2 and 3.3 above).

Refugees

Researchers with refugee status, as defined by the Geneva Convention, benefit from a less restrictive mobility rule: the refugee procedure (i.e. before refugee status is conferred) will not be counted as a period of residence/activity in the country of the beneficiary.

3.5 Duration of the Action and of the Recruitments

The duration of the action is limited to **48 months from the start date of the action set out in the Grant Agreement**. The recruitment of each individual **ESR**

will be supported for a minimum of 3 months and up to a maximum of 36 months. However, researchers enrolled in a doctoral programme are expected to be appointed for the maximum 36 months. Given the time required at the beginning of the action to advertise the vacancies and to recruit researchers, the 48 month duration offers a sufficient margin to ensure that the researchers can remain in place for the full 36 month period.

3.6 The Supervisory Board

Each action must have a clearly identified **Supervisory Board** co-ordinating the network-wide training activities.

Composition

The Supervisory Board will be composed of representatives of all beneficiaries and partner organisations and may also include any other stakeholders of relevance to the research training programme, including those from the non-academic sector. An appropriate gender balance should be respected in the board's composition. It is also considered best practice to include a representative from among the recruited ESRs.

Tasks

The board will oversee the quality of the programme and ensure an adequate balance between scientific/technological and transferable skills training. This shall be achieved through personalised research projects and training, appropriate to the needs of each recruited researcher. Involvement of the non-academic sector in the supervisory board aims to ensure that the skills acquired by researchers fulfil the needs of both academia and the non-academic sector and enhance the inter-sectoral employability of the researchers. The Supervisory Board will also establish an active and continuous communication and exchange of best practice among the participating organisations to maximise the benefits of the partnership. Finally, it will also oversee the quality and quantity of supervision of the ESRs.

3.7 Management and Consortium Agreement

Beneficiaries in all ITNs are **required to conclude a consortium agreement outlining their cooperation in the action**, in principle prior to the signature of the Grant Agreement. This agreement should, *inter alia*, cover the selection and recruitment procedures and principles, IPR, and the supervision arrangements, including qualifications of supervisors, etc. It should also outline any redistribution of institutional unit costs between the beneficiaries. The final consortium agreement must be provided to the REA as a management deliverable, normally within 2 months from the start date of the project.

The cooperation and communication within the action shall be as open and efficient as possible, with the appropriate involvement of recruited researchers (for the organisation of meetings and identification of training needs, for example).

4. Typical Activities of an Innovative Training Network

4.1 Research and Training Activities

Applicants must primarily propose a dedicated and high-level joint research training programme that focuses on promoting scientific excellence and exploiting the specific research expertise and infrastructure of the beneficiaries and of the collective