



Horizon Europe Programme

Guide for Applicants

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions - MSCA and Citizens

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Disclaimer

This guide aims to support potential applicants to the MSCA and Citizens 2023 call. It is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources. Neither the European Commission nor the European Research Executive Agency (or any person acting on their behalf) can be held responsible for the use made of this guidance document. Note that the guidance provided in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement shall prevail in case of discrepancies.



History of changes

Version	Date	Change	Page
1.0 2023	16.04.2023	▪ Initial version	

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1. MSCA and Citizens – A few definitions

All main definitions (not included in this guide) are available in the MSCA part of the Work Programme. *Links to other official documents (e.g. [Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme part](#), [Horizon Europe General Annexes](#), [Horizon Europe Lump Sum Model Grant Agreement](#), [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#)) are provided in the [call page](#) on the Funding and Tenders Portal and are also accessible from the [REA website](#).*

Gender Equality Plan: Having a gender equality plan is an eligibility criterion for Public bodies, Higher education establishments and Research organisations from Member States and Associated Countries. Be aware that if the proposal is selected, having a Gender Equality Plan will be necessary before the grant agreement signature. Please refer to the [Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans](#).

To support beneficiaries, **National Contact Points** (NCPs) have been set up across Europe and beyond by the national governments to provide information and personalised support to Horizon Europe applicants in their native language. The mission of the NCPs is to raise awareness, inform and advise on Horizon Europe funding opportunities as well as to support potential applicants in the preparation, submission and follow-up of the grant applications. For details on the NCP in your country, please consult the [National Contact Points page](#).

2. MSCA and Citizens

MSCA and Citizens aims to bring research and researchers closer to the public at large, to increase awareness of research and innovation activities and to boost public recognition of science and research education. It will show the role of the researcher for the society and economy, as well as the impact of researchers' work on citizens' daily lives. It also aims to raise the interest of young people in research and scientific careers.

MSCA and Citizens will address the general public, attracting people irrespective of the level of their scientific background, with a specific focus on families, pupils, students, and notably those who do not have easy access to, and thus are less inclined to engage in, STEAM fields (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) or research activities. Inclusiveness is key to broaden access to science and research for all.

MSCA and Citizens also promotes gender balance and inclusiveness in science, Open Science, and Responsible Research and Innovation.

These objectives are pursued through the organisation of the European Researchers' Night and the implementation of the Researchers at Schools initiative.

The European Researchers' Night is the largest research communication and promotion event taking place across EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. It

takes place every year, **on the last Friday of September**¹. It supports events that can last up to two days: they can start on Friday and continue the following day. Pre-events, prior to the main event, and related post-events, such as wrap-up meetings or small-scale follow-up events, can also be organised. It is the occasion for a Europe-wide public and media event for the promotion of research careers.

The Researchers at Schools initiative strengthens the connection between research and education, by bringing researchers to schools and other pedagogical and educational centres to encourage interaction with pupils at all levels of primary and secondary education. Researchers and pupils will meet to talk about current and future challenges of our societies and the related key role of research. Pupils will learn directly about research projects and activities addressing the EU priorities and main orientations.

Typically, the activities are structured **around 5 Work Packages** (Awareness campaign, Activities during the NIGHT, Researchers at Schools activities, Impact assessment, and Management).

2.1 Beneficiaries

The MSCA and Citizen's activities can be organised either by one single beneficiary or by several organisations constituting a partnership at regional, national or cross-border levels.

Beneficiaries are **signatories of the Grant Agreement**. They directly contribute to the implementation of the action and may participate in one or several Work Packages and take complete responsibility for executing the proposed activities.

In the case of participation of more than one beneficiary, one of them takes the role of coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for the monitoring of the proper implementation of the action. It coordinates the claiming of the contributions, receives funding and distributes it.

2.2 Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by one or more legal entities established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

Legal entities created under EU law may be eligible to receive funding, unless their basic act states otherwise. International European research organisations² are eligible to receive funding.

¹ Except for countries which -for strong cultural reasons- would be prevented from organising any action addressing the public at large on such a date. In this case, the date should be as close as possible to the last Friday in September.

² 'International European research organisation' means an international organisation, the majority of whose members are Member States or associated countries, whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe.

Activities carried-out in non-associated third countries are not eligible for funding.

2.3 Project duration

The maximum duration of the project will be 24 months from the starting date specified in the Grant Agreement. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals covering activities for both 2024 and 2025, including the organisation of two successive editions (2024 and 2025) of the European Researchers' Night and implementation of Researchers at Schools activities during the project duration.

2.4 Types of activities

The European Commission has defined priorities, notably through the [EU Missions](#), which aim to tackle challenges faced by our societies. Applicants are encouraged to focus on and include activities relating to these priorities identified by the Missions in their events.

European Researchers' Night activities can combine education with entertainment, especially when addressing young audiences. They can take various forms, such as exhibitions, hands-on experiments, science shows, simulations, debates, games, competitions, quizzes, etc. Where appropriate, engagement with educational institutions should be sought to encourage formal and informal science education with the aim of improving the scientific knowledge base.

Researchers at Schools activities will allow researchers to showcase their work and interact with pupils. Researchers will engage with teachers, educators and pupils on challenges related to climate change, sustainable development, health and other issues related to the European Commission priorities and main orientations, such as the European Green Deal or the EU Missions. The Researchers at Schools activities should take place at any time during the project duration and should be subject to dedicated promotion, particularly towards schools and other pedagogical and educational centres.

Involvement of researchers funded by Horizon Europe or previous Framework Programmes, notably by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, is highly encouraged.

Partnerships and coordination at regional, national or cross-border levels will be strongly encouraged aiming at a good geographical spread and avoiding overlaps.

Beneficiaries should ensure that activities comply with all applicable health and safety rules.

2.5 Visibility of the events

The European Researchers' Night should be highlighted as a European (and Europe-wide) event, and each proposal should promote the European Union and its impact on the daily life of citizens in the most appropriate way, according to the set-up and the configuration of the event, its location and its activities. The applicants need to ensure the visibility and

acknowledgement of the EU support in all related communication activities, including the Researcher at School activities.

2.6 Financial Regime

Eligible costs will take the form of **lump sum** contributions as defined in the Decision of 11 March 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions and unit contributions for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions under the Horizon Europe Programme³. We strongly encourage you to read this document before submitting your proposal.

The expected EU contribution per project is between EUR 50 000 and 150 000 **per annual edition**. Therefore, the expected EU contribution requested for a proposal covering **two successive editions** of the European Researchers' Night and Researchers at Schools activities (2024 and 2025) is between EUR 100 000 and 300 000. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.

Applicants propose a lump sum based on a detailed estimation of costs. Following evaluation of the proposal and taking into account expert advice, an individual lump sum is fixed in each grant agreement.

Proposals must contain a detailed budget estimation that resolves the direct costs of each beneficiary in the following categories:

- personnel costs
- subcontracting costs
- purchase costs (travel and subsistence + equipment + other goods, works and services)
- other cost categories

Indirect costs are added by applying the 25% flat rate to the direct cost categories that qualify for the calculation of indirect costs⁴.

In addition, applicants must provide a split of the lump sum per beneficiary and affiliated entity (if any), and per work package. If applicants intend to organise two editions of the European Researchers' Night and Researchers at Schools activities, they shall indicate as well the total costs per edition.

Payment of the lump sum shares is linked to the completion of work packages. Therefore, it is recommended to design work packages in a way that enables the clear identification of whether the action has been completed. When designing horizontal work packages, this recommendation is an important consideration.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/unit-cost-decision_he-msca_en.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf

It is critical that the information provided in Part A is identical to the information given in proposal Part B. In case of discrepancy, the information provided in the Part A will take precedence, unless there is an obvious clerical error.

2.7 Timetable

Opening of the call	20 June 2023
Deadline for submission of proposals	25 October 2023
Evaluation of proposals	November/December 2023
Evaluation Summary Reports sent to proposal coordinators ("initial information letter")	From February 2024
Invitation letter to coordinators likely to be proposed for funding to prepare grant agreement negotiations with REA services	From February 2024
Signature of first grant agreements	March-April 2024

2.8 Award criteria and scores

The proposal will be evaluated against the award criteria defined in [General Annex D](#) of the Horizon Europe [Work Programme 2023-2024](#) and applicable to all Coordination and Support Actions. These are:

MSCA and Citizens 2023		
Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
(The following aspects will be taken into account, to the extent that the proposed work corresponds to the description in the work programme)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives - Quality of the proposed coordination and/or support measures, including soundness of methodology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from the project. - Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall. - Capacity and role of each participant, and the extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.

Scores

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria, and not for the different aspects listed in the table. For full applications, each criterion will be scored out of 5 in steps of 0.5. The

threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applied to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

High-quality applications not retained due to lack of funding, but passing all thresholds, may be granted the status of associated events.

3. Instructions for Completing Part A and Part B of the Proposal

MSCA and Citizens proposal part A can be accessed from the call page on the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) and is also accessible from the [REA website](#). It has embedded instructions.

Part B template and its Annex (a detailed budget table) can be downloaded from the call page on the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) and is also available from the [REA website](#). All instructions for completing part B and its Annex are embedded in the templates.