Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Postdoctoral Fellowships

Version 1, Date of release: December 2023

Marie Skłodowska
Curie Actions

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Congratulations on your successful application to the Marie Skłowdowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF). We hope that your experience as an MSCA researcher proves to be a fruitful and rewarding one, both personally and professionally.

The purpose of this short guide is to provide some information and anticipate some questions relating to the implementation of your Fellowship under Horizon Europe, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation.

Your project will be managed by the European Research Executive Agency (REA), an agency established by the European Commission to manage EU research grants.

Although your supervisor and/or the people at your host institution responsible for administering your project should be your first points of contact, should you experience any difficulties or require any assistance, **your main contact at REA will be your designated Project Officer (PO)**. Contact with your PO should take place exclusively through the Communication Centre interface in the [Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal](#) ("the Portal"), under "Manage Project", unless you would like to discuss sensitive or private issues.[1]
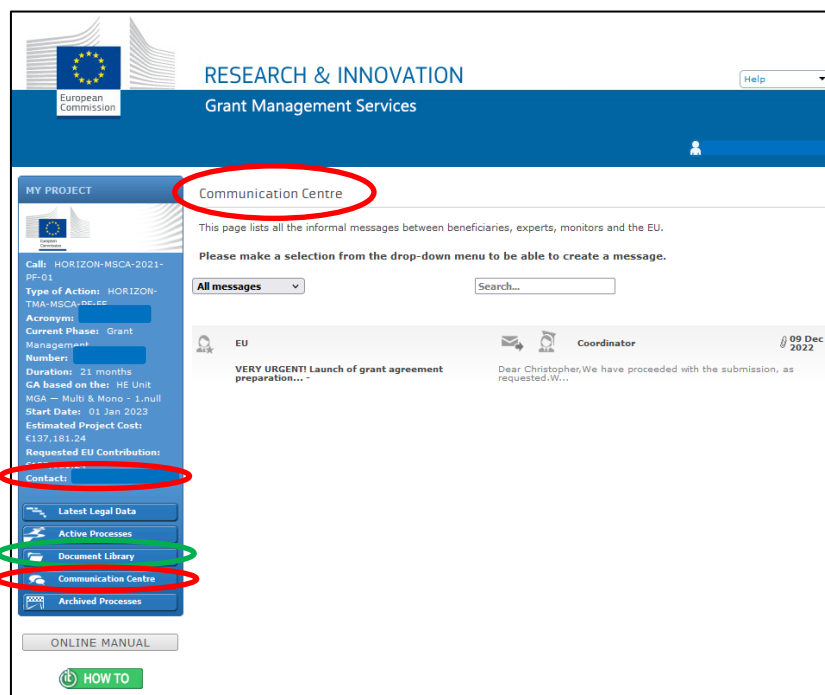
Figure 1: How to communicate with your Project Officer and how to view the grant agreement

We strongly encourage you to read carefully the grant agreement and its annexes, which represent the legal contract between REA and your host institution. These are the principal legal texts that will govern the implementation of your fellowship. You can find them under "Document Library" (see green circle in figure 1 above).

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[1] The name of your Project Officer is indicated in the Portal under "Contact" while their telephone number and email address are available via the EU Whoiswho website. Note that any communication that takes place through the Communication Centre is visible to all of the appointed representatives for your project.

1. Project Implementation[2]

1.1 Researcher Mobility Declaration

A researcher "Mobility Declaration" (MD) has been introduced under Horizon Europe in order to facilitate the grant management process. This declaration is accessible via the project page on the Portal (Active Processes > Continuous Reporting data > Mobility > Mobility Declaration) and will be visible as of the start date of the project. The MD should be submitted in the system within 20 days of the start date and be kept up-to-date throughout the lifetime of the project. The MD can be reopened by the PO each time an additional change should be required. **Please note that the MD must be submitted by a representative of the beneficiary (i.e. your host institution**), and not by the researcher.

The MD should represent an accurate reflection of how the project is being implemented at any point in time, meaning that it should be updated to reflect all periods of activity, as well as suspensions, part-time work, long-term leave, secondments etc., some of which may subsequently also require a formal amendment (see below). After each change, the MD should be submitted to the PO. Guidance on how to use and complete the MD is provided throughout this document. A dedicated page is also available on the Portal.
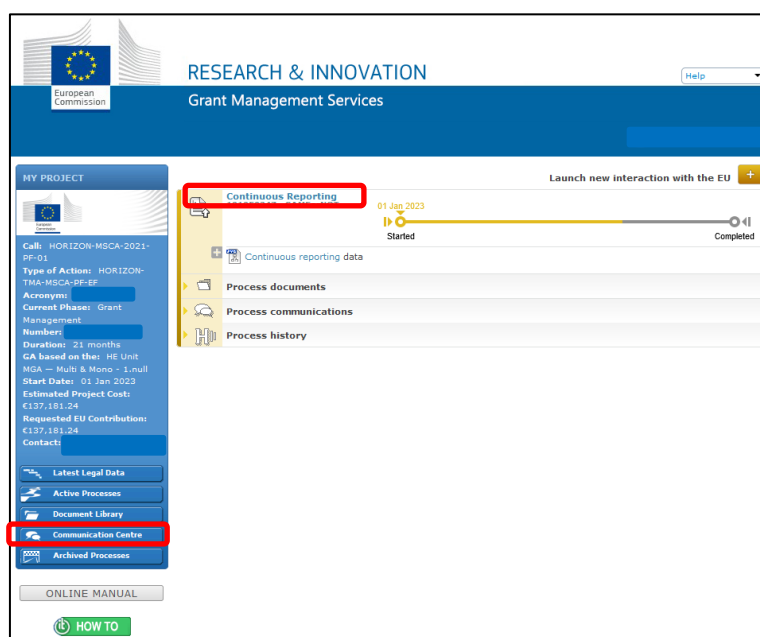

Figure 2: How to access the Continuous Reporting section for your project
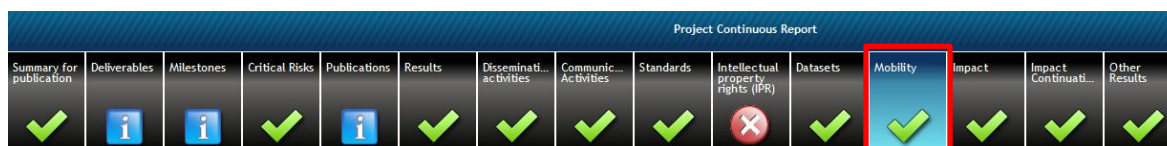

Figure 3: How to access the Mobility Declaration

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[2] For the purposes of Horizon Europe, each specific grant receiving funding is referred to as an "action". To avoid confusion with the Marie Sklodowska-Curie *actions*, the present document instead refers to "projects".

1.2 Project Start Dates

During the grant agreement preparations (GAP) for your Fellowship, your host institution selected one of the two start date options below. In both cases, your project will start automatically on the date in question. However, should you anticipate any problem with starting the project on this date, please **notify your PO as soon as possible**. Note that **it is not possible** to change this date retroactively.

- ***Fixed start date***
  This means that the project will start on the fixed date specified in the grant agreement. This is the day that you should start working on your project at the premises of the host institution with a signed employment contract.

- ***First day of the month after entry into force of the grant agreement***
  Rarely used unless you are already employed at the host institution, this option means that the project will have started on the first day of the month after the signature of the grant agreement by REA. This also means that, as of this date, you are at the premises of the host institution with a signed employment contract and begin working on your project.

What if you need to change the start date of your project?

- ***Starting earlier than planned***
  It may be possible to start earlier than on the date indicated in the grant agreement, if this date is in the future. In such cases, please contact your PO to see whether it remains possible to process an amendment to this effect. Note, however, that it is not normally possible to change a start date retroactively.

- ***Starting later than planned***
  Again, if this date is in the future then, in some cases, it may be possible to process an amendment to the start date, if the request is received in due time (at least several weeks in advance of the originally planned start date). In cases of short delays to the start date (of several weeks, for example), this period can be encoded as a "generic suspension" of 0% work in the Mobility Declaration, with the researcher actually starting work on the first day after the suspension is lifted. In this case, an amendment request must be submitted ca. 2 months before the original end date to extend the duration of the grant.

Note that in all cases the actual start date of the project must not be later than 1 September of the year following the signature of the grant agreement (i.e. if your grant agreement was signed in 2023, the latest possible start date would be 1 September 2024).

1.3 Your Host Institution and You

Your host institution (the "*Beneficiary*") is your employer for the purposes of your MSCA-PF project. For the duration of your project the beneficiary is required to provide you with an employment contract (or equivalent) with full social security coverage, to host you at its premises, and provide you with adequate supervision.[3] This also means that you should inform your host institution as soon as possible of any events or circumstances which are

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[3] See the obligations outlined in Annex 5 of the grant agreement, Specific rules for MSCA actions.

likely to affect your employment and/or the implementation of your project (Articles 18 & 19 of the grant agreement). These could include, for example, encountering difficulties with your research or seeking changes in your training plan, or – on a personal level – serious illness or pregnancy which may require the amendment or suspension of the agreement (see next point). In turn, your host institution has the obligation to inform REA about any events or circumstances likely to affect significantly or delay the implementation of the project (Article 19 of the grant agreement).

Part-Time Work

Under normal circumstances you are required to work full-time and exclusively on your MSCA-PF project for its duration (i.e. you cannot work on other projects or pursue additional professional activities during this time). However, part-time work is possible for either personal or professional reasons, as long as:

- The Project Officer at REA has been consulted
- This is agreed between you, the researcher, and your host institution
- You continue to work at the premises of the host institution during all periods of time charged to the project
- You work a minimum of 50% of your time (full-time equivalent) on your MSCA-PF project and this is accurately encoded in the MD
- This part-time work is on a daily, weekly or fortnightly basis (note that any period of absence for more than 30 consecutive days requires a suspension and cannot be charged as living allowance and mobility allowance)

Additionally, in the case of **professional part-time** (i.e. to combine your MSCA-PF with another professional activity):

- Reliable time records must be kept – either on paper or in a computer-based time recording system – which demonstrate the actual time spent by the researcher on the MSCA-PF project
- The researcher must not undertake the same research in more than one project
- There must be no double-charging of costs between two projects
- The researcher must not benefit from two MSCA grants at the same time
- The researcher's total professional time commitment must not exceed 100% FTE
- The part-time implementation of the project must not jeopardise the research and training activities of the MSCA-PF project
- For Global Fellowships (GF), part-time work for professional reasons <u>must not</u> take place during the outgoing phase

In all cases, part-time work must be correctly encoded in the MD. Each period of part-time work requires the creation of a new "recruitment period" within the existing MD line.

Suspensions

Once your project has started, any periods of absence for more than 30 consecutive days must be reflected in a suspension (via encoding of 0% work in the MD). During such "generic" periods of suspension, no unit contribution can be claimed. Note that suspensions of your fellowship (other than for reasons of long-term leave – see below) should not exceed 30% of the project's duration.

Long-Term Leave Allowance

Where your absence during a period of more than 30 consecutive days results in costs being incurred by your host institution (e.g. maternity, paternity, parental, sick or special leave) which are not covered by social security, these additional costs can be charged to the project. Such periods should be discussed with your PO and the beneficiary should encode these in the MD separately by selecting the specific reason for the long-term leave from the drop-down menu (e.g. "suspension for parental leave", etc.) under "Working Time Commitment". The percentage to be indicated in the MD should reflect the amount – expressed as a percentage of the combined living allowance (corrected by the country correction coefficient) and mobility allowance for the period in question – that the beneficiary is required under national legislation to cover as a contribution towards the social security costs arising from the researcher's leave. This may change over time (e.g. 20% for month 1 of the long-term leave, 10% for months 2 and 3, etc.), in which case each change should be encoded as a separate period. Note that periods of long-term leave when the full costs are covered by the national social security system should be encoded as long-term leave with a contribution percentage of 0%. During such periods, no unit contribution can be claimed for the project. In all such cases, please consult your PO before proceeding.

Telework

The MSCA is a researcher mobility programme. Therefore your presence at the premises of your host institution is an essential part of your project and of the MSCA programme more generally. **Teleworking from abroad is therefore not permitted.** Teleworking from the same country as your host institution – where this is in line with the policy of your host institution – can be accepted, as long as it is agreed with the host institution, it is only for a limited period of time (e.g. one day a week), and it does not interfere with the correct implementation of your research project. In all such cases, please consult your PO before proceeding.

Income

Not only must you work full-time and exclusively on your project (unless otherwise agreed), but you are not permitted to receive additional income from any other source for the research and training activities you are conducting in the context of your project, unless this is a "top-up" amount paid by – or via – your host institution, or by an institution mentioned in Annex 1 of your grant agreement.

1.4   Amendments and Formal Notifications

The grant agreement between your host institution and REA is a legal contract. Its provisions are therefore legally binding and must be respected. Any substantive changes to either the proposed work or the way that the project is implemented, whether they occur before the project starts or once it is underway, **must therefore be agreed and accepted by REA beforehand and, in some cases, via an amendment or formal notification procedure (see below).**

Amendments

Events requiring an amendment to the grant agreement include:

- Transfer of the grant agreement to a new beneficiary[4]
- Change of secondment host
- Increase in the maximum grant amount (in exceptional cases, for example due to the addition of the Family Allowance or special needs allowance, should there be insufficient funds to cover them)

In particular, amendments may be required to reflect certain changes encoded in the MD, including periods of suspension or part-time work, which impact the end date of the project and which therefore must be reflected in an amendment to the end date of the reporting period. Such amendments should be submitted towards the end of the project (ca. 2 months before the original end date) so as to reflect the totality of the changes that have occurred.

Note that amendments should be discussed beforehand with your host institution and with the PO at REA and should always be requested *before* the actual change in question occurs.[5] Moreover, amendments **cannot** be submitted in the IT system – and therefore cannot be accepted *after the end date of the project*. Detailed information on submitting amendments is available on the Portal here, while a guide on the different types of amendments is available here.

Formal Notifications

Certain changes require a "Formal Notification" (via the Formal Notification option in the Portal) rather than an amendment. These include:

- Changes to the scientific supervisor (with letter of justification and the full CV of the new supervisor)
- Important changes in the scientific direction of your project (with letter of justification)
- Changes affecting your ability to implement the project as planned (e.g. due to difficulty to travel, unavailability of key infrastructure, resources, etc. – see Art. 19.3 of the grant agreement).

Again, in all such cases please consult your PO beforehand and ensure that the Formal Notification is submitted well before the change in question is scheduled to occur. Note that changes to the scientific supervisor, once approved by the PO, should also be encoded in the MD.

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[4] Note that your personal circumstances (e.g. other professional opportunities, personal or family commitments) are NOT considered valid grounds for transferring the grant agreement to a new beneficiary.

[5] Amendments to increase the maximum grant amount should be requested ca. 2 months before the end of the project, knowing that in cases of early terminations there may be sufficient budget remaining to cover the additional costs without requiring an amendment.

> **How do I request an amendment or submit a Formal Notification?**
>
> As with all other project-related actions, amendments and formal notifications should be done through the Portal under the "Manage Project" section, and the link "*Launch a new interaction with the EU*". From there, an amendment request or a Formal Notification or even a GA termination can be launched. In the amendment information tab, please complete the "AMD Justification" box providing a description of your request (including dates, reason, and other relevant information). On the basis of the changes to the grant data, the system will automatically select the relevant amendment clause, while some others have to be selected by the Project Officer (e.g. Change of Annex 1). Once the amendment request is prepared, please send it for review by clicking on "Lock for review" and "EU review". Our amendment team can then help follow the process.
>
> Please note that requesting an amendment is the formal responsibility of the host institution, not the researcher.

Figure 4: How to request an amendment or send a Formal Notification

1.5   Associated Partners

Any institutions which will contribute to the implementation of your project, particularly in terms of hosting periods of your research, should be encoded as "associated partners" and therefore already appear in the grant agreement.

Associated Partners for Secondments

Under Horizon Europe, secondments in MSCA-PF projects can take place to institutions located anywhere in the world in order to contribute to the implementation of your project. During a secondment, the supervision of your research will be the responsibility of someone at the secondment host. **Secondments must be indicated in the grant agreement**. For European Fellowships, secondments must take place for a **combined period of no more than 1/3 of the project's normal duration** (i.e. max 8 months for a 24 month project). For Global Fellowships, **secondments are permitted for up to one third of the outgoing phase**. A maximum of three months of such secondments can be spent at the start of the project at the beneficiary (or associated partners linked to the beneficiary), allowing the

researcher to spend time there before going to the associated partner in the Third Country. However, **secondments cannot take place during the mandatory twelve-month return period** to the host organisation in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.
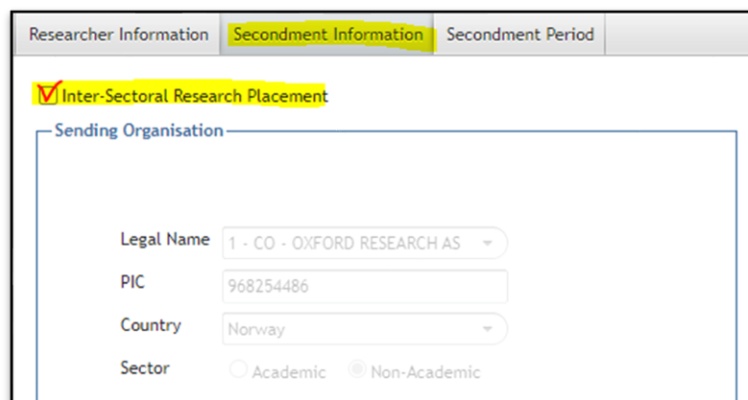
Note that if a secondment period is indicated in Annex 1 of the grant agreement (the secondment host should also appear in the text of the "core" grant agreement on pages 8-9), this is considered a contractual obligation. Any changes, for example to the institution hosting the secondment, or if you wish to add a secondment, must be agreed beforehand by the REA through the amendment procedure (see above). All such changes must be carefully explained and justified. Agreed secondments should be encoded in the MD, using the button "*Add secondment to this recruitment*". Select the associated partner which is hosting the secondment from the drop-down menu and encode the start and end dates of the secondment, as well as the time commitment of the researcher. Once encoded, the secondment will appear under the "Secondments" tab.

Short Visits

Short visits have a different nature and pursue different objectives. Like a secondment, a short visit can take place anywhere in the world and implies mobility to another location outside the physical premises of your host institution for the purpose of implementing your project (for field work, for example). However, the work done during a short visit is supervised directly by your institution. By definition, short visits should only be for a short period of time and can only represent a small part of the project. They should not be encoded in the MD. Should you have any doubt whether something qualifies as a "short visit", please consult your PO.

Associated Partners for Non-Academic Placements

Secondments and short visits **should not be confused** with Non-Academic Placements (NAPs), which in order to be eligible must have been requested at proposal submission stage (i.e. they cannot be added later on) and must take place *after the end of the normal duration of the project.* NAPs are only permitted to take place at the premises of a non-academic institution located in an EU Member State or HE Associated Country. This institution must appear in the "core" grant agreement. In the MD, NAPs are encoded under the "Secondment Information" tab ("*Add secondment to this recruitment*"), by ticking the box "*Inter-Sectoral Research Placement*" and then specifying the dates in question. Note that during a NAP your salary will continue to be paid by your host institution, irrespective of where the associated partner for the NAP is located.

Figure 5: Encoding secondments and NAPs in the Mobility Declaration

The hosting institution in a Third Country during the outgoing phase is considered as an associated partner and will therefore appear in the grant agreement. You will be required to encode information on the duration of your stay at the associated partner for the outgoing phase, including any suspensions, in the Mobility Declaration. Note, however, that time spent at the *beneficiary* during the outgoing phase (up to the maximum of 3 months) does not need to be encoded separately in the MD. It must, however, be agreed beforehand with your PO.

1.6   Open Science

Open science is a legal obligation under Horizon Europe. Its purpose is to foster greater transparency and trust for the benefit of scientific research and for EU citizens.

Open Access to Scientific Publications

The specific rules laid down in Annex 5 (Article 17) of the grant agreement require that all peer-reviewed scientific publications (including articles and long-text formats, such as monographs and other types of books) arising from your project – whether published during or after the completion of your project – are made available 'open access'. This implies that the publications in question must be freely available online, **immediately upon publication** and with no restrictions on use, by **depositing either the final peer-reviewed manuscript accepted for publication or the final published peer-reviewed version in a "trusted repository"**[6] under CC BY or a licence with equivalent rights. You should be aware that you are required to retain sufficient intellectual property rights to comply with these open access obligations.

Since **no embargo periods are permitted whatsoever,** please take this into account when deciding which journals to submit articles to. In some cases, you may need to negotiate with the publisher in order to comply with these obligations. You must also ensure that information is given via the repository about any research output, or any other tools and instruments needed to validate the conclusions of the scientific publication.

Metadata of deposited publications must be open under CC 0 or equivalent, in line with the FAIR principles, and provide information at least about the following: publication (author(s), title, date of publication, publication venue); acknowledgement of Horizon Europe funding; grant project name, acronym and number; licensing terms; persistent identifiers for the publication, the authors involved in the action and, if possible, for their organisations and the grant. Where applicable, the metadata must include persistent identifiers for any research output or any other tools and instruments needed to validate the conclusions of the publication.

For more information, please consult the OpenAIRE guide on how to comply with the Horizon Europe mandate for publications and the Horizon Europe Annotated Grant Agreement (pp. 281-89). Links to the publisher's website and to the trusted open access repository must be provided in the "Continuous Reporting" section of your project space on the Portal.

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[6] Please note that personal websites and databases, publisher websites, as well as cloud storage services (Dropbox, Google drive, etc) are not considered repositories. Academia.edu, ResearchGate and similar platforms do not allow open access under the terms required and are NOT considered repositories.

Open Research Europe

Funded by the European Commission, [Open Research Europe](#) (ORE) is an open peer review publishing platform for research stemming from Horizon Europe and Euratom research funding across all subject areas. The platform makes it easy for beneficiaries to comply with the open access requirements of their funding and offers researchers a publishing venue to share their results and insights rapidly and facilitate open, constructive research discussion. All articles that have passed peer review will be indexed in bibliographic databases.

Research Data Management

The specific rules laid down in Annex 5 of the grant agreement require you to manage the digital research data generated in the project ("data") responsibly, in line with the FAIR principles, and by taking all of the following actions:

- Submit a Data Management Plan (DMP) and regularly update it
- Deposit the data in a trusted repository as soon as possible and within the deadlines set out in the DMP
- Ensure open access via the repository to the deposited data as soon as possible and within the deadlines set out in the DMP, under CC BY or CC 0 or a licence with equivalent rights, following the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary."

Access to data may be restricted where this is against the beneficiary's – or the EU's – legitimate interests, but this should be justified in the DMP. Metadata of deposited data must be open under a Creative Common Public Domain Dedication (CC 0) or equivalent, in line with the FAIR principles and provide information at least about the following: datasets (description, date of deposit, author(s), venue and embargo); Horizon Europe funding; grant project name, acronym and number; licensing terms; persistent identifiers for the dataset, the authors involved in the action, and, if possible, for their organisations and the grant. Where applicable, the metadata must include persistent identifiers for related publications and other research outputs.

For more information, please consult the [OpenAIRE](#) guide on [how to comply with the Horizon Europe rules on Research Data Management](#). Further information on open science is available from the [REA website](#) and in the Horizon Europe [Programme Guide](#) (pages 40-56).

1.7   Acknowledgement of EU Funding

For all communication relating to the project and for any dissemination of results, including through scientific publications, posters, conference papers, etc. you are required to **ensure the visibility of the EU flag and to acknowledge EU funding** (see Article 17 of the grant agreement) like this:

This image can be downloaded [here](#). Further information and guidance on how to communicate about your project can be found on the REA website [here](#).

2. Project Reporting

2.1 Continuous Reporting

Continuous Reporting refers to the submission of documentation and information relating to your project **during the course of its implementation**. The Continuous Reporting module will therefore be activated **as soon as your project has started** and is accessible via your project page on the Portal and should be kept updated throughout the lifetime of the project. Detailed information on each of the different sections and how to encode data in the Continuous Reporting module is available on the Portal here.
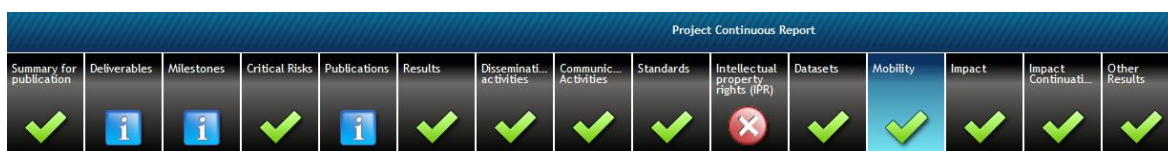

Figure 6: Continuous Reporting toolbar in the Portal

MSCA-PF Deliverables

In Postdoctoral Fellowships there are different types of Deliverables which must be reported:

- *Data Management Plan* (compulsory for all projects by implementation month 6)
- *Career Development Plan* (compulsory for all projects by implementation month 6)
- *Dissemination, Communication and Outreach Plan* (compulsory for all projects by penultimate month of project duration)
- *Ethics Deliverables* (only for projects subject to ethics review with requirements)

All deliverables **must be submitted** via the Portal by selecting the link "*Continuous Reporting data*" and clicking the "*Deliverables*" tab. Only one document can be uploaded per deliverable, therefore please merge documents before uploading (or zip them), where applicable. Where possible, please also **avoid including any personal data or personal information** in the final version of the Deliverable, with the exception of your name and project acronym/number. This is because Deliverables listed as "PUB" (i.e. "Public") will be made **publicly available via CORDIS**, the European Commission's research and innovation results platform.

Data Management Plan

The Data Management Plan (DMP) is a document outlining how the research data will be handled during your project, and after it is completed. It describes what data will be collected/ generated, what methodology and standards are used, whether and how this data will be shared and/or made open, and how it will be curated and preserved. **The DMP must be submitted within the first 6 months of the project**.

The European Commission provides a DMP template here, the use of which is voluntary but recommended. As mentioned above, you will also be required to deposit your research data in a research data repository (such as Zenodo) and to take measures to enable third parties to access, mine, exploit, reproduce and disseminate (free of charge for any user) this research data.

Career Development Plan

Your host institution is required to ensure that you establish, together with your supervisor, a Career Development Plan (Article 32.1(k)) or "CDP". The purpose of the CDP is to outline your training requirements, taking into account your research objectives and career goals. For example, this could include training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications, and participation in conferences and events aiming at opening science and research to citizens. The CDP can be updated when needed.

Your host institution should ensure that you are supported in ensuring the implementation of your CDP during the lifetime of your project. You are not required to follow a formal template when drafting your CDP. **The CDP must be submitted as a Deliverable by month 6 of your project.**

Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation

Your grant agreement requires you to engage in communication, dissemination and exploitation activities relating to your project (Article 17 and Annex 5 of the grant agreement). A plan for this is scheduled as a project Deliverable towards the end of the project (usually the penultimate month of project implementation). However, you should start thinking about how you will communicate, disseminate and exploit the results of your research as soon as possible.

- *Communication:* You should promote your project and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the general public), in a strategic and effective manner.
- *Dissemination:* You should share your research results with potential users, including your peers in the research field, and to other commercial players and policymakers, including through scientific publications.
- *Exploitation:* You should aim to exploit the results of your research, for example through further research activities, developing, creating or marketing a product or process, or creating and providing a service. These exploitation activities should be pursued for up to four years after the end of the project.

Further guidance is available in the HE Programme Guide here and on the REA website here. Please also **keep your Project Officer informed should your communication activities take place in the media** (TV, radio, newspapers, YouTube, etc.) so that REA can help ensure maximum coverage.

Ethics Deliverables

Following the ethics review, the implementation of your project could be subject to the fulfilment of ethics requirements. All ethics requirements due once the project has started, are automatically included in the grant agreement in the form of Deliverables. These deliverables are known as "ethics deliverables" and, where relevant, will be placed in an automatically generated work package called "Ethics requirements".

2.2 Unit Contributions

"Unit contributions" refer to the fixed amounts that are paid to your host institution for the implementation of your project. These contributions are based on units, one unit being one implemented researcher month. The funds provided to your host institution for the purposes

of implementing your project are then divided into two sub-categories: those for the benefit of you, the researcher ("researcher unit contributions"), and those for the benefit of the host institution ("institutional unit contributions").

Researcher Unit Contributions

These allowances are paid directly to you by your host institution and are to cover your private expenses, not those relating to your project. You should therefore request from your employer a clear overview of how your monthly allowance is calculated (both the gross amount and the amount net of all taxes and deductions). The total amount received may vary between institutions, even within the same country, because your host institution can deduct employer, as well as employee payroll taxes and social security costs from the gross salary.

- *Living Allowance:* this is the basic, gross amount (i.e. *before* taxation and compulsory deductions) that should be paid to you in monthly instalments. To ensure equal treatment and purchasing power parity, this amount is then adjusted through the application of a correction coefficient, based on the country in which you are hosted. Researchers recruited in higher cost countries therefore receive a higher gross living allowance than those recruited in lower cost countries.[7] The coefficients applied are indicated in the corresponding MSCA Work Programme and in the grant agreement. Note that each coefficient applies to the whole country in question, even if the cost of living may differ between cities or regions within that country.

- *Mobility Allowance:* This is a monthly amount and is intended to cover the costs associated with your moving to a different country in order to take up your position.

- *Family Allowance:* Should you be entitled to receive the Family Allowance, this should be reflected in an additional monthly allowance. Family is defined in the MSCA Work Programme as "*persons linked to the researcher by marriage (or a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised) or dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.*" Should your family status change during the course of your project, this should be updated and reflected in the Mobility Declaration.[8] **You will be entitled to the Family Allowance as of the date that you become eligible to receive it**. An amendment to increase the maximum EU contribution will normally be required before the end of the project.[9] In the meantime, the additional cost should be met by your host institution, and this will be reimbursed by REA at the end of the next reporting period.

- *Non-Eurozone Members:* The project budget is calculated and paid in EURO; your host institution must also report their costs in EURO. Where your allowances are *not* paid in EURO (i.e. because your host institution is not located within the Eurozone), the allowances you receive may consequently fluctuate due to exchange rate changes. Your host is normally required to report the costs on the basis of an average

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[7] Note that for GF, two different country correction coefficients apply: for the outgoing phase, the coefficient of the Third Country in which you will be hosted, and for the return phase the coefficient of the EU member state or associated country that you will return to.

[8] This requires the creation of a new recruitment line so that, for example, the researcher was recruited for 5 months *without* family allowance, and then a new recruitment line is created for the remaining 19 months *with* the family allowance.

[9] Unless your project finishes early and there is remaining budget to cover the additional costs stemming from the addition of the Family Allowance.

of the official daily exchange rates over the reporting period. It is permissible for your host institution to underpay you on a monthly basis in order to hedge against this fluctuation, as long as you receive the correct amount by – at the latest – the end of your fellowship.

Institutional Unit Contributions

These allowances are directly managed by your host institution to cover your professional costs and are divided into two categories: *Research, Training and Network Contributions*, and *Management and Indirect Contributions*.

- **Research, Training and Network Contribution:** This is a fixed amount for each month a researcher is recruited in the project. Although administered by your host institution, this amount is intended to cover the costs associated with your project as outlined in Annex 1 of your grant agreement. This could include, for example, the costs of attending training courses, conferences, or of going on secondment. This amount should also help to cover the cost of your research (e.g., consumables), as appropriate, and can also be used to cover other related costs, such as visas. Note, however, that this amount is normally administered by the host institution, not by researchers themselves.

- **Management and Indirect Contribution:** This is a fixed monthly amount per researcher month which is for the direct benefit of the host institution in order to cover the costs of their involvement in the project.

Note that the institutional unit costs can be shared with the associated partners listed in the grant agreement, for example to cover costs associated with hosting secondments or NAPs.

Special Needs Allowance

Should you have a disability[10] of a nature that your participation in your project may not be possible without additional financial support, your host institution can request a 'special needs' allowance to contribute to the purchase of special needs items and services (e.g. assistance by third persons, adaptation of your work environment, additional travel costs, etc.) which have not been funded from another source (e.g. social security or health insurance). The request should be discussed beforehand with your PO. If the request is accepted by REA, the MD must be updated accordingly and an amendment to increase the maximum grant amount may be required before the end of the project.

2.3   MSCA Green Charter

The MSCA Green Charter aims to empower and inspire MSCA researchers, beneficiaries and consortia to minimise the environmental impact of their research on a "best effort" basis. This could be through, for example, minimising waste and harmful emissions, prioritising low carbon forms of mobility, or promoting the use of renewable and sustainable forms of energy.

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[10] Defined as a long-term physical, mental, intellectual and/or sensory impairment which is certified by a competent national authority.

In your Final Report you will be asked about the ways in which you have integrated the principles of the MSCA Green Charter into your work. However, it's never too early to start thinking about how to make your research project as sustainable as possible. For inspiration and ideas of how to minimise the environmental impact of your research, check out the dedicated MSCA webpage.

2.4 Submission of Reports

The standard duration of PF projects is between 12 and 24 months for European Fellowships, and between 24 and 36 months for Global Fellowships. Those projects including a Non-Academic Placement, can claim an additional period of up to 6 months at the end of the project. Due to professional or personal reasons, however, projects sometimes have to finish sooner or indeed later than planned (e.g. due to suspension or part-time implementation). Whatever the final length of your project, together with your host institution you will be required to submit a Final Report once your project has ended.

In your report, you will be required to report on the scientific progress of your project (and deviations, if any), as well as your training and transfer of knowledge activities, secondments (if any), career development, the scientific management of the project, dissemination and communication activities, and on the project's overall impact. The standard Horizon Europe reporting template is available here. More specific instructions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships will be forwarded to you nearer to the time.

Your report must be submitted **within 60 days following the end date of the project.** Submission of this report is a precondition for payment of the remaining amounts.[11]

How do I submit my Final Report?

Through the Portal. Submission is the formal responsibility of your institution. Although it might be possible for you as the researcher to submit the report, we strongly suggest that you liase carefully with your supervisor and host institution before doing so. A separate financial report must be submitted by a legal representative of your institution.

2.5 Submission of Questionnaires

Based on Article 18 of the grant agreement, funded MSCA researchers are required to submit two questionnaires about their experience: one immediately following the completion of the project ("Evaluation Questionnaire") and one two years later ("Follow-up Questionnaire"). We strongly value the opinions of all researchers funded through the programme and your responses to these questionnaires will help us shape the future design of the MSCA programme.

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[11] For all Global Fellowship projects, an additional Periodic Report must also be submitted within 60 days following the end of the first reporting period (i.e. at the end of the outgoing phase).

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.

3. Help and Support

Most projects are invariably implemented without any major difficulties. When problems do occur, these tend to be easily resolved together with your host institution. Indeed, your supervisor and/or those people at your host institution responsible for administering your project should be your first point of contact in case of difficulties or should you require assistance. Don't forget that **your host institution is your employer for the purposes of your project (and not REA or the European Commission).** Your employment contract is **subject to the employment laws in your country of recruitment**. Moreover, your employer should have confidential and independent procedures in place to deal with any issues or disputes that may arise. Only in exceptional cases where problems remain after this dialogue, should you inform the relevant PO at REA.

Additional help is also provided by the network of **National Contact Points** (NCPs), individuals within each EU member state and Horizon Europe Associated Country, who are able to provide expertise and support in your host country and/or own language. The names and contact details of the NCP(s) in each country are available here. An EU-funded network coordinating the work of several MSCA-NCPs, called MSCA-NET, also offers information and support to MSCA applicants and funded researchers. Their website can be accessed here.

For further general guidance on how to manage your project (and apply for EU funding), please consult the Portal here and REA' s dedicated webpage.

Should you experience IT problems when using the Portal, please contact the IT Helpdesk directly.

3.1   Further Reading and References

You can follow the MSCA on Facebook and X/Twitter for the latest developments, including MSCA events, further funding opportunities, competitions, etc.

@Marie.Curie.Actions

@MSCActions

REA on LinkedIn

The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)

As an MSCA researcher, you are also eligible to join the [MSCA Alumni Association](#). Established as a not-for-profit organisation in 2014, the Association offers opportunities for learning, training and peer-exchange, an alumni directory, job offers, an events calendar, and other services of potential interest to PF researchers. With its network covering a vast geographical area, and working groups specialised in priority areas such as research management, career development, bridging science and business, and policy, the MCAA is also a platform able to connect to a large network of researchers. The MCAA is free to join and is open to all MSCA-supported researchers, past and present.

Useful Documents and Links

- [MSCA homepage](#)
- [DG EAC Information Note for MSCA Fellows](#)
- [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#)
- [MSCA Financial Guide for Horizon Europe](#)
- [Guidance on your MSCA Grant and Reporting](#) (REA website)
- [MSCA Green Charter](#)
- [MSCA-NET](#) (MSCA NCP platform)
- [Horizon Europe National Contact Points](#)
- [Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal Online Manual](#)
- [Horizon Europe Programme Guidelines](#)
- [Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#)
- [OpenAire open science guidance](#)
- [Open Science FAQ](#)(REA website)
- [European IPR helpdesk](#)
- [EurAxess](#)