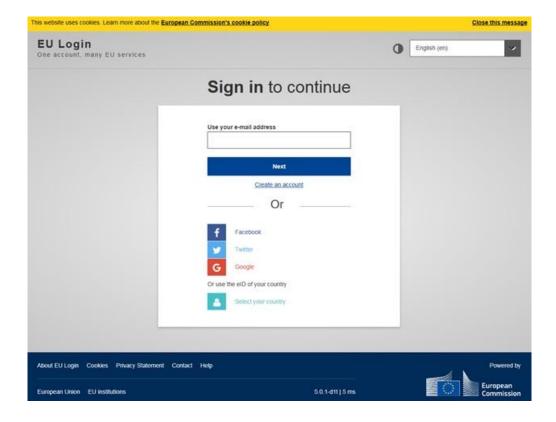# How to submit a MSCA-IF proposal

Experienced researchers (completed doctoral degree or at least four years' full-time research experience) can apply for post-doctoral funding within the [MSCA Individual Fellowships.](#) In order to make it easier for them to be familiar with the application procedure, EURAXESS Worldwide team prepared a step-by-step process on how to apply for this type of grant:

STEP 1

All MSCA-IF proposals must be submitted electronically using the electronic submission system of the of the EC's Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal (previously known as Participant Portal).

You first need to log in.

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1. Go to the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html
2. Click the **Login** button. You will be prompted to authenticate through the **EU login** screen.

3. Enter your email address in the field provided, then click the **Next** button.
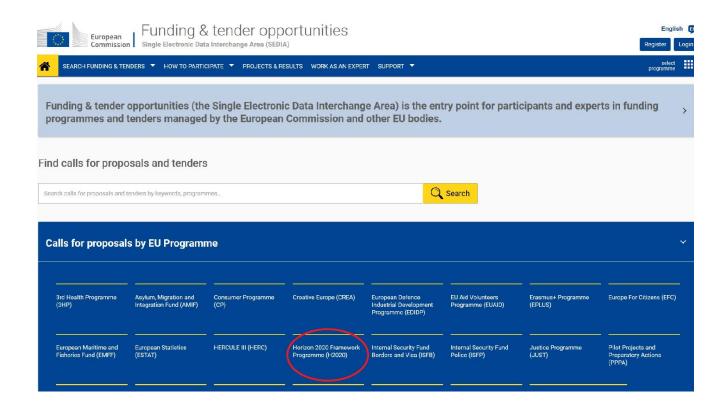   You will be prompted for your password.
4. Enter your password in the **Password** field.
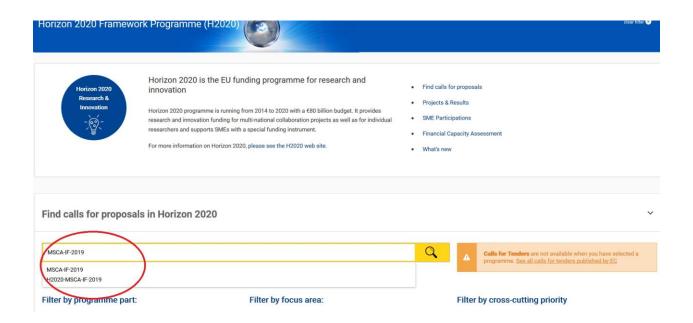5. Click the **Sign in** button.

STEP 2

Once logged in to the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal, you will need to select the MSCA-IF Call to start with the electronic proposal submission.
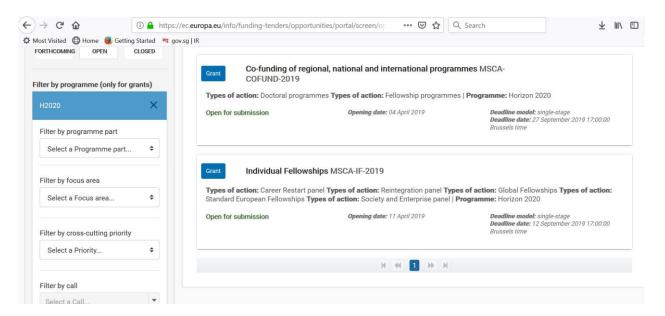

To do so, perform the following steps:

1. Click on **HORIZON 2020**.

2. In the search function "Find Calls for Proposals in Horizon 2020", type in 'MSCA-IF-2020'.

3. Select the Call for Individual Fellowships that is marked **OPEN** for application. In 2020, the call identifier is H2020-MSCA-IF-2020.

4. LAC-based researchers planning to move **TO EUROPE** to complete the Fellowship, select the section 'STANDARD EF', then click on Start Submission. The system will prompt you to confirm your choice.
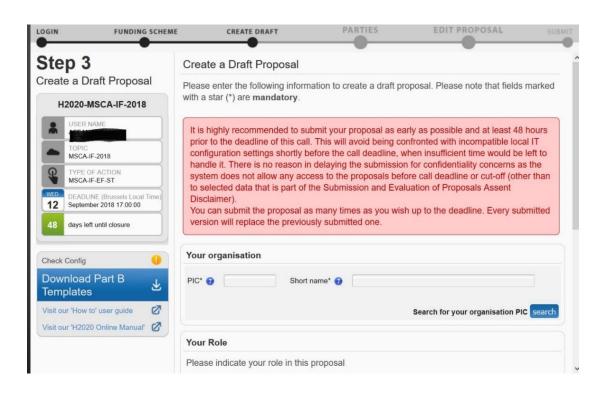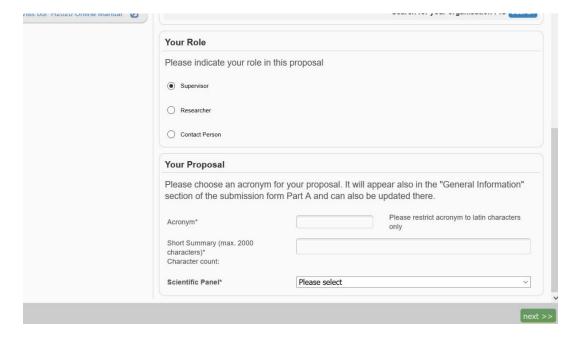
STEP 3

Register your proposal.

To do so, perform the following steps:

1. Begin by **entering your organisation's PIC**. Please be aware that you need to insert the **PIC of the European institution that will host you during the fellowship**!

2. Once you enter the PIC number you will notice that the **Short name** field is automatically populated, and the address is shown in blue highlight. **Note:** If the PIC you entered is incorrect (for example, it contains less numbers than required, etc.), the system will show you an error message.

A Participant Identification Code (PIC) is a 9-digit number serving as a unique identifier for organisations (legal entities) participating in EU funding programmes. If you don't know the PIC of your European host, **ask your host organisation**. There is also a search tool for organisations and their PICs available here.

3. Select **your role** – Researcher.
4. Fill in the **Acronym field**. Acronyms can be changed later on by editing the Administrative form in part A in the section A1 'content' within the form.
5. Fill in the **Summary** field.
6. **Download Part B** templates as indicated in the blue box on the bottom left corner of the screen.
7. Click the **Next** button.

The system will confirm that you have created a draft. Click **Continue with this proposal** to proceed to the next step. To postpone this action for a later time and return to your list of proposals in the Participant Portal, click **Go to My Proposal**.

STEP 4
Prepare your proposal – Part A

You can now start working on the actual proposal preparation. Start with Part A – Administrative details.

This part contains 5 sections. Click on **Show** to start entering data for the individual sections. Remember to always save your changes!

The sections listed in Part A require you to submit the following data and information.

Section 1 – General Information

- ✓ Abstract
- ✓ Panel
  Note: Make sure you choose the correct panel! Your proposal will be evaluated in the panel which you confirm in this section! The system will prompt you if the panel differs from the one you previously selected.
- ✓ Descriptors

Descriptors (keywords) are chosen by applicants to guide REA (Research Executive Agency) in selection of experts and allocation of proposals to the experts. Applicants select the descriptors **in order of importance** with 1st being the most important, with a **minimum of three and a maximum of five** descriptors. The Guide for Applicants contains a breakdown of scientific areas into descriptors. **Keep in mind:**
• The mandatory **first descriptor** should best characterise the subject of the proposal and should be chosen from the area of research chosen for the proposal.
• The mandatory **second descriptor** should be within the same area of research (e.g.: CHE).
• The mandatory **third descriptor** can be from any of the eight areas of research.
• Applicants may add **two** additional descriptors chosen freely from any of the eight areas of research.

Section 2 – Administrative data of participating organisations (concerning the supervisor(s) and the researcher)
- ✓ Names
- ✓ Contact details incl. email addresses, phone numbers
- ✓ PIC identifiers

Section 3 – Budget: information on the duration (person-months) to calculate the total requested EU contribution
  Note: The budget will be calculated automatically.

Section 4 – Ethics: identifies any ethical aspects of the proposed work.
  Note:
- ✓ Read each question carefully and address them appropriately in Part B.
- ✓ Even if there are no issues, do <u>not</u> leave this section blank! Simply confirm that none of the ethical issues apply to the proposal!

Section 5 – Call specific questions request declarations related to your eligibility and personal data, together with questions on any secondment in Europe.

Don't forget to upload any supporting documents.

STEP 5

Prepare & Submit Part B – the core of your proposal

Part B of the application is your actual proposal.

Part B is submitted as two separate documents – you will not be able to submit the proposal in the submission system unless both Parts 1 and 2 are provided in pdf format.

The structure below is mandatory. Please do NOT include a **cover page or table of contents!**

DOCUMENT 1 – **Maximum 10 pages!**

Start counting page numbers
1. Excellence
2. Impact
3. Implementation
Stop counting page numbers. Do not exceed 10 in total.

Of the maximum 10 pages applied to sections 1, 2 and 3, applicants are free to decide on the allocation of pages between the sections. However, the overall page limit will be strictly applied, <u>excess pages will be blanked out and experts will not be able to read them.</u> It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the submitted pdf documents are readable and are within the page limit.

DOCUMENT 2 – no page limit

4. CV of the experienced researcher
5. Capacities of the participating organisations
6. Ethical aspects

Once you have submitted your proposal you can still make changes to it until the deadline!
Note that every new submission overwrites the previous one!

Some Hints:

Part B – Document 1

1. **Excellence**
   - ✓ Be precise about objectives. Explain the contribution that your project is expected to make.
   - ✓ What is the applicant's methodology?
   - ✓ Describe originality & innovative aspects of the applicant's research – Why is your project worth funding?
   - ✓ Explain how the high-quality, novel research is the most likely to open up the best career possibilities for the applicant.
   - ✓ How will the project allow you to move towards research independence?
   - ✓ Why are the host institution and supervisor ideal for the research project you aim to conduct?
   - ✓ Describe how this project will contribute to your own research career development. Clearly describe which new competencies you will acquire through the fellowship.
   - ✓ What type of skills and knowledge will you transfer on the host institution?

2. **Impact**
   - ✓ Impact of training on career development of the applicant and the host institution (be precise)
   - ✓ List expected publications expected to result from the research project (be precise i.e. concrete journal names)
   - ✓ What is your IPR strategy?
   - ✓ Be precise about your outreach activities

3. **Implementation**
   - ✓ Add a realistic GANTT Chart
   - ✓ Work packages, deliverables, milestones
   - ✓ Describe experimental risks and your contingency plan

Part B, Document 2
You may want to consider including the following information.

- ➤ **CV**
   - ✓ Education
   - ✓ Employment
   - ✓ Research Experience
   - ✓ Publications
   - ✓ Fellowships, Awards, Prizes
   - ✓ Presentations (Invited seminars, Posters, etc.)
   - ✓ Public Outreach
   - ✓ Supervising and Mentoring Activities

- ✓ Teaching Experience
- ✓ Service and Leadership (*ad hoc* review activities, committee members, etc.)
- ➢ **Capacity of the participating organisations**
  - ✓ General Description: *Describe the reputation and expertise of your chosen host institution. Why is it the best host for your postdoc in the research field you aim to explore?*
  - ✓ Role and Commitment of Supervisor
  - ✓ Your supervisor's research and funding history
  - ✓ Key research facilities, infrastructure and equipment
  - ✓ Independent research premises?
  - ✓ Previous involvement in Research and Training Programmes: *Describe your host institution's involvement in national and international funding (e.g. EU Framework Programme7 (2007 –2013), Horizon 2020 (2014 –2020)*
  - ✓ Current involvement in Research and Training Programmes*: List the number of fellows at the host institution who receive fellowships, e.g. MSCA-IF or ERC*
  - ✓ Relevant Publications*: List of relevant publications of your supervisor*

General Tips

- ✓ Read and follow the Application Guide!
- ✓ Help the evaluators with a concise, well-structured and relevant proposal.
- ✓ Ensure your project is innovative. Avoid a simple extension of your doctoral thesis.
- ✓ Don't assume reviewers know what you have done and what you can do – if something is important, make sure it is stated clearly.
- ✓ Avoid using very specific jargon and acronyms that are only known to experts in a specific field.
- ✓ Do several spell checks! Ask a native English speaker to proof-read your proposal.
- ✓ Graphics and charts are a useful tool but do not overdo it. Make sure they are readable in black & white.
- ✓ Stick to the page limit!
- ✓ You can only submit one proposal per call!
- ✓ Don't wait until the last day to submit. Note that every new submission overwrites the previous one.

In order to check the details on this funding opportunity, please access: bit.ly/MSCAIF2020

Support for Applicants

For researchers interested in applying for the MSCA IF there are a variety of tools available to support you in the application process:

- ➢ **Guide for Applicants:** Please make sure you carefully read the latest guide for applicants available here.
- ➢ **Finding a Host Institution:** check out some ways on how you can find your host here.
- ➢ **National Contact Point Network:** The network of National Contact Points (NCPs) is the main structure to provide guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in Horizon 2020, including MSCA. LAC researchers can contact the MSCA NCPs in the country where there would like to undertake their MSCA IF and in their home country. Find their contacts here: bit.ly/Horizon_NCP

  The NCPs offer the following services:

  - ✓ Advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues
  - ✓ Training and assistance on proposal writing
  - ✓ Distribution of documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.)
  - ✓ Assistance in partner search
  - ✓ The EU-funded Net4Mobility+ project has a number of resources that might assist applicants with their candidacies. Check their website: net4mobilityplus.eu
- ➢ **Facebook:** Follow the MSCA on Facebook: facebook.com/Marie.Curie.Actions/
- ➢ **FAQ:** Here is a link to a FAQ-Blog: mariecurieactions.blogspot.com

About EURAXESS Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

EURAXESS LAC is a networking tool for European researchers active/seeking activity in Latin America and the Caribbean countries and for LAC researchers wishing to collaborate with and/or pursue a career in Europe.

EURAXESS LAC provides information about research in Europe, European research policy, opportunities for research funding, for EU-LAC and international collaboration and for trans-national mobility.

Membership is free.

Visit us at lac.euraxess.org and contact us at brazil@euraxess.net or lac@euraxess.net.

To **join the community**, register here: bit.ly/EuraxessBR_LAC_Mailing