

## **Head of the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office**

A vacancy has arisen in the Irish Universities Association, in partnership with the Irish Research Council, for the Head of the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office, Ireland's National Contact Point for the Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

### **Background and Role Overview**

The Irish Universities Association (IUA) is the representative body of the university sector. The Irish Research Council operates multi-million-euro research funding initiatives, which support talented researchers across all disciplines and career stages. Since 2012, the IUA has partnered with the Irish Research Council (IRC) in the operation of the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office (IMSCO), hosted at the IUA premises in Merrion Square, Dublin. This successful partnership has contributed to more than €195 million of funding coming in to Ireland from Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) under Horizon 2020, the European Commission's 8<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. It is the area of highest drawdown for Ireland under Horizon 2020 and Ireland ranks second in drawdown per capita after Denmark. The launch of Horizon Europe (2021-27) provides great opportunities for Ireland to build on our success to date.

### **Head of the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office**

The Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office (IMSCO) supports access by Irish higher education, public and private sector organisations to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) under Horizon Europe and supports applicants in preparing competitive funding proposals to MSCA Calls. The Head of the IMSCO is Ireland's officially nominated National Contact Point (NCP) for the MSCA and the National Delegate. They lead the work of the IMSCO and its team members in the delivery of the Office's activities. The IUA wish to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person to take up the position of Head of the IMSCO.

### **Job Specification and Key Responsibilities & Deliverables**

Reporting to the IUA Director of Research & Innovation, the Head of the IMSCO will decide on the overall strategic direction for the IMSCO and manage the office's team in the delivery of the this nationally important service.

The IMSCO provides a "conception to completion" service for the entire Marie Skłodowska-Curie process from a researcher or research-performing organisation (RPO) initially receiving information about the programme, through to proposal submission, contract negotiation and implementation. The Head of the IMSCO will be responsible for:

- Leading the IMSCO and supporting the team member in the delivery of goals including the contribution of MSCA to the national Horizon Europe funding target;

- Developing an annual work-plan for the office focused on maximising Ireland’s success in the MSCA;
- Devising a promotions/marketing strategy targeted at academic, enterprise and civil society organisations;
- Developing and implementing a strategy to increase participation by the technological higher education sector and the non-academic sector;
- Providing support to HEIs as they develop and implement their own plans/strategies around increasing MSCA engagement.
- Rolling out a suite of support programmes including webinars, “Train the Trainer” workshops, support documents/handbooks and dedicated proposal-writing workshops as well as joint initiatives with the ERC NCP(s) to provide a bridge from MSCA Fellowships to ERC Starting Grants;
- Liaising with the IRC and other stakeholders to promote and further enhance the success of the MSCA in Ireland;
- Driving forward the IMSCO’s strategy of encouraging and supporting successful COFUND applications, by liaising directly with eligible agencies and organisations to scope out and develop opportunities thus expanding Ireland’s engagement in the MSCA COFUND programme;
- Supporting greater participation by the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Community by targeted interventions, liaising with their representative bodies and CSOs, creative industries, etc.);
- Gathering, analysing and pro-actively using data on the Horizon Europe MSCA to increase successful Irish participation;
- Supporting sectoral / national / EU policy on researcher career development and, where appropriate, engage in the activities of the EURAXESS Ireland office at IUA in their complementary roles in promoting researcher mobility.
- Keeping up to date with national/EU policy developments in areas that pertain to success in the MSCA, such as the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) Agenda, including research integrity, open data and gender issues in research;
- Advising government on developments in the MSCA or assist the Irish Research Council in doing so.
- Working with the IMSCO team to provide timely advice to researchers and RPOs on general MSCA queries, unsuccessful applications, contract negotiations and issues that may arise during project implementation;
- Act as Ireland’s National Contact Point for the MSCA, adhering to the minimum standard and guiding principles for that role as set down by the European Commission;<sup>1</sup>
- Liaise with other NCPs, funding agencies etc. to ensure dissemination and added value to researchers engaged in other Horizon Europe programmes;
- Represent Ireland and Irish interests as the National Delegate for Excellent Science (focus on MSCA) with the European Commission, seeking changes and plan for new EU R&D programmes for the benefit of Ireland.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/20131125\\_NCP%20Minimum%20standards.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/20131125_NCP%20Minimum%20standards.pdf)

## **Candidate Skills and Attributes**

This is a role which requires strategic leadership, management skills and a hands-on approach to the achievement of results based on the skillset below:

Essential:

- A primary degree and at minimum four years' experience in a research funder, research support or research administration role;
- Results focused and a self-starter with a capacity for strategic thinking, including analysis and interpretation of data to inform the development of an annual strategic work-plan for the office;
- Strong knowledge of the research landscape nationally and internationally, having particular regard to the higher education dimension and an in-depth knowledge of European Framework Programmes (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe);
- Experience of liaising with a broad range of stakeholders and the research community;
- Exceptional communication skills, particularly the ability to confidently present to large audiences;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, judgement, and ability to work calmly under pressure, both when leading and working within a team, and when engaging with external stakeholders;
- Experience of managing a team or supervising the work of colleagues.

Desirable:

- A track record in EU funding opportunity identification, proposal definition and review;
- Previous experience of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions/Framework Programmes;
- Experience of liaising with enterprise or civil society organisations in regards to research projects, and the issues which may arise (including Intellectual Property);
- Knowledge of the contractual requirements and implementation of Horizon 2020/Europe awards;
- Previous experience of working within and/or liaising with EU networks;
- An awareness of using social media for business.

## **Contract details**

The position of Head of the Irish Marie Skłodowska-Curie Office will ordinarily be based at the IUA (in line with public health guidelines in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic) with some capacity for remote working. It is offered on a fixed term contract up to 31st December 2024, and subject to a period of probation and meeting on-going performance requirements. The role will require domestic travel within Ireland on a regular basis, when possible, with European travel also required as appropriate.

Salary in the region of €70,000 commensurate with experience will be offered. A secondment arrangement for existing public-sector employees may be possible, subject to concluding an appropriate agreement between the IUA and the candidate's current employer.

### **Application Details**

Please forward a detailed but concise CV and cover letter (max 500 words), demonstrating the competencies and experience listed above, by email by **Monday March 8th 2021** to:

[marguerita.lardner@iua.ie](mailto:marguerita.lardner@iua.ie)

Tel. 01 6764948

Subject to panel availability, interviews will be scheduled for the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Applications submitted by or through third parties, including recruitment agencies, will be rejected.

The IUA is an equal opportunities employer.