IRISH UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

ITN Call 2015 Webinar
Questions and Answers

Question: In ETN, must the ESRs recruited by beneficiaries (both academic and non-academic) be working towards a PhD?

Answer: In ETN, there is no requirement for ESRs recruited by the beneficiaries (both academic and non-academic) to be working towards a PhD or a research Masters'. However, the majority of successful ITN applications involve a programme where all recruited researchers are working towards a PhD.

Question: The number of participants in the consortium recommended by EU is 6-10. Does this number include only the beneficiaries or the Partner Organisations as well?

Answer: The recommended number of 6-10 participants includes only the beneficiaries. There is no recommended minimum or maximum number of Partner Organisations.

Question: For a consortium to be inter-sectoral what participants are considered, only the beneficiaries or the beneficiaries plus the Partner Organsations?

Answer: An inter-sectoral consortium is one that contains a mix of academic and non-academic beneficiaries. Experience from FP7 and the 2014 ITN Call shows that successful projects have a mix of sectors amongst the list of beneficiaries. The typical number of non-academic beneficiaries in a consortium in the 2014 Call was between 2 and 5.

Question: Are tuition fees an eligible cost in the ITN? Which part of the budget should they come from: the Researcher Unit Costs (Living, Mobility and Family Allowance) or the Institutional Unit Costs (Research, Training and Networking Costs; Management and Indirect Costs)?

Answer: As stated on page 19 of the Guide for Applicants, tuition fees are an eligible cost under the Research, Training and Networking Costs category. The researchers should not be asked to pay tuition fees from the Researcher Unit Costs.

Question: Do all beneficiaries and Partner Organisations need to be registered in the online part A of the application and have a PIC number?

Answer: All beneficiaries must have a PIC number, and it is recommended that all Partner Organisations have one too. In creating the application online, all beneficiaries are added at 'Step 4 –

Consortium + Budget', whereas the details of Partner Organisations are only added into the PDF Proposal Submission Forms.

Question: What does "independent research premises" mean?

Answer from the Commission's ITN 2015 FAQ: The principle is that each beneficiary must have dedicated premises – own or rented – to host the fellows, e.g. a newly established campus company/university spin-off that neither owns nor rents premises would not be considered to have independent research premises. However, please note a company with dedicated space in an incubator facility made available free of charge would be considered to have independent research premises.

Question: Does the risk analysis need to include also generic risks of any multi-party project, like a beneficiary dropping out, ESR dropping out etc., or can we focus on the specific issues of our topics, configurations etc.?

Answer: The risk analysis should contain both research risks and contingency plans, and project management/implementation risks and contingency plans.

Question: Does the limit of 40% of the budget for one country apply to the entire budget or just to the budget related to the ESRs (Researcher Unit Costs)?

Answer: The limit of 40% of the budget for one country applies to the entire budget. However, during the project implementation, the distribution of the budget for the Institutional Unit Costs (Research, Training and Networking Costs; Management and Indirect Costs) does not have to adhere to the 40% rule.

Question: In the Implementation section, the evaluator's focus seems to be on "appropriateness". Is it advisable to craft an overarching "appropriateness section" or should appropriateness be dealt with locally, at each required sub-heading?

Answer: "Appropriateness" should be dealt with locally at each required sub-heading.

Question: If some of the beneficiaries have mandatory 4-year PhD programmes, it is not possible for the PhD awards to be delivered within the 48-month duration of the grant. How should this be dealt with in terms of having a project Deliverable for the PhD awards?

Answer: First be sure to specify which beneficiaries have longer PhD programmes. Then, it is appropriate to state that for these beneficiaries, the PhD awards will occur after the final month of the ITN, e.g. that they will be delivered in M60. Since the ITN will be officially over at this point, it will be important to put in place a management/implementation strategy to continue after the official end of the ITN to ensure that this Deliverable is met.

Question: Some countries start their PhD cycle only once in the year, typically in Sept-Nov. We wished to have a joint kick-off week for all the ESRs. Can we go ahead and have this kick-off week at the start of the project, even if all the ESRs have not been recruited?

Answer: It is important that all the ESRs are able to attend any network-wide events. Therefore it is not advisable to schedule events either before all the ESRs are in place, or after any of them have finished up.

Question: Again, as some countries start their PhD cycle only once in the year (Sept to Nov) and the deadline to finalise the Grant Agreement is Sep 2015, we may not have time to recruit all the ESRs and get them started on the PhD programme in their host country. How do we manage this?

Answer: If there are difficulties with timing of entry of the recruited ESRs to PhD programmes, then the start date and recruitment period of the ITN should be planned to accommodate them. A "staggered" intake of ESRs is possible, but only if the ESRs recruited at a later point are not disadvantaged by starting later than the other ESRs (related to the question above).