

ITN 2020 – General Points & Excellence Section

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IMSCO ITN 2020 Support

- Handbook

Available @ www.iua.ie/mariecurie under “Resources, Events and Training”

- Webinars

Available @ www.iua.ie/mariecurie under “Resources, Events and Training”

- On-Site Clinics

- Proposal Reviews (Mid Nov-Dec 2019)



Online Submission

- Filter for the MSCA programme and select the call on the new portal: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-search>
- Online submission using SEP system
- Three parts
 - Part A – Online Forms
 - Part B1 – uploaded as PDF to the system
 - Part B2 – uploaded as PDF to the system
- All three parts are submitted together
- Submission can be overwritten multiple times
- Submit early, submit often!



Administrative Forms

- Prepared electronically on SEP platform

Form	Title	Content
Section 1	General Information about the Proposal	e.g. Acronym, Title, Selection of Evaluation Panel, Project Duration...
Section 2	Data on Participating Organisations	e.g. PIC, legal name, contact details, name of <i>person-in-charge at the host organisation</i>
Section 3	Budget	Request for funding in terms of researcher months
Section 4	Ethics Table	Yes/No answers to series of questions re. ethical issues
Section 5	Call specific question	Open access



Abstract (Part A)

Helps REA staff assign proposals to the evaluators, and evaluators to agree to review your proposal

- Be concise
- Provide enough technical/research information to help REA officers and evaluators understand the scope of your proposal
- Reflect the whole proposal including:
 - Overall research theme
 - Research objectives
 - Training objectives
 - Potential Impact, including career paths for the ESRs
- A list of Descriptors can be found at the back of the Guide for Applicants (Annex 7).



Part B - Proposal Content

Part B – Doc 1 (34 pages total)

- Start page (1 page)
- Table of Contents (1 page)
- List of Participants (2 pages)

- 1. Excellence
- 2. Impact
- 3. Implementation



30 pages total
No section page limits



General Points

- Use a self-explanatory title and a memorable acronym
- Use a clear and readable font
- Diagrams, Charts, Tables or Figures are easier to evaluate than text and save space too – **font size 8 in tables**
- For resubmissions, don't just use Evaluation Summary Report from previous submissions to help revise
 - Look at the proposal as a whole to find room for improvement – the evaluators will be different and will not have access to your previous proposal or score.
- Be aware of the overall weighting of each criterion...
 - ...but you need to score well in all sections in order to be funded!
- Educate the Evaluator!
 - The majority of evaluators will not be expert in the specific subject area of the proposal so....
 - Write in a style that is **accessible to the non-expert** using figures/tables/charts/diagrams to illustrate where appropriate.



Layout

A clear layout will be appreciated by the evaluators

Template

- Use the Correct Template
- Use the Template sub-headings (provides good structure)
- Provide a Table of Contents with page numbers
- Use the Full Page Limits
- Put the proposal acronym in the Header
- Put Page Numbers (format Page X of Y) in the Footer

Format

- Use charts, diagrams, tables, text boxes, figures.
- Use appropriate font size, line spacing, page margins
- Ensure any colour diagrams etc. are understandable when printed in black and white
- Use highlighting where appropriate (**bold**, underline, italics) but don't overdo it!
- Literature references in footnotes, font size 8 or 9

Language

- Avoid jargon and buzzwords ("paradigm shift", etc)
- Explain any abbreviations
- Simple clear text
- Avoid long sentences
- Get rid of repetitions (**refer to other parts of proposal** if necessary)
- Do not copy text from other documents or websites
- Be consistent with language (UK/US english)



Proposal Template

Part B1 - max. 30 pages

Excellence (50%)

1.1

Quality, innovative aspects and credibility of the research programme (including inter/multidisciplinary, intersectoral and gender aspects)

- Introduction, objectives and overview of the research programme
- Research methodology and approach
- Originality and innovative aspects of the research programme

1.2

Quality and innovative aspects of the training programme (including transferable skills, inter-multidisciplinary, inter-sectoral and gender aspects)

- Overview and content of the training (ETN) or doctoral programme (EID/EJD)
- Role of the non-academic sector in the training programme

1.3

Quality of the supervision

- Qualifications and supervision experience of the supervisors
- Quality of the joint supervision arrangements

1.4

Quality of the proposed interaction between the participating organisations

- Contribution of all participating organisations to the research and training programme
- Synergies between participating organisations
- Exposure of recruited researchers to different (research) environments, and the complementarity thereof

Impact (30%)

2.1

Enhancing the career perspectives and employability of researchers and contribution to their skills development

2.2

Contribution to structuring doctoral/early-stage research training at the EU level and to strengthening EU innovation capacity, including the potential for:

- a) Meaningful contribution of the non-academic sector to the doctoral/research training
- b) Developing sustainable joint doctoral degree structures (EJD)

2.3

Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the results

- Dissemination of research results
- Exploitation of results and IP

2.4

Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the activities to the target audiences

- Communication and public engagement strategy

Implementation (20%)

3.1

Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan

- WP description
- List of Major Deliverables
- List of major milestones
- Fellows' individual projects

3.2

Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including quality and risk management

- Network organisation and management structure
- Joint governing structure
- Joint admission, selection, supervision, monitoring and assessment procedures (EJD)
- Supervisory Board
- Recruitment Strategy
- Progress monitoring and evaluation of individual projects
- Risk management
- IPR
- Gender Aspects
- Data Management Plan

3.3

Appropriateness of the infrastructure of the participating organisations

3.4

Competences, experience and complementarity of the participating organisations and their commitment to the programme

- Consortium composition and exploitation of participating organisations' complementarities
- Commitment of beneficiaries and partner organisations of the programme



1.1 An excellent research programme

- Use the first sub-heading 1.1.1 as an Executive Summary of your programme
 - Explain “What, why, who, how” in 1-2 pages max, possibly including a good figure.
 - Introduce the relevance and timeliness of your research questions by citing relevant sectoral policies (see IMSCO Handbook for links to EU and OECD policies).
 - Define a clear and focused research goal/aim/topic, then define specific research objectives.
 - Make the research objectives clear, focused and up front.
 - Introduce the state of the art by citing a few relevant, up-to-date bibliographic references in the footnotes (the state-of-the-art can be expanded upon, if necessary, in subheading 1.1.3).
 - Clearly but briefly explain the novelty of your research objectives compared to the ‘state of the art’.
- Start (or conclude) 1.1.1 with a short paragraph summarising the overall ITN programme, such as:

The overarching objective of this ITN is to provide high-level training in X to a new generation of high achieving early stage researchers to provide them with the transferable skills necessary for thriving careers in a burgeoning area that underpins innovative technological development across a range of diverse disciplines. This goal will be achieved by a unique combination of “hands-on” research training, non-academic placements and courses and workshops on scientific and complementary “soft” skills facilitated by the academic-non-academic composition of the consortium”



1.1 Research - 2

- **1.1.2. Methodology: describe in detail how the research objectives will be explored**
 - Equipment, techniques, assays, types of research etc.
 - Lack of clarity around methodology often identified as a “weakness”
 - Explain how the work is **inter- or multi-disciplinary**
 - Could gender or sex differences affect the performances of the research work? If yes, explain how you have taken **gender** into account in the research methodology. See the Handbook for useful resources.
 - **Break down the research programme into discrete **Work Packages** that link to your research objectives**
 - 3-4 research WPs is typical
 - Number them to relate to the research objectives (WP1 tackles objective O1, etc.)
 - Give a brief WP summary (one paragraph each) here – the detailed WP tables should be in Section 3.1
 - Explain how the ESR projects fit into the WPs (diagram)



1.1 Research - 3

- **1.1.3 Explain why the research is original, innovative and timely compared to:**
 1. The state-of-the-art in the research area.
 2. **And** other doctoral/research trainings in the EU (previous ITNs? – search at http://cordis.europa.eu/search/advanced_en) and beyond.



Remember: the **research
project**
is only one aspect of a
research training programme



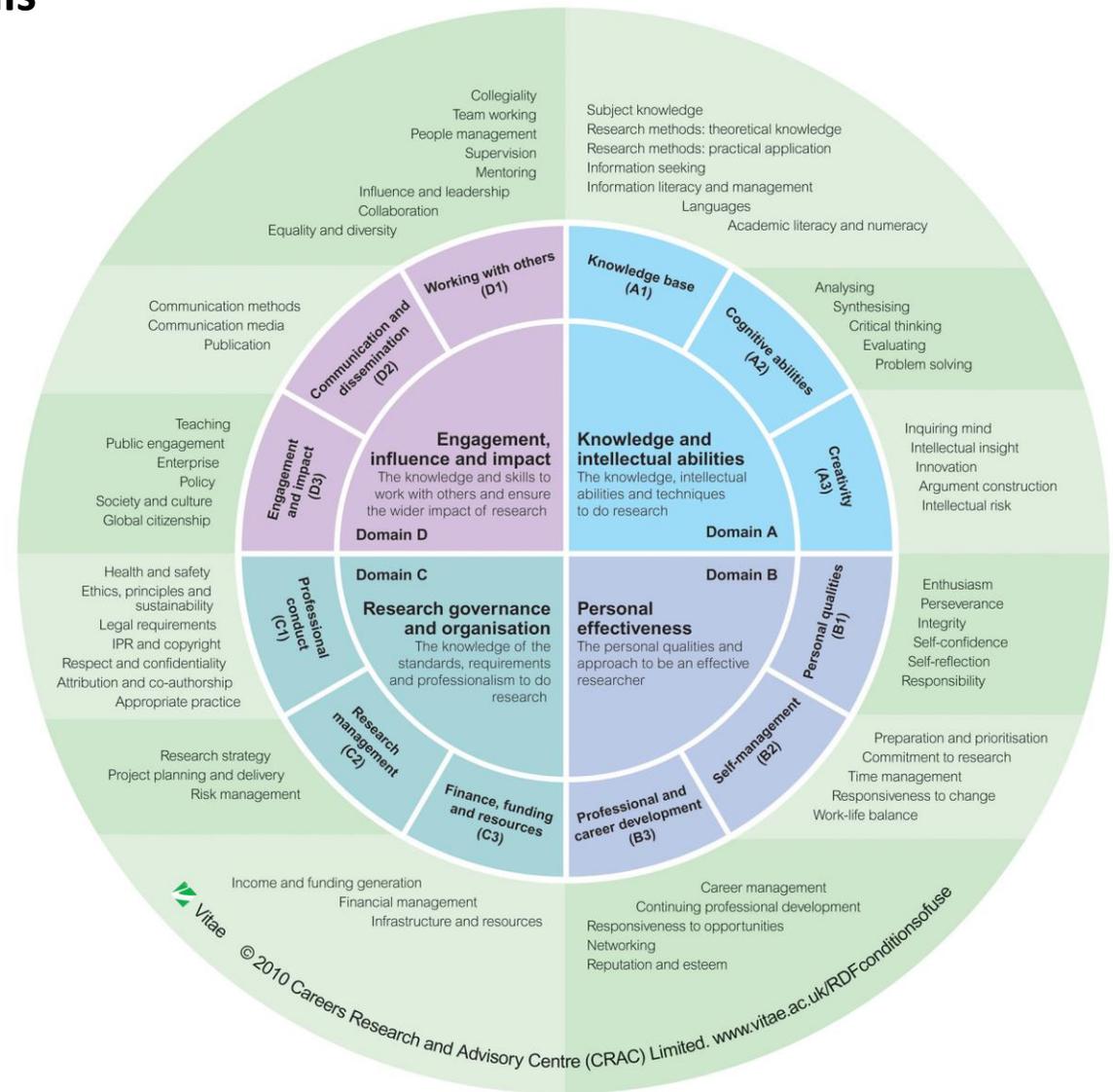
1.2 Training - 1

- Remember that the goal of the ITN programme is to produce ESR graduates who are **highly employable**.
- Start with a list of training objectives, including developing three types of skills:
 - **Core Research Skills** (acquired via their ESR project).
 - **Advanced/Additional Research Skills** (delivered by the consortium).
 - **Transferable Skills** (delivered by the consortium - particularly those useful in non-academic careers).
- Three modes of delivery:
 - **Local training**: offered at the main host organisation where the ESR will work e.g. via graduate schools.
 - **Network-wide training**: offered by the consortium at specific events e.g. workshops, summer schools.
 - **Secondment programme**: visits by each ESR to other beneficiaries or partner organisations- intersectoral.



Transferable & Complementary Skills

The [VITAE Researcher Development Framework](#) is a useful resource to identify transferable skills & Complementary Skills



1.2 Training - 2

- Describe the local training followed by the network-wide training:
 - **Local:** describe what is offered for the ESRs at their main host. Outline any mandatory training that they must take locally. Local training also includes their research project.
 - **Network wide:** Be very specific about the details of each event you will organise (Table 1.2b):
 - When and where it will take place.
 - What topics will be covered.
 - How long will it last.
 - Who will deliver the training.
 - Good to open up some events to the wider research community. Typical to have a final conference for example.
 - Earning a certain number of ECTS Credits (European Credit Transfer System) via the local and network-wide training is becoming the norm – mandatory for EJD.



1.2 Training - 3

- Complementarity between the local and network wide training is achieved by having a **Personal Career Development Plan (PCDP)** for each ESR.
- A PCDP will include at least:
 - A personalised analysis of the requirements and goals of the planned training for the ESR.
 - A list of courses (local and network-wide) to be taken by the ESR during their programme, including any ECTS credit requirements.
 - A list of communication and dissemination activities to be undertaken by the ESR.
 - A tentative schedule for their programme, including secondments.
- The PCDP will be prepared at the start of the ITN between the ESR and their supervisor(s) – it should be mentioned but not described in the proposal.
- It should be reviewed at least every six months.
- Finally, **explain the contribution of the non-academic beneficiaries** and POs in the training programme (Hint! They should be delivering some of the network-wide training).



1.3 Supervision - 1

Experience of supervisors

- Note the instruction in the proposal template:
To avoid duplication, the role and scientific profile of the supervisors should only be listed in the "Participating Organisations" tables
- Demonstrate, with hard evidence, the **collective quality** of the research supervisors in training of researchers.
- Do not write one paragraph per PI (not enough space).
- Instead write a collective statement about the expertise of the consortium. Don't leave out the Partner Organisations.
- Include (in tabular format):
 - Number of PhDs graduated, numbers of postdocs mentored, and where they are now, plus details of the quality of the supervisors.
 - Notable grants, editorial board membership, awards, important journal articles/conference papers/monographs etc.



1.3 Supervision - 2

Quality of the joint supervision arrangements

- Include for all ITN modes (EID, EJD and ETN)
- Describe a **consistent supervision policy** across the consortium
- Each SC must be a **minimum of 3 persons** – at least one should be from the **non-academic sector**
- Describe a **regular series of meetings** between ESR and SC
- Each SC must ensure that a **Personal Career Development Plan** is in place for each ESR and that it is reviewed at regular intervals
- Each SC reports into an **overall training/doctoral studies or similar committee** (Section 3.2 Management)



1.4 Interaction - 1

- Describe what tasks each participant (beneficiaries and POs) will undertake in the research & training programmes – use a table.
- Synergies:
 - Show why this consortium are best placed to deliver the programme (synergies/overlaps in expertise) – a diagram is useful.
 - Describe the “added value” of working together to deliver this programme –include information on previous collaborations between the participants and any successful outputs e.g. joint publications.



1.4 Interaction - 2

Exposure of ESRs to different research environments and complementarity thereof:

- i.e. Describe the secondments.
- Provide a table summarising the secondments for each ESR.
- Explain how the **secondments are linked** to ensuring the excellence of the research & training programmes.
- For EID, make sure it is clear that each ESR will achieve the minimum 50% of time in the non-academic sector.
- Each ESR should get a **secondment** of at least 3 months to a non-academic beneficiary or PO.



Thank you!

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