

New requirements for MSCA-ITN-2019 proposals

Changes in the Guide for Applicants and Standard Proposal Template from 2018 to 2019

The content of this document is based on the Horizon 2020 MSCA-ITN *Guide for Applicants* (GfA) and the *Standard Proposal Template* (SPT) as of 13/09/2018.



Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market.¹

Call: H2020-MSCA-ITN-2019

Types of action: MSCA-ITN-ETN European Training Networks
MSCA-ITN-EJD European Joint Doctorates
MSCA-ITN-EID European Industrial Doctorates

Submission deadline: 15 January 2019

Main Changes

Overview of changes from 2018 to 2019 as defined by the European Commission

- Guide for Applicants
- Standard Proposal Template

Guide for Applicants for ITNs 2019

Detailed overview of changes in the GfA (including Part A, Part B1 and Part B2) from 2018 to 2019

Main Changes

The main changes are defined by the European Commission in the Guide for Applicants as well as the Standard Proposal Template in the table “History of Changes”.

Guide for Applicants

Changes in the GfA (13.09.2018)	GfA page no.
Update of the Work Programme 2018-20 adoption references	7
Addition of two definitions (secondments and IEIO)	7
Addition of a comment on the project size for EJD	10
Clarifications added regarding entities with a legal or capital link	13
Note on the new partner search function of the participant portal	18
Examples of EID flexible recruitment	19
Clarification added on secondment costs (if >6 months)	22
Updated information on Open Access under H2020	25
Clarification on visa costs	28
More information added on the evaluation procedure	34-39
Clarification added on the financial capacity	37
Update of the Instructions for completing the proposal part A and updated note on resubmissions	40-42
Update of the Instructions for completing the proposal part B (additional table for EID, no more Gantt chart)	43
Part B template updates (Table 1.2a with PhD awarding entities added, section 3.1, note added on mandatory milestones, new table for EID, minimum font size 8 for table in section 5)	50, 52
Updated template for EJD letter of institutional commitment	54, 57
Update of links where applicable (e.g. NCP Net4Mobility+, call page, ...)	58
Other minor corrections	62

Standard Proposal Template

Changes in Part A (13.09.2018)	Changes in Part B (13.09.2018)
Restructuring of the participant section (no more mandatory PIC for partner organisations)	Table 1.2a with PhD awarding entities added
	Section 3.1, note added on mandatory milestones
	New table for EID
	No more Gantt Chart needed
	Minimum font size 8 for table in section 5

Guide for Applicants for ITNs 2019

Detailed comparison between the Guide for Applicants (GfA) version 3.0 – 2018 (12. October 2017) and the latest version 4.0 – 2019 (13 September 2018).

- Changes are sorted by the type of ITN action/implementation mode affected by the change.
- Changes in the text of the GfA (e.g. additions, rewording) are highlighted in **bold**.
- Explanations added by accelopment for clarification and orientation are in *italics*.
- Changes in form of eliminations (e.g. no more GANTT chart) are marked as ~~strikethrough~~.

Changes affecting all ITN implementation modes (ETN, EID and EJD)

Changes	Page
<i>The mobility rule that recruited researchers must not have spent more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date at the same appointing organisation</i> also applies for the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) or an ‘entity created under Union law’.	6
<i>New definitions/clarification of terms:</i> Secondment: is a period of research training with another beneficiary, its entities with a capital or legal link, or a partner organisation implemented to further enrich the training experience of a researcher. International European interest organisation (IEIO) means an international organisation, the majority of whose members are EU Member States or Horizon 2020 Associated Countries, and whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe (see Article 2.1(12) of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation (Regulation No 1290/2013)).	7
<i>2.1 Beneficiaries:</i> Where necessary, entities with a capital or legal link to the beneficiaries ⁶ may implement the tasks of hosting and training of researchers as described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement (including during secondments). The involvement of such entities must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and will be assessed as part of the evaluation. Note, however, that only beneficiaries can recruit researchers and the recruiting beneficiary remains fully responsible for the correct implementation of the action, for ensuring the eligibility of the recruited fellow, etc. Such entities don't need to supply any letters of commitment but need to be included in the list of participants (part B1) and in the participating organisations table (part B2).	13
As a general rule, the total duration of all secondments is limited to a maximum of 30% of the research training. The work performed at an entity with a capital or legal link can be up to 100% of the planned research training foreseen for the recruiting beneficiary.	13
How to find partners for your project ideas? You can use the new Partner Search function in the Participant Portal. The function allows to : - Look for organisations which receive funding in the past. - Create and check partner search requests by call/topic.	18
<i>4.2 Secondments:</i> During their secondment, researchers receive supervision and training at the premises of the receiving beneficiary, its entities with a capital or legal link , or partner organisation. The premises of these institutions must be independent from each other and therefore the secondment must involve physical mobility of the fellow.	23
Secondments in ITN of six months or less which require mobility from the place of residence must be financed using the Research, Training and Networking costs in order to prevent an unreasonable financial burden for the early-stage researchers. This includes at least the travel and accommodation costs. Longer secondments can also be supported in the same way.	23

<p>Open Access under Horizon 2020</p> <p>Open Access to scientific publications: Each beneficiary must ensure open access (free of charge online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results - either as 'gold' open access, i.e. via the publisher AND via the repository, or as 'green' open access, i.e. via the repository only (see guidance on Article 29.2 in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement). A repository link and a digital object identifier (DOI) for each publication must be provided in the action reports.</p> <p>Open Access to research data: beneficiaries will engage in research data sharing by default (extended Open Research Data Pilot), as stipulated under Article 29.3 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement (including the creation of a Data Management Plan). Participants may, however, opt out of these arrangements, both before and after the signature of the Grant Agreement under the conditions described in Annex L of the Work Programme. Note that information related to Open Research Data provided in the proposal will not be subject to evaluation. In other words, proposals will not be evaluated negatively because they opt-out of the data sharing.</p> <p>Further information on the Data Management Plan can be found in the H2020 Online Manual of the Participant Portal.</p>	25										
<p><i>5.2 Mobility Allowance / 5.3 Family Allowance:</i></p> <p>The mobility and family allowances are fixed amounts, regardless of the country of recruitment, and may be excluded from taxation and/or social security charges, where this is in line with national legislation.</p>	27										
<p><i>Annex 2 – Evaluation Criteria and Procedure:</i></p> <p>In each of the eight scientific areas (panels) a Chairperson ("Chair"), assisted by several Vice-Chairs (depending on the size of the panel) will assist REA staff with the management of the evaluation. Chairs and Vice-Chairs are distinguished members of the scientific community who do not evaluate proposals. Their tasks include the following: finalising the assignment of three experts to each proposal, providing guidance to evaluators, checking the quality and consistency of the experts' reports, drafting the consensus report, attending the panel review meetings to endorse the final ranked lists of proposals for funding.</p>	34										
<p>Each proposal will be assessed independently by at least three experts chosen by the REA from the pool of experts taking part in this evaluation. An expert will be designated as the proposal "rapporteur" and will assume additional responsibilities at the end of this phase and in the following phases of the evaluation session.</p>	36										
<p>Financial Capacity</p> <p>Please note that the operational capacity should be distinguished from the financial capacity. All beneficiaries in the project shall be financially viable and show that they have a reasonably stable income in relation to the costs of business operations. If the proposal is selected for funding, the beneficiaries' financial capacity will be analysed by a dedicated department at the REA on the basis of standardised criteria, during the Grant Agreement preparation. The previous annual financial statements are essential documents in this context without which a proper analysis is not possible.</p>	37										
<p>4. Overview of the evaluation process</p> <p>In order to conduct the evaluation of all eligible proposals submitted to a MSCA-ITN call, the following actors support the REA (under a contract covering confidentiality and remuneration).</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="124 1659 1289 1921"> <thead> <tr> <th>Actor</th> <th>Role</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Vice-Chairs</td> <td>Support REA staff in remote monitoring of the evaluation process, including drafting of consensus reports, and perform quality-control and panel discussion in Brussels.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evaluators</td> <td>Remote evaluation of the proposals.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ethics experts</td> <td>Ethics review of the proposal likely to be funded.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent Observer</td> <td>Observation of the full process and feedback.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Actor	Role	Vice-Chairs	Support REA staff in remote monitoring of the evaluation process, including drafting of consensus reports, and perform quality-control and panel discussion in Brussels.	Evaluators	Remote evaluation of the proposals.	Ethics experts	Ethics review of the proposal likely to be funded.	Independent Observer	Observation of the full process and feedback.	38/39
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The evaluation process follows steps in chronological order:

Evaluation step	Output	Actor
Eligibility and Admissibility checks	Ineligible and inadmissible proposals are removed from the evaluation process. Applicants are notified about their ineligibility/ inadmissibility. However, a proposal may be declared ineligible or inadmissible at any time during the process.	REA
Request for Review	Applicants may file a complaint about their ineligibility or inadmissibility. If grounded, the evaluation will resume. Any information not present in the submitted proposal will be discarded.	REA
Assignment of evaluators to eligible proposals	A first draft assignment is done automatically by matching the keywords (descriptors) of the proposals with the expertise of the evaluators. In Brussels, Vice-Chairs carefully check each assignment against the proposal and evaluators' expertise in order to obtain the best match.	REA and Vice-Chairs
Individual Evaluation	Each proposal is remotely evaluated by three evaluators in an individual and independent manner.	Evaluators Vice-Chairs (support) and REA (follow-up)
Consensus discussion	The consensus phase will start as soon as all three Individual Evaluation Reports for a given proposal are submitted in the evaluation tool (SEP), the goal being to reach a final set of comments that all three experts can agree on. Each proposal is remotely discussed by the three evaluators and the Evaluation Summary Report is agreed on unanimously (comments + scores). The discussion is mostly done through the SEP IT platform, but can also take place via tele/video-conference.	Evaluators Vice-Chairs (drafting) and REA (moderation and follow-up)
Ranking List	The consensus score determines the ranking list. The Vice-Chairs rank proposals having obtained the same score in each criterion and discuss proposals where full consensus could not be reached.	REA and Vice-Chairs
Ethics screening	Proposals likely to be funded are subject to an ethics screening and an "Ethics Summary Report" informs the applicants about the potential ethics requirements to be fulfilled.	Ethics experts
Feedback to applicants	All applicants receive the Evaluation Summary Report of their proposal.	REA
Request for Review	Applicants may contest the procedural aspects of the evaluation (not the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators).	REA Review Committee (external to the evaluation team)

<p><i>Annex 3 – Instructions for Completing Part A of the Proposal:</i></p> <p>Step 5: Upload of Part B1 and B2, and Editing of the form (part A), including the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1: General information about the proposal; • Section 2: Data on participating organisations (list of beneficiaries and additional table for partner organisations (manual entry)); • Section 3: Budget (request for funding in terms of person-months); • Section 4: Ethics issues table; • Section 5: Call-specific Question (Open Access) 	40
<p>Experts will evaluate ETN proposals under a given panel. EID and EJD proposals will be evaluated by dedicated experts, and then be ranked in separate, multidisciplinary panels, each with its own earmarked budget (€35 million for EID and €35 million for EJD). Each panel will establish a ranked list of proposals for funding.</p>	41
<p><i>How to complete the Part A Forms:</i></p> <p>The coordinator fills in the steps 1 to 4, uploads part B1 and B2 in step 5 and fills in the sections 1 (general information), 3 (budget), 4 (ethics) and 5 (Call-specific question) of the form..</p>	41
<p><i>Partner Organisations:</i></p> <p>Information on partner organisations is provided by the coordinator ONLY under section 2 of the proposal. Although not mandatory, providing a Participant Identification Code (PIC) for partner organisations in this section is highly encouraged.</p>	41
<p>If you have submitted your proposal (or a very similar one) to the ITN Calls for Proposals MSCA-ITN-2017 or MSCA-ITN-2018, the evaluators will receive a copy of the previous Evaluation Summary Report during the consensus phase (i.e. after the individual evaluation has been carried out). However, please note that the evaluation of the current proposal will take place independently of the previous submission(s). In case the evaluation markedly differs from the previous evaluation(s), the evaluators will be instructed to verify that their comments and scores for the current proposal are duly justified. There will be no comparison between proposals.</p>	42
<p><i>Annex 4 – Instructions for Drafting Part B of the Proposal:</i></p> <p>The Expert evaluators will disregard any excess pages above the 34 page limit, since all pages in excess will automatically be blanked out once the application is submitted.</p>	43
<p><i>Annex 5 – Part B Template:</i></p> <p>4. GANTT CHART</p> <p>3. Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation</p> <p>Required sub-headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Packages description (please include table 3.1a); • List of major deliverables (please include table 3.1b), including the awarding of doctoral degrees, where applicable); • List of major milestones (please include table 3.1c) • Fellow's individual projects (please include table 3.1d); • Gantt Chart, including secondment plan (please use template below) • EID specific requirements: for EID proposals, an additional table should be completed in part B2; 	46, 52
<p><i>Table 3.1c Milestones List:</i></p> <p>Note that, if the proposal is successful, two mandatory milestones will be added during the Grant Agreement preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Term meeting between REA and the consortium, due at month 13-15: the presence of all beneficiaries (scientists-in-charge and recruited researchers) and partner organisations is expected. A best practice is to combine this meeting with other project events as appropriate. • Recruitment process completed, due at month 12. <p>For EID and EJD projects, specific milestones may also be added (PhD enrolment for all recruited researchers, Agreement to deliver the joint/double/multiple PhD).</p>	54

Changes affecting only European Training Networks (ETN)

Changes	Page
If ETN proposals offer a doctoral training to ESRs, the entity entitled to award a doctoral degree must be clearly identified in the proposal and added as a beneficiary, a partner organisation or an entity with a capital or legal link.	9
ETN proposals will be ranked in eight scientific panels with a total budget of € 400 million (previously € 375 million).	9

Changes affecting only European Joint Doctorates (EJD)

Changes	Page
<i>European Joint Doctorates (EJD):</i> There is no pre-defined size for these multi-partner networks. However, it is recommended to keep the size of the consortium between 4 and 8 beneficiaries since previous experience has shown this to be a manageable size.	10
The remaining supported researchers must also be enrolled in a programme that results in a joint, double or multiple degree awarded by at least one European participating organisation (MS/AC). Applicants must indicate at proposal stage for all supported researchers, from which institution(s) they are supposed to receive the degree(s).	11
<i>Rewording:</i> The participating organisations must demonstrate clearly that the joint scheme will contribute to improving the overall quality of doctoral education and research in Europe , and will lead to the award of a joint, double or multiple degree recognised or accredited by the respective national authorities.	12
In EJD it is expected that the researchers will need to spend at least the minimum period of time required to be eligible for a doctoral degree at the corresponding academic participating organisations. This will vary according to the institution and country in question. The limitation of secondments to 30% of the total recruitment period does not apply to EJD insofar as time spent at other participating organisations occurs in line with the proposal description.	24

Changes affecting only European Industrial Doctorates (EID)

Changes	Page
<i>European Industrial Doctorates (EID)</i> : [...]should none of the academic beneficiaries be entitled to award a doctoral degree ⁴ , a university or a consortium/grouping of academic/research institutions entitled to award a doctoral degree must be associated as a partner organisation or as an entity with a capital or legal link .	9
EID proposals will be ranked in a separate multidisciplinary panel with a dedicated budget of € 35 million (previously € 32 million).	10
<i>Rewording</i> : For EID, however, recruited researchers must spend at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector. This inter-sectoral mobility must be international between beneficiaries .	18
The remaining supported researchers must also be enrolled in a programme that results in a joint, double or multiple degree awarded by at least one European participating organisation (MS/AC).	18/19
Examples of flexible recruitment in an EID with 2 beneficiaries, a university located in Germany and a company located in Sweden: i. The university in Germany will recruit one researcher for the full period (36 months). The university will receive the entire budget corresponding to 36 person-months. The country correction coefficient of Germany (97%) will be applied on the living allowance. ii. The university in Germany will recruit the researcher for 18 months and the company in Sweden will recruit him/her for another 18 months. In this case, the country correction coefficient of Germany (97%) will be applied for the first 18 person-months and the coefficient of Sweden (121.8%) will be applied for the other 18 person-months.	19
In EID, all recruited ESRs must spend at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector. Therefore if a researcher is recruited by an academic beneficiary, they must be sent to beneficiaries and/or partner organisations in the non-academic sector, primarily enterprise, for at least 50% of their recruitment period within the action. This inter-sectoral mobility must be international between beneficiaries (i.e. between beneficiaries established in different countries) . The total secondment duration to partner organisations (irrespective of the sector) is limited to a maximum of 30% of the fellowship duration. The specific percentage of time that each researcher will spend at each institution should therefore be indicated in the proposal.	23
<i>Document 2 (part B2)</i> : Note that for EID proposals, an additional table is required in the part B2.	43
<i>Annex 5 – Part B Template</i> : 4. EID SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS (FOR EID ONLY)	46
<i>2. Impact</i> : b) Developing sustainable (= lasting) joint doctoral degree structures (for EJD only)	51
<i>3. Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation</i> Required sub-headings: • Work Packages description (please include table 3.1a); • List of major deliverables (please include table 3.1b), including the awarding of doctoral degrees, where applicable); • List of major milestones (please include table 3.1c) • Fellow's individual projects (please include table 3.1d); • EID specific requirements: for EID proposals, an additional table should be completed in part B2;	52
DOCUMENT 2 (no overall page limit applied) 4. EID specific requirements (for EID only) For the EID mode the following table should be included indicating for each fellow the time spent in the academic and non-academic sectors confirming that each individual fellow spends at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector (Check 1) and the mobility between academic and non-academic beneficiaries is international (Check 2). Also indicate the time spent in partner organisations (irrespective of the sector) restricting it to a maximum of 30% of the fellowship duration (Check 3).	57