



MSCA-IF EVALUATION STEP BY STEP

MANUAL FOR EVALUATORS 2018

Research Executive Agency

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 GENERAL ASPECTS	3	3.4 Page limits and formatting standards	27	4.3.4 What if it is difficult to reach a consensus?	45
1.1 Why this Guide	4	3.5 Overall comments	28	4.3.5 Compliance with deadlines	45
1.2 Working as an expert	5	3.6 Scores	29		
1.3 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowships	6	3.7 Operational capacity	30		
1.4 Research topics	8	3.8 Open Access to Publications vs. Open Access to Research Data	31	5 TIPS & HINTS	46
1.5 Secondments	9	3.9 Ethics	32	6 ANNEXES	51
2 THE EVALUATION IN PRACTICE	10	3.10 Special cases	33	6.1 Glossary	52
2.1 Who Is Who	11	3.10.1 Overlap with IF, ITN, COFUND and ERC	33	6.2 MSCA-IF Summary table	54
2.2 Workflow	12	3.10.2 Research misconduct	33	6.3 MSCA-IF Assessment Grid	55
2.2.1 Overview of the workflow	12				
2.2.2 Timeline	13	4 PERFORMING THE WORK	34		
2.2.3 The evaluation phases in detail	14	4.1 Accept to evaluate	35		
2.3 The remote evaluation process in SEP	15	4.2 The Individual Evaluation Report (IER) phase	36		
3 THE PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT	16	4.2.1 How to draft your IER	37		
3.1 Guiding principles	17	4.2.2 What if?	40		
3.2 The evaluation criteria	19	4.3 The Consensus Report (CR) phase	41		
3.2.1 Criterion 1: Excellence	20	4.3.1 How to draft the consensus report (CR)	42		
3.2.2 Criterion 2: Impact	23	4.3.2 Reaching consensus	43		
3.2.3 Criterion 3: Implementation	24	4.3.3 What if it is a resubmission?	44		
3.3 Eligibility check	26				

1 GENERAL ASPECTS

1.1 Why this Guide	4
1.2 Working as an expert	5
1.3 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowships	6
1.4 Research topics	8
1.5 Secondments	9

1.1 WHY THIS GUIDE

Expert Evaluators for the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowships programme (H2020-MSCA-IF) have the important task of assessing applications for funding from among Europe's best and most promising researchers. Your evaluations will affect their careers and ultimately the quality of European research. **This guide will help you to assess proposals and draft your evaluation reports.**

1.2 WORKING AS AN EXPERT

Working as an Expert

H2020-MSCA-IF is one of the EU's most competitive research funding programmes. It is based on applications made jointly by the researcher and the beneficiary in academic or non-academic sectors in response to an annual call for proposals. About 10,000 proposals are submitted each year, with a success rate of approximately 14 %.

The Research Executive Agency (REA) uses independent experts to assist with the evaluation of the IF proposals. These experts have different roles, namely:

- **Expert Evaluators** for drafting the Individual Evaluation Reports (IER) and reaching consensus by participating in the remote consensus phase
- **Expert Rapporteurs** for drafting the Consensus Reports (CR)

➤ **Chairs** and **Vice-Chairs** to support and monitor the evaluation

➤ **Ethics Experts**

➤ **Independent Observer**

When working as an expert, you should consider:

➤ **Place of work:** all the work of the expert Evaluator or Rapporteur is performed remotely and may be carried out at your home or place of work. The evaluation of proposals is performed through SEP, a web-based electronic tool.

➤ **Conflict of Interest (Col):** the REA will not appoint you as an expert to evaluate proposals if you have a vested interest that could influence your evaluations. For more details, please see [section 3.1.7](#) of this guide and/or **your contract**.

➤ **Remuneration:** as an expert, you are entitled to a fee per task, with a maximum stipulated in your contract. In April 2017, the European Commission introduced a new version of the model contract, introducing a new methodology for calculating expert fees for remote evaluation. For further details, please refer to your contract.

➤ **Volume of work:** participation in the H2020-MSCA-IF evaluation exercise **does not imply** consecutive or 9-to-5 working days, but **flexible working hours** according to the deadlines which will be set in due time. The number of proposals you will be asked to assess largely depends on the number of proposals received in your area of expertise.

Please follow the instructions from your Vice-Chair on how to prioritise your tasks.

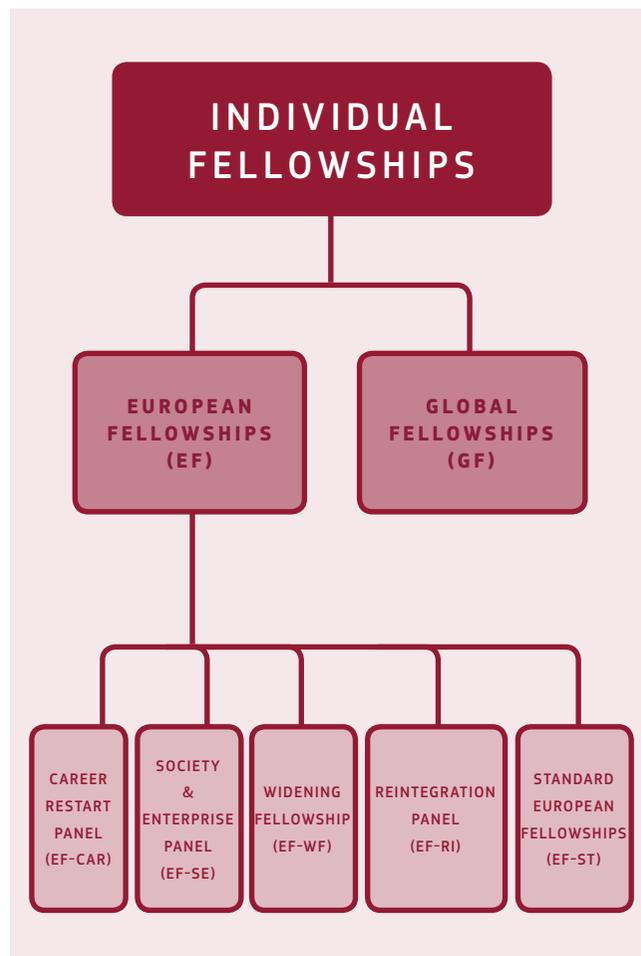
1.3 MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS

Guide for Applicants

The goal of the MSCA Individual Fellowships (IF) is to enhance the creative and innovative potential of **experienced researchers**¹ who are seeking to diversify their individual competences in terms of skill acquisition through advanced training, international and inter-sectoral mobility.

Individual Fellowships (IF) provide opportunities to acquire and transfer new knowledge and to work on research and innovation either in a European context (EU Member States and Associated Countries) or outside Europe.

¹ The experienced researcher must, at the deadline of the call, have either a doctoral degree or at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience.



As an Evaluator, you will assess the different Individual Fellowships:

1. EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIPS (EF)

European Fellowships are hosted from 12 to 24 months in EU Member States or **Associated countries** and are open to experienced researchers of any nationality either coming to Europe from any country in the world or moving within Europe. The researcher must comply with the **rules of mobility**² in the country where the EF will be hosted. The duration of CAR is between 12 to 36 months.

EFs are split into four different schemes:

➤ **Standard European Fellowships (EF-ST)**

- for all experienced researchers wishing to pursue their scientific career in another EU Member State or Associated Country.

² Eligibility conditions and mobility rules are described in the **H2020 MSCA Work Programme 2018-2020** and in the **Guide for Applicants 2018**.

➤ **Career Restart Panel (EF-CAR)** - dedicated to researchers who wish to resume their research career in Europe after a career break in research for a continuous period of at least 12 months within the 18 months immediately prior to the deadline for submission of proposals.

➤ **Reintegration Panel (EF-RI)** - dedicated to researchers who wish to return and reintegrate into a longer-term research position in Europe.

➤ **Society & Enterprise Panel (EF-SE)** - dedicated to researchers seeking to work on research and innovation projects in an organisation in the non-academic sector.

2. GLOBAL FELLOWSHIPS (GF)

Global Fellowships are based on a 12 to 24-month stay in a third country outside Europe followed by a mandatory 12-month return period to a European host institution.

Note: The eligibility of the proposals is checked by REA staff

List of widening countries

Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Associated Countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine

You will find a summary table illustrating the main features of each IF Action in the annexes.

1.4 RESEARCH TOPICS

Individual Fellowships are open to all fields of research and innovation, chosen freely by the applicants. Applicants must indicate at the submission stage in which of eight different **scientific areas** their proposal fits best. These areas are:

- Chemistry (CHE)
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)
- Economic Sciences (ECO)
- Information Science and Engineering (ENG)
- Environment and Geosciences (ENV)
- Life Sciences (LIF)
- Mathematics (MAT)
- Physics (PHY)

1.5 SECONDMENTS

Researchers applying for an IF may opt to include a **secondment** phase in an EU Member State or Associated Country within the overall duration of their fellowship. Applicants must clearly distinguish 'secondments' from short visits (for example, for fieldwork) since they are different in nature and pursue different objectives. The country selected for a short visit can be chosen freely.

If the partner organisation where the secondment takes place is not identified at the proposal stage, it is essential that Part B of the proposal contains as much information as possible on the sector, place, timing and duration, and its overall purpose.

The maximum duration of secondment is defined according to the total duration of the fellowship. Where secondments exceed the maximum permitted length, the excessive duration should be disregarded.

The secondment phase can be a single period or divided into shorter periods which

cumulatively do not exceed the maximum permitted length.

For Global Fellowships, such an optional secondment can also take place at the start of the action at the beneficiary or its entity with a capital or legal link and/or a partner organisation in a MS or AC for a maximum of 3 months, allowing the researcher to spend time there before moving on to a partner organisation in a Third country. In such cases, the initial secondment will be considered as part of the outgoing phase.

DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP	MAXIMUM DURATION OF SECONDMENT
≤ 18 MONTHS	3 MONTHS
>18 MONTHS	6 MONTHS

2 THE EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

2.1 Who Is Who	11
2.2 Workflow	12
2.2.1 Overview of the workflow	12
2.2.2 Timeline	13
2.2.3 The evaluation phases in detail	14
2.3 The remote evaluation process in SEP	15

2.1 WHO IS WHO

Individual Fellowships are awarded through an open competition and a transparent, independent evaluation. Each proposal is evaluated on the basis of a pre-defined list of criteria by at least three expert Evaluators, supervised by their expert Vice-Chair and under the umbrella of the Research Executive Agency staff.

Experts are grouped into eight different panels – aligned with the eight MSCA predefined scientific areas – according to their field of expertise. Each panel has its own group of Vice-Chairs, led by the Chair.

Note: You will only be asked to evaluate proposals in your specific field of expertise according to the keywords you have previously selected, and your profile. Given the multi-disciplinary approach of some proposals, you may also be requested to evaluate proposals not closely linked to your specific field of expertise, but more broadly linked to your general expertise.

The **Evaluator** is responsible for drafting the **Individual Evaluation Report (IER)**.

One of the Evaluator will also be asked to act as **Rapporteur**: he/she is responsible for drafting and finalising the **Consensus Report (CR)**.

Vice-Chairs are former Evaluators with in-depth knowledge of the MSCA evaluation process who assists the REA with the allocation of proposals, evaluation management and monitoring. He/she does not evaluate the proposals but instead performs a quality check of the IERs and the CRs prepared by the Evaluators and the Rapporteurs and thus may give feedback on the quality of the reports.

The Vice-Chairs monitor the timely submissions of the reports and check the quality of at least each Evaluator's first IERs and each Rapporteur's CR.

The **Chair** of a panel is an expert with an in-depth knowledge of the MSCA evaluation process and therefore, together with the Vice-Chairs, assists the REA in the overall

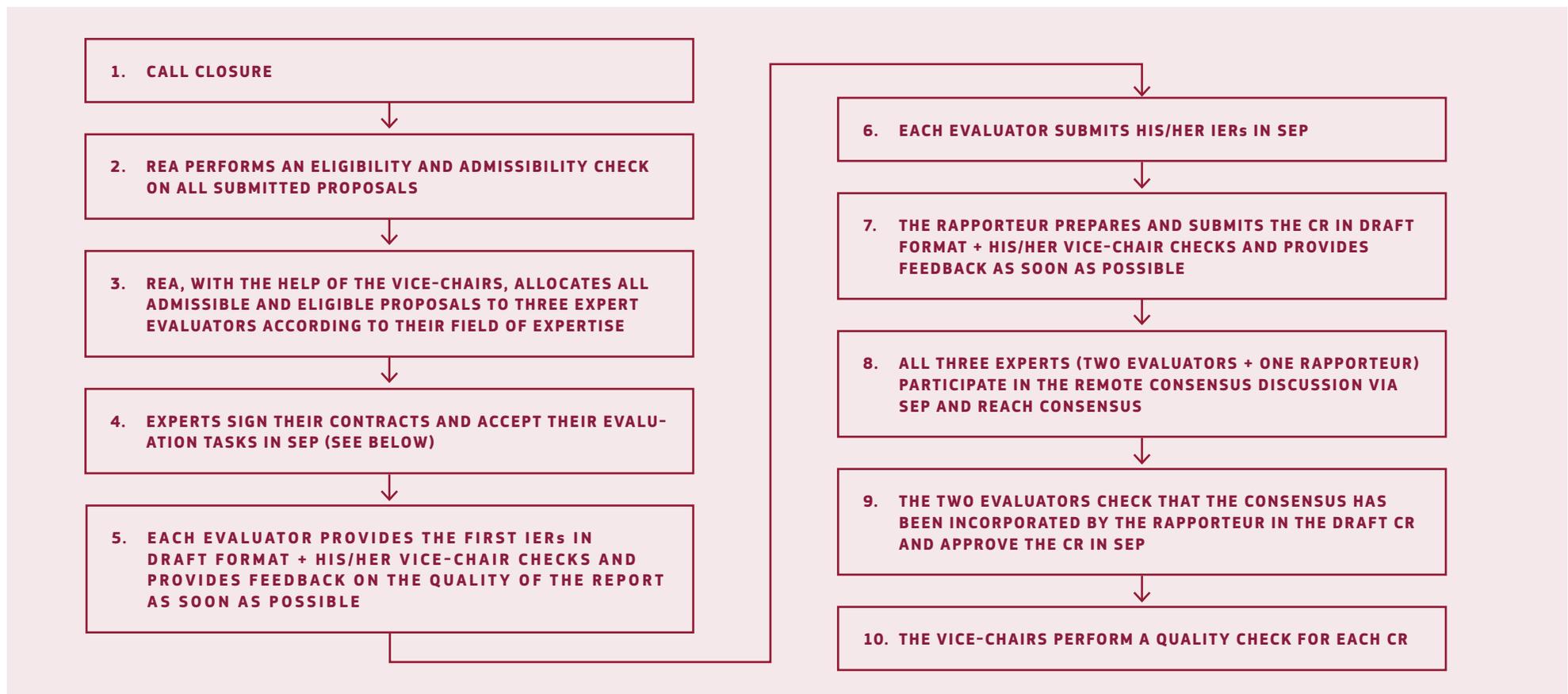
management of the evaluation process and monitoring its progress.

The **Independent Observer** is an independent expert appointed by the REA who follows, observes and checks the entire evaluation process and related procedures. He/she checks compliance with the procedures stipulated in the **Work Programme 2018-2020** and the **Guide for Proposals Submission and Evaluation**. He/she reports on the correct and fair implementation of the evaluations and gives his/her suggestions for improvements, as necessary, in a report to the REA. However the observer does not express views on the specific proposals or on other experts' opinions.

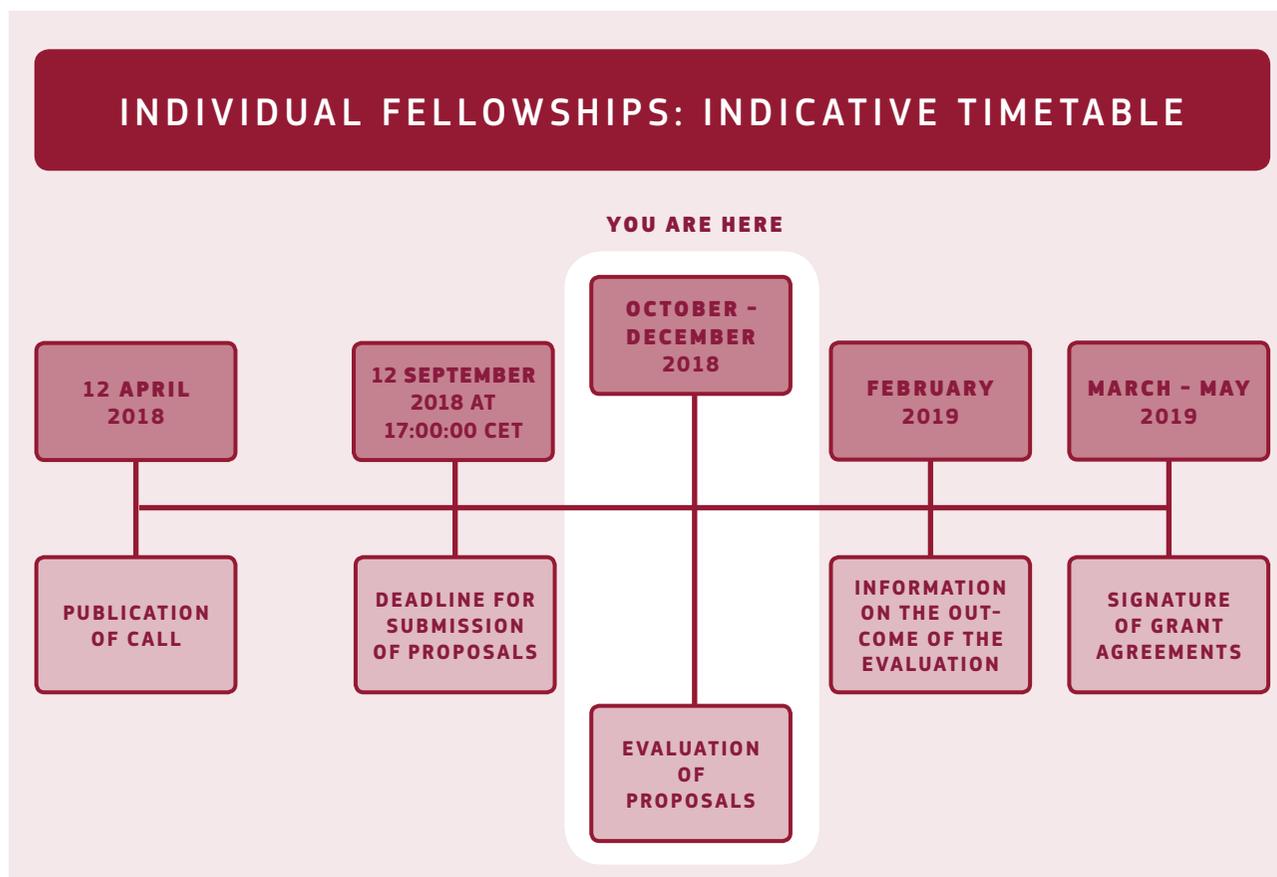
REA staff members, with the support of the Chair(s) and Vice-Chairs, are responsible for managing the evaluation process and monitoring its progress. They ensure that the evaluation rules are respected and give the experts advice for a quality and timely completion of the process.

2.2 WORKFLOW

2.2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE WORKFLOW



2.2.2 TIMELINE



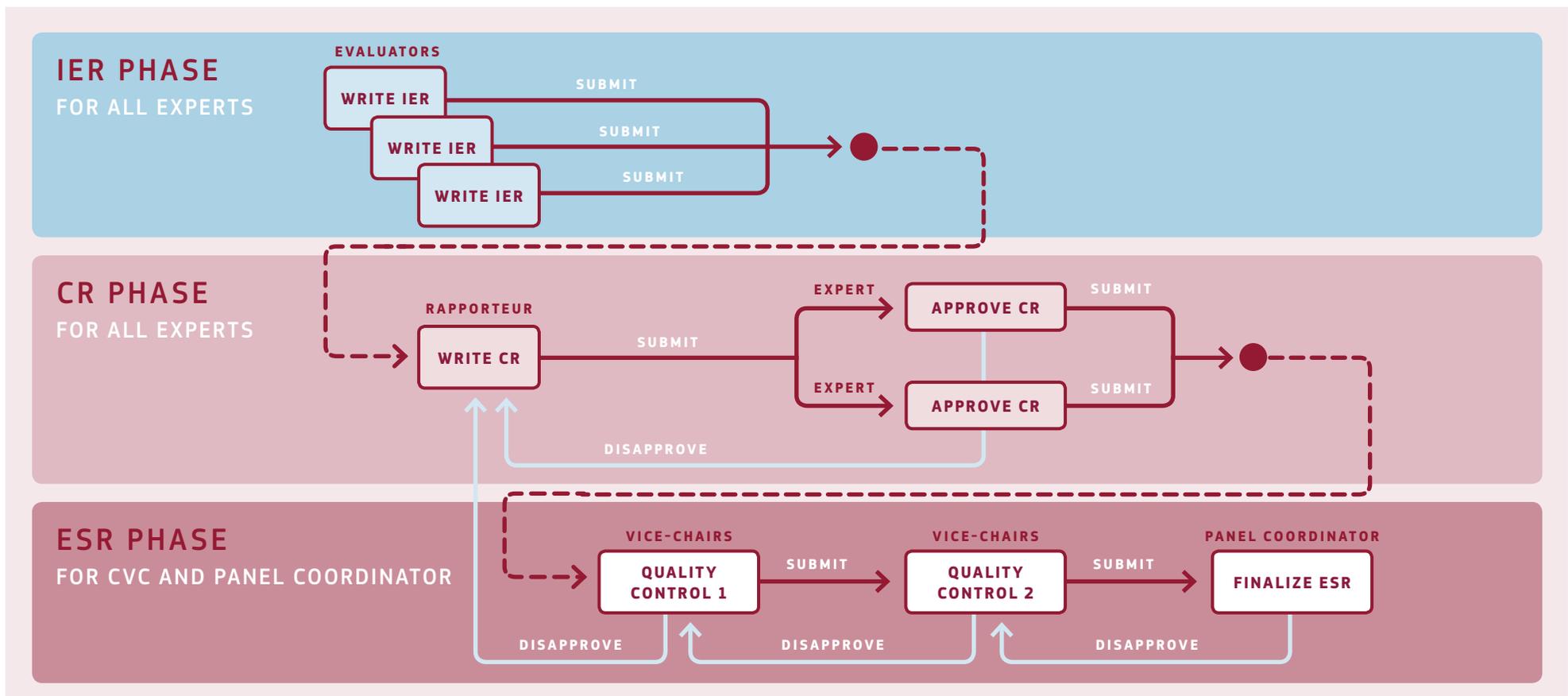
Call closure	12 SEPTEMBER 2018
Proposals allocation (only Vice-Chairs)	24-27 SEPTEMBER 2018
Expert contracting	28 SEPTEMBER - 5 OCTOBER 2018
Video-briefing & Guide for Evaluators	5 OCTOBER 2018
Remote evaluation: IER phase & CR phase (all experts)	5 OCTOBER - 2 DECEMBER 2018
Quality check and panel ranking (only Vice-Chairs)	3-6 DECEMBER 2018

2.2.3 THE EVALUATION PHASES IN DETAIL

Key:

- WRITE IER IER: Individual Evaluation Report
- WRITE CR CR: Consensus Report

- QUALITY CONTROL 1 ESR: Evaluation Summary Report
- QUALITY CONTROL 2 CVC: Chairs & Vice-Chairs



2.3 THE REMOTE EVALUATION PROCESS IN SEP

As already mentioned, you will perform your work in SEP – the EU online tool for remote evaluation.

The web links in the next column describe in detail how you use the SEP evaluation tool. They also provide reference information about the available screens and forms, additional actions available to call coordinators, and more.

SEP Access:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/evaluation/>

SEP Guidelines:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/expert/>

Introduction to proposal evaluation in SEP

Navigating the main screen

Filtering Tasks

Navigating through Tasks

Viewing proposal details

Accepting a Task

Declining a Task

Completing an individual evaluation report (IER)

Completing a consensus report (CR) Remotely

Printing Reports

Task Status

If you have submitted your Individual Evaluation Report by mistake and/or wish to reopen it, please contact your Vice-chair.

3 THE PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT

3.1	Guiding principles	17	3.6	Scores	29
3.2	The evaluation criteria	19	3.7	Operational capacity	30
	3.2.1 Criterion 1: Excellence	20	3.8	Open Access to Publications vs. Open Access to Research Data	31
	3.2.2 Criterion 2: Impact	23	3.9	Ethics	32
	3.2.3 Criterion 3: Implementation	24	3.10	Special cases	33
3.3	Eligibility check	26		3.10.1 Overlap with IF, ITN, COFUND and ERC	33
3.4	Page limits and formatting standards	27		3.10.2 Research misconduct	33
3.5	Overall comments	28			

3.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

While performing the evaluation work, you are expected to comply with the following principles, as stated in Annex 1 of the Code of Conduct of the expert contract³:

1. INDEPENDENCE

You are appointed in your personal capacity and act independently and in the public interest, not in your country or employer's interest.

2. IMPARTIALITY

You treat all proposals equally and evaluate them impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants.

3. OBJECTIVITY

You evaluate each proposal as submitted and not based on its potential if certain changes were to be made.

4. ACCURACY

You base your judgment on the 3 official evaluation criteria the proposal addresses, and nothing else.

5. CONSISTENCY

You apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

- You discuss evaluation matters – such as the content of proposals, evaluation results or opinions of fellow experts – only with your fellow experts involved in evaluating the same proposal.
- You do not contact applicants or any third parties.
- You do not disclose the names of your fellow experts (each year, the Commission publishes the experts' names – as a group – but no link is made between an expert and a proposal).
- You maintain the confidentiality of documents, paper or electronic, at all times and wherever you do your evaluation work

(on-site or remotely), and you must return, destroy or delete all confidential documents, paper or electronic, upon completing your work.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST RULES (CoI)

You have a CoI and are excluded from the evaluation session if you:

- are involved in a competing proposal, or were involved in the preparation of the proposal (including pre-proposal checks);
- benefit directly or indirectly if a proposal is accepted or rejected;
- have a close family or personal relationship with any person involved in the preparation of any proposal submitted to this call;
- are a director, trustee or partner or are in any way involved in the management of an organisation involved in the preparation of any proposal submitted to this call;
- are employed or contracted by one of the applicants or any named subcontractors;
- are a member of an advisory group set up by the Commission to advise on the prepa-

³ Sources: [Guide for submission and evaluation of proposals \(Horizon 2020 Grants manual\)](#), [Horizon 2020 model contract for independent experts](#).

ration of Euratom or EU Horizon 2020 work programmes or work plans in an area related to the call;

- are a National Contact Point (NCP) or a person working directly for the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN);
- are a member of a Programme Committee.

However, the REA may decide to invite an expert with a declared Col to take part in the evaluation session, while being excluded from the evaluation of the proposal(s) concerned, if all of the following apply:

- the expert works in a different team/department/laboratory/institute from where the action is to be carried out;
- the bodies operate with a high degree of autonomy.

In addition, the REA will decide whether a Col exists — taking into account the objective circumstances, available information and related risks — if an expert:

- was employed by one of the applicants in the previous three years;
- is involved in a contract or grant agreement, grant decision, membership of management structures (e.g. member of management or advisory board etc.) or research collaboration with an applicant or fellow (or had been in the last three years);
- is in any other situation that could cast doubt on their ability to participate impartially in the evaluation of the proposal (or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party).

You must inform the REA as soon as you become aware of a Col:

- before signature of the expert contract;
- upon receipt of proposals; or
- during the course of your work.

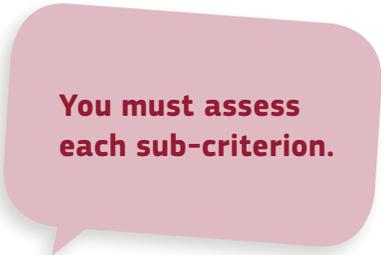
The REA will determine if there is a Col on a case-by-case basis and decide the course of action to follow. If a Col is limited to a certain proposal then you will not be allowed to evaluate it.

If you knowingly hide a Col, you will be excluded from the evaluation and your work declared null and void.

Your contract will be terminated and your allowances may be reduced, rejected or removed. You may also be excluded from working as an Evaluator for EU research programmes in the future.

3.2 THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals must be evaluated on the basis of the award criteria: **Excellence, Impact and Implementation**, as outlined in the MSCA IF Work Programme. Each criterion is further split into sub-criteria.



**You must assess
each sub-criterion.**

Applicants have been requested to structure their proposal according to the aforementioned evaluation criteria. However, the information relating to each criterion can be found throughout the whole proposal's "Part B", not only in the relevant sections. Therefore, it should be considered even though it may not be found where expected in the proposal.

3.2.1 CRITERION 1: EXCELLENCE

EXCELLENCE is about:

- the quality and novelty of the research;
- the training activities in the project;
- the capacity of the researcher, the scientific supervisor and their interaction.

Attention:

A **Career Development Plan** should **not** be included in the proposal!

EXCELLENCE SUB-CRITERIA	WHAT TO EVALUATE
<p>1.1 QUALITY AND CREDIBILITY OF THE RESEARCH/INNOVATION PROJECT; LEVEL OF NOVELTY, APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION OF INTER/MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND GENDER ASPECTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ State of the art, objectives and overview of the action ➤ Completeness and appropriateness of the research methodology and approach ➤ Originality and innovative aspects of the research project ➤ Interdisciplinary aspects of the action (if relevant) ➤ Gender aspects (if relevant) <p><i>On Gender dimension:</i> Evaluators must only assess the gender dimension if it is relevant to the proposed research. In research activities where human beings are involved as subjects or end-users, gender differences may exist. In these cases the gender dimension in the research content has to be addressed as an integral part of the proposal to ensure the highest level of scientific quality.</p>
<p>1.2 QUALITY AND APPROPRIATENESS OF THE TRAINING AND OF THE TWO WAY TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND THE HOST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess the quality and appropriateness of the training that will be offered ➤ Assess the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host institution(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How will the researcher will gain new knowledge during the fellowship at the hosting organisation(s) ➤ How the previously acquired knowledge and skills will be transferred from the researcher to the host organisation(s) ➤ For Global Fellowships ONLY: how will the new skills and knowledge acquired in the third country be transferred back to the host institution in Europe?

<p>1.3 QUALITY OF THE SUPERVISION AND OF THE INTEGRATION IN THE TEAM/INSTITUTION</p>	<p>I. The qualifications and experience of the supervisor(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The supervisor's level of experience on the research topic proposed and his/her track record <p>II. The hosting arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Integration of the researcher within the team/institution ➤ The nature and quality of the research group/environment as a whole ➤ Measures taken to integrate the researcher in the different areas of expertise and disciplines ➤ International networking opportunities the host could offer ➤ For global Fellowships ONLY: assess hosting arrangements for both outgoing AND return phases
<p>1.4 POTENTIAL OF THE RESEARCHER TO REACH OR RE-ENFORCE PROFESSIONAL MATURITY / INDEPENDENCE DURING THE FELLOWSHIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How will the researcher's existing professional experience, talents and proposed research contribute to his/her professional development as an independent/mature researcher during the fellowship? ➤ Assess the new competences and skills that will be acquired and how they relate to the researcher's existing professional experience. ➤ Look at the curriculum vitae (section 4 of the proposal) and evaluate the track record of the researcher in relation to the level of experience.

What is the difference between sub-criterion 1.3 and sub-criterion 3.4?

*The **hosting arrangements**, which are part of sub-criterion 1.3, refer to the integration of the researcher in his/her new environment at the host's premises. This does not refer to the **infrastructure of the host**, as described in the implementation sub-criterion 3.4.*

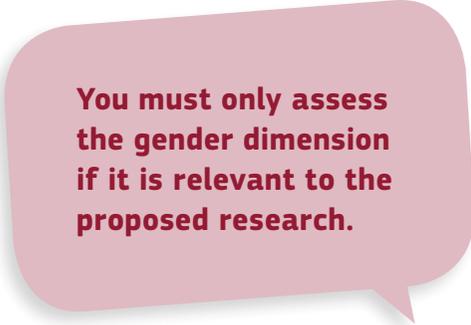
Don't penalize proposals if you think that the researchers' amount of publications is too low; however, you can penalize proposals if you think that the amount of publications is too low given his/her level of experience, and this may affect his/her professional development as an independent/mature researcher during the fellowship.

The proposal should explain the career development **strategy** intended for the researcher (mainly under sub-criterion 1.4). However, the **Career Development Plan** (i.e. the actual document listing the career objectives and major accomplishments expected) **must not be included in the proposal**. For this reason, the proposal cannot be penalised for not including the plan but could be penalised for the quality of the career development strategy.

Gender Dimension

Applicants are invited to explore whether and how the gender dimension is relevant to their research. A topic is considered **gender relevant** where human beings are involved as subjects or end-users and it can be expected that its findings will affect groups of women and men differently. In such cases, applicants should integrate gender issues as part of their proposals. Evaluators should consider this under 'excellence' (sub-criterion 1.1).

Please note that in MSCA-IF, the **gender balance** in research teams is not relevant.



You must only assess the gender dimension if it is relevant to the proposed research.

3.2.2 CRITERION 2: IMPACT

IMPACT refers to the impact on the fellow's career development and the dissemination and communication activities.

IMPACT SUB-CRITERIA	WHAT TO EVALUATE
2.1 ENHANCING THE POTENTIAL AND FUTURE CAREER PROSPECTS OF THE RESEARCHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess the expected impact of the planned research and training on the future career prospects after the fellowship ➤ Assess how the new competences and skills acquired during the fellowship (as explained in 1.4) can make the researcher more successful in their long-term career. ➤ Assess the added value of the fellowship on the future career
2.2 QUALITY OF THE PROPOSED MEASURES TO EXPLOIT AND DISSEMINATE THE PROJECT RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How will the new knowledge generated by the action be disseminated and exploited? What is the potential impact expected to be? ➤ Assess the strategy for targeting peers (scientific, industry and other actors, professional organisations, policy makers, etc.) and the wider community. ➤ Check whether the concrete planning for exploitation and dissemination activities is included in the Gantt chart
2.3. QUALITY OF THE PROPOSED MEASURES TO COMMUNICATE THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DIFFERENT TARGET AUDIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess how the planned public engagement activities contribute to creating awareness of the performed research. ➤ Assess how both the research and results will be made known to the public in such a way they can be understood by non-specialists. ➤ Check whether the concrete planning for communication activities is included in the Gantt Chart

What is the difference between sub-criterion 1.4 and sub-criterion 2.1?

➤ **Sub-criterion 1.4 "Capacity of the researcher to reach or reinforce a position of professional maturity/independence":** applicants should demonstrate how their past personal experience and the proposed research will contribute to their professional development as independent/mature researchers **during the fellowship.**

➤ **Sub-criterion 2.1 "Enhancing the potential and future career prospects of the researcher":** the proposal should explain the expected impact of the planned research and training on the career prospects of the experienced researcher **after the fellowship.**

"While you may expect a planned number and scientific content of articles to be published, do not expect a very precise and detailed plan for it, as it would be developed during the project's lifetime."

3.2.3 CRITERION 3: IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION is about the quality of the work plan, including the allocation of tasks and resources, and project management.

If a Gantt chart is not included in the proposal, please ensure that information on work packages, deliverables, milestones and secondments is included in the text, as applicable.

IMPLEMENTATION SUB-CRITERIA	WHAT TO EVALUATE
3.1 COHERENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORK PLAN, INCLUDING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE ALLOCATION OF TASKS AND RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess how the work planning and the resources mobilised will ensure that the research and training objectives will be reached. ➤ Assess why the number of person-months planned and requested for the project is appropriate in relation to the proposed activities. ➤ A Gantt chart should be included. Please assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work package titles (there should be at least one WP) ➤ List of major deliverables, if applicable ➤ List of major milestones, if applicable ➤ Secondments, if applicable
3.2 APPROPRIATENESS OF THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES, INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess the organisation and management structure, as well as the progress-monitoring mechanisms in place, to ensure that the objectives are reached ➤ The research and/or administrative risks that might endanger reaching the project objectives, and the contingency plans to be put in place should such risks occur
3.3 APPROPRIATENESS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT (INFRASTRUCTURE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The beneficiary's active contribution to the research and training activities ➤ The main tasks and commitments of the beneficiary and partners (if applicable) ➤ The infrastructure, logistics and facilities offered in as far they are necessary for the good implementation of the project ➤ For Global Fellowships ONLY: also consider the partner organisation in third countries for the outgoing phase.

What is the difference between sub-criterion 1.3 and sub-criterion 3.2?

- **Sub-criterion 1.3: "Quality of the supervision"** refers to the support and guidance provided for the personal and professional development of the researcher.
- **Sub-criterion 3.2 "Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures"** refers to the project's internal organisation and progress monitoring.

Please take into account the information in the CV when assessing the three evaluation criteria and also take into account the researcher's track record in relation to his/her level of experience.

3.3 ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The eligibility of the proposal is checked by REA staff. All proposals assigned to you for evaluation are to be considered eligible. However, you may find details in the proposal indicating possible ineligibility conditions that may have been missed by REA staff during the screening. In that case, you **must notify your Vice-Chair** who will discuss this with REA staff.

If you want to find out more about the eligibility criteria for the different actions, please consult the [Horizon 2020 MSCA Work Programme 2017-2018](#) and the [Guide for Applicants 2018](#).

3.4 PAGE LIMITS AND FORMATTING STANDARDS

The proposal you are asked to evaluate is made up of two parts, Part A and Part B:

- **Part A** includes administrative and financial information of the host institution (beneficiary) and the researcher;
- **Part B** includes the description of scientific and training activities. It is further divided into:
 - Part B-1, which introduces the beneficiary and partner organisations and describes the excellence, impact and implementation aspects of the proposal. The maximum total length of this document is **10 pages**.
 - Part B-2, which contains the researcher's CV, a description of the participating organisations, an ethical self-assessment and a commitment letter (only in the case of GFs).

The structure is the following:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1 EXCELLENCE | 10 PAGES MAX |
| 2 IMPACT | |
| 3 IMPLEMENTATION | |
| 4. CV OF THE EXPERIENCED RESEARCHER (5 PAGES MAX) | |
| 5 CAPACITIES OF THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS (1 PAGE PER ORGANISATION) | |
| 6 ETHICAL ASPECTS | |
| 7 LETTER OF COMMITMENT FROM THE PARTNER ORGANISATION (GF ONLY) | |

To ensure equal treatment of the proposals, applicants are required to respect a page limits of maximum 10 pages for **sections 1-3 (the 3 evaluation criteria)** and **5 pages for the researcher's CV. Excess pages will automatically be made invisible, and will not be taken into consideration by the experts.**

Proposals must also respect certain format-

ting standards described in the **Guide for Applicants** (e.g. a minimum font size of 11 points, except for the Gantt chart and tables where the minimum font size is 8 points).

The proposal must be clearly readable throughout. If not, please report this to your Vice-Chair.

If a proposal does not comply with the rules, applicants will be asked to reformat their proposal. This may result in excess pages which must be disregarded.

Tables cannot be used to include the core text of the proposal. Footnotes are to be used exclusively for literature references. Their minimum font size in footnotes is 8. They will count towards the page limit. Any other information included in a footnote shall be disregarded.

3.5 OVERALL COMMENTS

The **Overall Comments box** should only be used in two cases:

a) Proposal exceeds page limit (IER and CR)

If the proposal exceeds the page limit, please add the following remark:

The parts of the proposal exceeding the page limit have been disregarded.

b) Proposal is a resubmission (Only CR)

Applicants are requested to indicate in Part A if the proposal (or a very similar one) has been submitted in the MSCA IF 2016 and/or MSCA IF 2017 calls. A proposal is considered as a “resubmission” if the supervisor, researcher and host institution are the same as in the previously submitted one(s). For the Global Fellowships, the partner organisation must also be the same

as in the previously submitted proposal. In this case, at the consensus stage you will be given access to the previous Evaluation Summary Report(s).

No reference to the outcome of previous evaluations of a similar proposal should be included in Part B of the proposal. If there is a reference, please disregard any such references in their entirety since they must in no way affect your evaluation of the current proposal.

If the proposal is a resubmission, please add the following remark:

This proposal was declared as a resubmission from IF-2016 and/or IF-2017. During the consensus stage of the evaluation, evaluators were given access to the previous evaluation summary report. Over the years, proposals are usually assessed by different evaluators who may express different judgements and opinions. Furthermore, every year the level of competition amongst submitted proposals may vary significantly. This may lead also to a difference in scoring results and opinions.

3.6 SCORES

A proposal's overall score depends on the agreed scores in the CR, weighted according to the three evaluation criteria:

EVALUATION CRITERION	WEIGHT
EXCELLENCE	50 %
IMPACT	30 %
IMPLEMENTATION	20 %

An overall threshold of 70 % will be applied to the total weighted score.

You must assign a score (from 0 to 5 – using just one decimal) for each evaluation criterion. Remember that the score must reflect your comments (both strengths and weaknesses). Please note that you should use the full range of scores. See on the right the Score table.

EXCELLENT. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.	5	<div style="border: 2px solid #800000; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Excellent</p> <p>Very Good</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Fair</p> <p>Poor</p> </div>
VERY GOOD. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.	4 4.9 ↕ 4.0	
GOOD. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.	3 3.9 ↕ 3.0	
FAIR. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.	2 2.9 ↕ 2.0	
POOR. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.	1 1.9 ↕ 1.0	
The proposal FAILS to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.	0	

3.7 OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

As an Evaluator, you will need to assess whether, based on the information provided in the proposal, the participating organisations have the ‘operational capacity’ required to implement the project according to the planned role and responsibilities. In the context of IF, operational capacity shows whether an applicant has the **basic** operational resources and capacity to undertake the research tasks outlined in the proposal, and, in particular, the parts in the proposal for which it is responsible.

Your assessment of the operational capacity is important, especially when a small entity, such as an SME or micro-SME, is the host organisation.

To assess the operational capacity, please check the information in the Table on ‘participating organisations’ (Part B-2, section 5).

Should a case of lack of operational capacity arise, please discuss it with your Vice-Chair.

3.8 OPEN ACCESS TO PUBLICATIONS VS. OPEN ACCESS TO RESEARCH DATA

In Horizon 2020, applicants must ensure **Open Access** to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to their results.

In IF 2017, all those submitting proposals are encouraged to participate in the extended **pilot on Open Access to Research Data**. However, applicants can opt out.

Providing Open Access to peer-reviewed publications is mandatory and therefore must not be considered as a strength.

Opting out from the pilot on Open Access to Research Data is not an evaluation issue and therefore must not be penalised.

3.9 ETHICS

After the scientific evaluation, the proposal will be reviewed by ethics experts. This means that:

- you DO NOT screen the proposal for ethical issues;
- comments related to ethics will not be included in the scientific evaluation reports (both individual and consensus);
- a proposal cannot be penalised on ethical grounds.

Only when the proposed research concerns the use of human embryonic stem cells is your explicit comment required on their use under a specific box in SEP.

3.10 SPECIAL CASES

3.10.1 OVERLAP WITH IF, ITN, COFUND AND ERC

The researcher's involvement in another running EU-funded grant should not influence your evaluation.

3.10.2 RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Any suspicion of fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other research misconduct must be reported.

Please report it to your Vice-Chair.

4 PERFORMING THE WORK

4.1	Accept to evaluate	35
4.2	The Individual Evaluation Report (IER) phase	36
4.2.1	How to draft your IER	37
4.2.2	What if?	40
4.3	The Consensus Report (CR) phase	41
4.3.1	How to draft the consensus report (CR)	42
4.3.2	Reaching consensus	43
4.3.3	What if it is a resubmission?	44
4.3.4	What if it is difficult to reach a consensus?	45
4.3.5	Compliance with deadlines	45

Please make sure you work on the evaluation of proposals in alphabetical order without leaving significant time gaps since different actors work on the proposals simultaneously and delays by some experts can put the evaluation process at risk.

4.1 ACCEPT TO EVALUATE



As soon as you sign your contract you will be given access to SEP where you will see the proposal abstract and the name of the beneficiary, so that you can declare (if any) a conflict of interest.

You must confirm the evaluation of each proposal assigned to you in SEP within two days of receiving access. It is important that you accept the tasks without unnecessary delay, unless you detect a 'Col' (see above [Section 3.1.7 of this guide](#)).

4.2 THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION REPORT (IER) PHASE



START OF THE IER PHASE	➤ 05/10/2018
PROVISIONAL DEADLINES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ By 14/10/2018: 20 % of IERs submitted ➤ By 21/10/2018: 60 % of IERs submitted ➤ By 28/10/2018: 100 % of IERs submitted
WHO?	➤ Evaluator, supervised by his/her Vice-Chair
HOW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each proposal is assigned to three Evaluators ➤ Bullet-point list of strengths and weaknesses for each sub-criteria ➤ Work in SEP
STEPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept the task in SEP ➤ Draft the IER ➤ Save and submit it in SEP

Please remember that the CR phase can only start when all 3 IERs have been submitted. Any delay on your side in delivering your work in any of the 3 batches may slow down the whole process. Please proceed in alphabetical order of proposal's acronyms (as they appear in SEP) in order for the Rapporteurs to be able to begin working on the drafting of the CRs as soon as possible.

Please evaluate the proposal in alphabetical order according to their acronym (as they appear in SEP).

4.2.1 HOW TO DRAFT YOUR IER

As an Evaluator, you will:

- **Check** the type of action of the proposal (EF-ST, EF-RI, EF-CAR, EF-SE or GF) before assessing it, and take into account the specific objective of each type of action.

- **Read** the proposal and **independently** assess it:
 - without discussing it with anybody else, except your Vice-Chair (if necessary).

 - **as submitted** – not on its potential, if certain changes were to be made, nor by visiting websites which might be mentioned in the proposal.

- Assess the proposal against the 3 evaluation criteria.

- Assess the quality and degree of involvement of partner organisation(s) and the impact of the secondment(s), if any. In all cases, **the secondment must be meaningful and appropriate to the type of fellowship and research field.**

Secondments are optional. You must not penalise proposals that do not include secondments or partner organisations.

Reminder:

Excess pages will automatically be made invisible, and will not be taken into consideration by the experts.

➤ Keep a **bullet-point list of 'strengths and weaknesses'** for each criterion (Excellence, Impact, and Implementation).

➤ For each criterion, make your comments and give a score between 0 and 5 (scores must match comments). The whole range of scores must be used:

- 0** - Proposal **FAILS** to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 - POOR.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 - FAIR.** Proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 - GOOD.** Proposal addresses the criterion well but there are a number of shortcomings.
- 4 - VERY GOOD.** Proposal addresses the criterion very well but there are a few shortcomings.
- 5 - EXCELLENT.** Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion, and any shortcomings are minor.

➤ Explain shortcomings, but **do not make recommendations.**

The screenshot shows a web-based evaluation form titled "Individual Evaluation Report". The form is for "Criterion 1 - Excellence" and is part of a "Threshold 10 Evaluation Progress: 6/2016" process. The current score is 1/5, with a threshold of 3/5 for "Priority 1". The form includes a "Your score:" dropdown menu and several text input fields for comments. The first comment field is titled "Quality and clarity of the research/innovative action plan: to include appropriate consideration of internationality and gender aspects" and has a character limit of 54/1000. The second field is titled "Quality and appropriateness of the leading part of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host" with a limit of 21/1000. The third field is titled "Quality of the research plan and of the integration in the host institution" with a limit of 31/1000. The fourth field is titled "Capacity of the researcher to reach or reinforce a positive professional stability/dependence" with a limit of 31/1000. The form also includes a "Form packages" sidebar with links for "Help", "Threshold 10 Evaluation Progress: 6/2016", "Expand / Collapse all criteria", "Form packages", "Proposal decisions", "User utilities", "Invitation decisions", and "Links".

Scoring the quality of the proposal is not an exact science and therefore it is necessary to calibrate the understanding of the scores among experts. When your first two IERs are ready in SEP, please notify your Vice-Chair. He/she will then give you feedback on formulating the comments, the style, and the scores you assigned for each criterion in relation to your text.

If you are a new expert for this call (MSCA-IF), a good and very common practice is to quickly read through several – if not all – assigned proposals to get a general idea of the content and level of proposals. In this way, it is easier to identify proposals in which certain points are weak or missing while, on the other hand, being able to identify more ‘complete’ (i.e. better developed) proposals. It will then be easier to start writing and get the IERs right first time without having to make corrections. This may help you to calibrate your way of assessing and formulating the strengths and weaknesses, and avoid having to reconsider some of your comments or scores in the IER.

- Assess the **basic operational capacity** of participant(s) to carry out the tasks (special attention to EF-SE) and indicate your conclusions in the SEP form (tick box). No reference to ‘operational capacity’ should be made under the evaluation criteria. However, under the Implementation criterion, you may comment on the appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure).
- When you are satisfied with the IER, please submit it in SEP. As soon as your two fellow Evaluators submit their IERs, the discussion will be open for the CR.

Please feel free to contact your Vice-Chair if you would like more feedback on your reports.

To help experts to better assess all the aspects of the proposal and to facilitate a common understanding of the scoring, an Assessment GRID has been created. This tool available in SEP on the Dashboard is only for personal use, is not compulsory and should not be submitted/shared to/with the VC. A copy of this Grid can be also found as Annex 3 of this Manual.

4.2.2 WHAT IF?

IF A PROPOSAL ...

- ... requires substantial modifications in terms of implementation (i.e. additional work packages), this must be reflected in a lower score for the 'quality and efficiency of the implementation' criterion.
 - ... is not a research proposal - please contact your Vice-Chair who will discuss with REA whether or not the proposal is **out of scope**.
 - ... seems incomplete, please inform your Vice-Chair as soon as possible, as it may be considered inadmissible.
 - ... is difficult to read because of a **small font size** or any other reason, please inform your Vice-Chair as soon as possible. Depending on the issues identified, REA can ask the applicant to resubmit the proposal, meeting the criteria such as using an 11pt font size.
- ... includes a **secondment** that will be carried out in a non-EU country and/or beyond the maximum duration established in the work programme (up to three months for fellowships < 18 months and up to six months for fellowships > 18 months), please contact your Vice-Chair who will discuss with REA whether or not the secondment must be disregarded.
 - ... is a Global Fellowship which does not include **a letter of commitment from the partner organisation**, it will be declared inadmissible. Please inform your Vice-Chair as soon as possible.

Letters of commitment are NOT required for European Fellowships.

The letters of commitment are only required for admissibility purposes in Global Fellowships and you should not look into their content.

4.3 THE CONSENSUS REPORT (CR) PHASE



WHEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As soon as the three IERs are submitted
PROVISIONAL DEADLINES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 04/11/2018: 20 % of CRs submitted By 11/11/2018: 60 % of CRs submitted By 18/11/2018: 100 % of CRs submitted
WHO?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed Rapporteur, supervised by his/her Vice-Chair Two other Evaluators for comments/approval
HOW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rapporteur synthesises the three IERs in a draft CR Evaluators have read-only access to all 3 IERs via "merge IERs" Bullet-point list of strengths and weaknesses for each criteria Work in SEP
STEPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapporteur accepts task in SEP Rapporteur drafts the CR and suggests an initial score Rapporteur shares it with the other two Evaluators Experts reach the consensus on the strengths and weaknesses Experts agree on the final score that best reflects the agreed comments If the proposal is a resubmission, the previous Evaluation Summary Report will be made available for consideration Rapporteur submits the CR Vice-Chair makes a quality-check and may reject the CR for corrections

4.3.1 HOW TO DRAFT THE CONSENSUS REPORT (CR)

The aim of the CR is to give:

- a clear assessment of the proposal based on its merit, with justification;
- clear feedback on the proposal's strengths and weaknesses, of an adequate length, and in an appropriate tone;
- an explanation of the shortcomings, but without making recommendations.

The quality of the CR is crucial because the text will be included as such in the Evaluation Summary Report which is sent to the applicant. Feedback for the applicant must give a clear and fair assessment of the proposal based on its strengths and weaknesses in a manner consistent with the score.

How to proceed in SEP?

Use the SEP merging option – 'new form with expert assessment': it merges the comments of the 3 experts.

- Keep the bullet-point structure (strengths and weaknesses) for each of the three evaluation criteria.
- Identify and organise the comments from IERs under each criterion into:

- STRENGTHS** (i.e. strong points that all three experts agree upon - with no repetition!).
- WEAKNESSES** (i.e. weak points that all three experts agree upon - with no repetition!).
- Divergences in comments and/or scores
→ **POINTS FOR DISCUSSION IN SEP**

It can be useful to have a checklist to ensure that all sub-criteria have been covered.

- Compare comments both within the criterion and between different criteria in order to eliminate possible contradictions. Ensure that the same weakness is **never** mentioned under two separate criteria.

If in any doubt, please contact your Vice-Chair.

4.3.2 REACHING CONSENSUS

The consensus phase usually involves a discussion on the basis of the IERs and an exchange of views based on a synthesis carried out by the Rapporteur (draft CR) of the individual evaluations.

A consensus is a collaborative and cooperative process where the group of experts is committed to find the solution that best meets the opinion of the group.

The Rapporteur will:

- identify agreements in the IERs and propose comments acceptable to all the experts involved.
- identify divergences in the IERs and exchange views remotely with the other Evaluators on these points using the comment text box in SEP.
- reach an agreement with other Evaluators on the text and score and ensure coherence between them.

The aim is first to find an agreement on comments, and then on the scores. Ensuring consistency between comments and scores is paramount to ensure calibration throughout the evaluation.

Do not converge immediately on the average score!

- Clarify any difference of opinion, contradiction or lack of clarity.
- Where the views are very different, the Rapporteur needs to understand where the major disagreements are and prepare a focused remote consensus discussion.
- 'Diverging' opinions must be explored:
 - They might be as valid as others: be open-minded;

➤ It is normal for individual views to change during the process.

➤ Finally, make sure that:

- The meaning of the comments is clear;
- No scientific 'advice' or recommendations for improving the proposal are provided;
- Gender, name, nationality (etc.) of the applicant is not mentioned;
- There are no negative remarks as regards individuals, places, nationalities, cultures or countries.

➤ NO overall remarks **except** for the standard sentences for resubmissions and/or excess pages issues.

During and after the consensus phase, the Vice-Chair will check the fairness, objectivity and accuracy of the evaluation and will make sure the process respects all applicable rules.

4.3.3 WHAT IF IT IS A RESUBMISSION?

Proposals are only considered as resubmissions if the Supervisor, Researcher and Host Organisation are the same as in the previously submitted proposal.

REA staff will check whether the proposals declared as such can be considered as resubmissions.

If so, at the end of the consensus phase, the Evaluation Summary Report from the previous evaluation(s) will be made available.

As Rapporteur, you should:

➤ Pay particular attention to proposals where the scores of the present evaluation differ markedly to those of the previous evaluation. If the new score is lower, the Evaluators must provide a clear justification for their scores and comments in the SEP comment box, and comments should reflect the lower score.

➤ Do not make any reference to the previous evaluations, but avoid any unjustified discrepancies with them.

➤ You **must add** the following sentence under 'OVERALL COMMENTS' in the CR:

This proposal was declared as a resubmission from IF-2016 and/or IF-2017. During the consensus stage of the evaluation, evaluators were given access to the previous evaluation summary report. Over the years proposals are usually assessed by different evaluators who may express different judgements and opinions. Furthermore every year the level of competition amongst submitted proposals may vary significantly. This may lead also to a difference in scoring results and opinions.

4.3.4 WHAT IF IT IS DIFFICULT TO REACH A CONSENSUS?

If necessary, the Vice-Chair may act as a facilitator to help the group reach consensus while keeping iterations in the draft CR to a minimum.

The Rapporteur should contact the Vice-Chair.

4.3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH DEADLINES

Please remember that any delay on your side in delivering your work may affect other experts' work and block the whole process. Therefore, you are requested to:

- Check your **'Active Tasks'** in SEP regularly throughout the whole remote evaluation phase;
- **Be reachable:** in the case of unavailability on a certain day(s), please let your fellow experts and/or your Vice-Chair know;
- **Be proactive:** the Rapporteur must monitor the progress of the CR and contact the other two experts via the comments box in SEP should delays occur.

5 TIPS & HINTS

The comments must be:

- Relative to the proposal as it stands;
- Specific to the relevant criterion addressing each sub-criterion;
- In light of the type of action (EF-ST, EF-SE, EF-CAR, EF-RI, GF);
- Clear and substantial;
- Consistent with the score awarded, balancing strengths and weaknesses;
- Of adequate length.

The comments must NOT be:

- A summary of the proposal;
 - Too short, too long, inappropriate/incorrect;
 - Categorical/general statements, not properly verified, such as “it is missing” or “it is not provided” or “not present” or “there is no material covering ...”. Instead, use “not clear”, “inadequate description”, “not well justified”, etc.
 - Based on assumptions: if the proposal is unclear on important aspects this should be reflected in the comments and scores;
 - Comments not related to the criterion in question;
 - References to details that could easily lead to a factual mistake, e.g. page numbers, amounts, etc.
- Aiming to make recommendations or provide advice on improving the proposal;
 - A reference to the same weakness under different criteria;
 - Contradictory statements relative to strengths and weaknesses;
 - Discriminatory or politically incorrect;
 - Using the phrase “operational capacity” in the CR (refer instead to missing aspects according to the criteria (e.g. infrastructure under implementation));
 - About ethics issues.

Examples of negative adjectives

Insufficient, minimal, fails to describe, unacceptable, inadequate, very generic, not evident, unfocused, very weak, bad, does not meet the requirements, inappropriate, limited, unclear, not sound enough, not specified, no significant impact, unjustified, overestimated.

Examples of positive adjectives

Very relevant, credible, very clear, precisely specified, realistic, very innovative, very well suited, timely, convincing, comprehensive, high quality, justified, very well identified, strong, highly effective, thoughtful, very promising, evidence, well-formulated, carefully prepared, fully in line, very profound, sound, very convincingly integrated, clearly articulated, coherent, well balanced, very plausible, ambitious, clear advances, well above average.

Special attention must be paid to the use of 'adequate': it does not express a strength but simply means 'sufficient'.

Examples of sentences which may be used:

- There are numerous statements which are not grounded on [relevant research results].
- The proposal does not consider the use of ...
- ... is not relevant to the goals of the project because it fails to address issue A but instead dedicates the majority of its efforts to B.
- Section xx of the proposal is inadequate.
- In this proposal, the researcher does not show adequate expertise in the area of X.
- [xxx activities] are not adequately discussed.
- The proposal does not sufficiently consider... / ... not adequately discussed.
- This proposal fails to... / does not take Z into account.
- The proposal lacks a clear identification of
- Section xx of the proposal addresses A and B.
- The approach [...] is unlikely to enable the project to achieve its objectives.

To be avoided:

- Terms that can cause offence, such as ‘terrible’, ‘awful’, ‘dreadful’, etc.
- The use of the expression ‘is described’. Such a phrase is not suitable. You need to explain whether something is ‘fully’ or ‘inadequately’ described, etc.
- Scores that do not match the comments.
- Recommendations. As there is no negotiation procedure, the use of ‘should’ must be avoided.

Avoid the terms ‘candidate’ and ‘fellow’. Instead, please refer to the ‘researcher’.
‘Applicant’ refers to the host institution.

Examples of good vs. poor comments

<p>POOR COMMENTS MERELY ECHO THE SCORE</p> <p><i>The innovative aspects of the proposed research are poor.</i></p>	<p>GOOD COMMENTS EXPLAIN IT</p> <p><i>This proposal is not innovative in X and it does not take Z into account.</i></p>
<p>POOR COMMENTS ARE AMBIGUOUS</p> <p><i>The resources for the project are unrealistic.</i></p>	<p>GOOD COMMENTS ARE CLEAR</p> <p><i>The resources for X are seriously underestimated given the complexity of the activity proposed.</i></p>
<p>POOR COMMENTS ARE VAGUE AND SUBJECT TO INTERPRETATION</p> <p><i>We think the management is probably inadequate.</i></p>	<p>GOOD COMMENTS ARE PRECISE AND FINAL</p> <p><i>The management plan is inadequate. It does not include a clear description of overall responsibility for the activities; it also lacks a risk management plan.</i></p>
<p>POOR COMMENTS ARE INACCURATE AND PROVIDE AN OPENING FOR A COMPLAINT</p> <p><i>There is no discussion of a dissemination strategy.</i></p> <p><i>The supervisor is not experienced.</i></p>	<p>GOOD COMMENTS CLOSE THE QUESTION</p> <p><i>The proposal fails to address the dissemination strategy at the appropriate level of detail.</i></p> <p><i>The supervisor does not demonstrate in the proposal an adequate level of experience in this field.</i></p>
<p>POOR COMMENTS INCLUDE WORDS LIKE...</p> <p><i>Perhaps, think, seems, assume, probably ...</i></p>	<p>GOOD COMMENTS INCLUDE WORDS LIKE...</p> <p><i>Because, specifically, for example ...</i></p>

A real example of inconsistency between scores and comments:

EXCELLENCE CRITERION:

STRENGTHS:

- The S&T objectives of the research project are **well presented** and **clearly** structured.
- The project is original and the state of the art is **adequately** presented.
- The partners have **complementary** expertise

WEAKNESSES:

- The methodology for the project is **not fully convincing**.
- The data-collection strategy, potential sources of information and data accessibility are **unclear**.
- The proposal **fails to sufficiently demonstrate** that the beneficiary has the necessary expertise and capabilities to obtain the necessary information for the project.

In this case, the strengths include words like 'good', 'clear' and 'adequate', i.e. nothing pointing towards excellent. At the same time, there are obvious weaknesses. However, the score given was 4.5, i.e. between 'very good' and 'excellent' which is not consistent with the comments when they are all taken into consideration.

6 ANNEXES

6.1	Glossary	52
6.2	MSCA-IF Summary table	54
6.3	MSCA-IF Assessment Grid	55

6.1 GLOSSARY

AC: Associated country. A Country associated to Horizon 2020. Click [here](#) for the list

Academic sector: Public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research institutes whose primary mission is to pursue research, and international European interest organisations, as defined in Article 2.1(12) of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No. 1290/2013.

CAR: Career Restart Panel of the European Fellowships

CR: Consensus Report

Duration of fellowships: The duration for European Fellowships (ST, CAR, RI, and SE) is between 12 and 24 months. For the Global Fellowships there is an initial outgoing phase of between 12 and 24 months, and an additional mandatory 12 month return phase, making the total duration of this type of fellowship between 24 and 36 months.

EC: European Commission

EF: European Fellowships

ESR: Evaluation Summary Report

Experienced Researcher (or Researcher or ER): the researcher must be in possession of a doctoral degree or has at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience at the date of the call deadline.

GF: Global Fellowships

GfA: [Guide for Applicants](#)

Host institution (beneficiary): Legal entity that signs the Grant Agreement and has the complete responsibility for the proper implementation of the action.

IER: Individual Evaluation Report

IF: Individual Fellowships

MS: EU Member States

MSCA: Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Non-academic sector: Any socio-economic actors not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No. 1290/2013. It includes all non-academic organisations, from industry to business (including SMEs), government, civil society organisations (NGOs, trusts, foundations, etc.), some cultural institutions, museums, hospitals, and international organisations (like the UN or WHO).

Partner organisations: Entities that contribute to the implementation of the action, but do not sign the Grant Agreement:

- In EF, organisations in MS or AC that host the researcher during optional secondments and provide additional training.
- In GF, organisations in TC that host the researcher during the compulsory initial outgoing period and provide additional training.

REA: Research Executive Agency

RI: Reintegration Panel of the European Fellowships

SE: Society & Enterprise Panel of the European Fellowships

SEP: Web-based electronic evaluation tool

ST: Standard European Fellowship

Supervisor: Scientist appointed at the beneficiary to supervise the researcher throughout the whole duration of the action.

TC: Non-associated third countries. Countries which are neither EU Member States (MS), nor associated to Horizon 2020 (AC)

Vice-Chair: Expert that has an in-depth knowledge of the MSCA evaluation process and assists the REA in the evaluation management and monitoring.

WP: Work Programme

WF: Widening Fellowships

6.2 MSCA-IF SUMMARY TABLE

MSCA INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS		EUROPEAN (EF)				GLOBAL
		STANDARD EF	CAR	RI	SE	GF
EXPERIENCED RESEARCHERS	Nationality	ANY	ANY	MS, AC or long-term residents	ANY	MS, AC or long-term residents
	Mobility	From ANY country to MS or AC	From ANY country to MS or AC	From TC directly to MS or AC (<i>location of the host institution</i>)	From ANY country to MS or AC	From ANY country to TC then to MS/AC
		≤ 12 months in the last 3 years	≤ 36 months in the last 5 years	≤ 36 months in the last 5 years	≤ 36 months in the last 5 years	≤ 12 months in the last 3 years
	Career break in research	-	at least 12 months within 18 months prior to call deadline	-	-	-
PARTICIPANTS	Beneficiary	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC Non-academic only	MS or AC
	Entity with a capital or legal link	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC Non-academic only	MS or AC
	Partner Organisa- tion	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC	MS or AC (both academic and non-academic)	Outgoing phase (mandatory): TC Secondment (optional): MS or AC
DURATION (months)		12 - 24	12 - 36	12 - 24	12 - 24	12 to 24 + 12
SCIENTIFIC AREAS		8	8	8	8	8
NUMBER OF RANKING LISTS		8	1	1	1	8
BUDGET (total € 273 million)		€ 220 million			€ 8 million	€ 45 million

6.3 MSCA-IF ASSESSMENT GRID

INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS 2018 - ASSESSMENT GRID	PROPOSAL NUMBER/ACRONYM: -----	ASSESSMENT					
		Fail	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
EXCELLENCE		1					
Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project, level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects		1.1					
Are the state-of-the-art, specific objectives and an overview of the action provided and relevant?		1.1					
Is the proposed research methodology and approach credible (in view of the type of research / innovation activities proposed)?		1.1					
Is the planned research original and innovative? Will the action contribute to advance the state-of-the-art within the research field (i.e. new concepts, approaches or methods)?		1.1					
Where applicable, are there interdisciplinary aspects to consider?		1.1					
Where applicable, is the gender dimension in research content well addressed (i.e. in research activities where human beings are involved as subjects or end-users)?		1.1					
Quality and appropriateness of the training and of the two way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host		1.2					
Is the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host institution outlined and credible?		1.2					
<i>For Global Fellowships only</i> , does the proposal explain how the newly acquired skills and knowledge will be transferred back to Europe?		1.2					
Are training activities described and relevant? [NOTE: do NOT penalize the proposal in case there is no Career Development Plan]		1.2					
Quality of the supervision and of the integration in the team/institution		1.3					
Are the qualifications and experience of the supervisor well described and adequate, taking into account their level of experience on the research topic and their track record of work (e.g. main international collaborations, experience in supervising/training especially PhD, postdoctoral researchers)?		1.3					
Do the hosting arrangements allow for a good integration of the researcher in the team/institution to maximize knowledge and skills generated from the fellowship? Are the nature and the quality of the research group/environment as a whole outlined? Are international networking opportunities offered?		1.3					
<i>For Global Fellowships only</i> , are the hosting arrangements at the partner organisation adequate to accommodate the researcher?		1.3					
Potential of the researcher to reach or re-enforce professional maturity/independence during the fellowship		1.4					
Will the researcher's existing professional experience, talents and proposed research contribute to their development as an independent researcher during the fellowship?		1.4					
Are the new competences and skills that will be acquired during the fellowship relevant to the researcher's profile? [NOTE: fellowships will be awarded to the most talented researchers as shown by the proposed research and their track record <i>in relation to their level of experience.</i>]		1.4					
IMPACT		2					
Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship		2.1					
Will the planned research and training activities have an impact on the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship? i.e. what is the added value of the fellowship?		2.1					
How can the new competences and skills (as explained in 1.4) make the researcher more successful in their long-term career?		2.1					
Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results		2.2					
How will the new knowledge generated by the action be disseminated and exploited? Is the potential impact realistic?		2.2					
Is the strategy for targeting peers (scientific, industry and other actors, professional organisations, policy makers, etc.) and the wider community clear, consistent and appropriate?		2.2					
Where applicable, does the proposal describe potential commercialisation, and how intellectual property rights will be dealt with?		2.2					
Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences		2.3					
Will the planned public engagement activities contribute to creating awareness of the performed research? Example of outreach activities: Internet presence, press articles and participation in European Researchers' Night events.		2.3					
Will the research and results be made known to the public in such a way they can be understood by non-specialists?		2.3					
IMPLEMENTATION		3					
Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources		3.1					
Are the work planning and mobilised resources appropriate to ensure that the research and training objectives are achieved?		3.1					
Is the number of person-months planned and requested for the project appropriate in relation to the proposed activities?		3.1					
Is a Gantt chart included and clear? Does it cover all planned activities? Does it include at least one work package? Where applicable, does it include major deliverables, milestones and secondments? [NOTE: there is no fixed template provided]		3.1					
Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management		3.2					
Will the organisation and management structure (including support services), as well as the progress monitoring mechanisms put in place, ensure that objectives are reached?		3.2					
Does the proposal adequately address the research and/or administrative risks that might endanger reaching the action objectives and the contingency plans to be put in place should risk occur?		3.2					
Where applicable, if entities with a capital or legal link to the beneficiary are involved, is their contribution well explained?		3.2					
Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)		3.3					
Is the active contribution (main tasks and commitment) of the beneficiary to the research and training activities clear?		3.3					
<i>For Global Fellowships only</i> , is the active contribution (main tasks and commitment) of the partner organisation clear?		3.3					
Are the infrastructure, logistics and facilities offered suitable for the good implementation of the action?		3.3					
OVERALL COMMENTS							
Based on the information available in the proposal, does the beneficiary possess the basic operational capacity to carry out the proposed work? The operational capacity of the beneficiary relates to whether it has, or will have in due time, the operational resources and capacity to implement the action. This is the purpose of the table in Section 5 of Part B.		Y/N					
Does this proposal involve the use of hESC? If yes, please state whether the use of hESC is, or is not, in your opinion, necessary to achieve the scientific objectives of the proposal and the reasons why. Alternatively, please also state if it cannot be assessed whether the use of hESC is necessary or not because of a lack of information.		Y/N					
Were there excess pages that could not be evaluated?		Y/N					