

Research and Innovation Staff Exchange Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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General Aspects¹

Q1: What is the main objective of RISE?

A: The objectives of the Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) are defined as to promote international and intersectoral collaboration through research and innovation staff exchanges, and sharing of knowledge and ideas from research to market (and vice-versa) for the advancement of science and the development of innovation. The proposed research and innovation activities should exploit complementary competences of the participants, as well as other synergies, and enable networking activities, organisation of workshops and conferences to facilitate sharing of knowledge, new skills acquisition and career development for research and innovation staff members.

Q2: What are the RISE opportunities for SMEs and companies?

A: Through a RISE project, SMEs can second staff to an academic research organisation or to any other organisation internationally to gain expertise. Also, it can host partners' staff and benefit from their knowledge.

Q3. What are the RISE opportunities for academic organisations?

A: Academic organisations can second staff engaged in research to other types of organisations, for example for commercialisation purposes, and it can also host staff from those organisations (please note that staff located in certain countries cannot receive funding from the MSCA).

Q4: What countries can participate in [RISE 2015](#)?

A: Organisations from all countries can participate in RISE. However, not all countries are eligible for funding. To define the eligibility for funding, please refer to the list of countries in [Annex A](#) to the WP.

Q5: Can staff members of any nationality participate in RISE?

A: Staff members of any nationality can participate in RISE.

Q6: What kind of project can be funded?

A: The project should be based on joint research and/or innovation activities promoting international and intersectoral cooperation and transfer of knowledge.

Q7: How will the RISE project be implemented?

A: The project should be implemented through secondments of staff (no recruitment).

Q8: What size can the project have?

A: The maximum size for a project is 540 person-months of secondment (corresponding to a maximum co-funding amount of EUR 2.43 million); there is no minimum size explicitly defined for the project, but substantial impact is expected.

¹ See the [Guide for applicants, Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation](#).

Partnership

Eligible Participants

Q9: What organisations can participate in RISE?

A: All organisations can participate in RISE. However, organisations legally established in countries not eligible for funding (as indicated in the [Annex A](#) of the Work Programme) can participate but they will not be supported by EU funding.

Legal entities established in countries not listed in the Annex A of the work programme will be eligible for funding in RISE when the Commission deems participation of the entity essential for carrying out the action.

Q10: What is the minimum number of participants in RISE?

A: A partnership in RISE shall be composed of at least three independent participants established in three different countries and must respect one of the following two conditions:

- two organisations are located in two different Member States/Associated Countries (MS/AC) and one organisation is located in a Third Country (TC), independently from the sector they belong to,
- or
- if all three independent organisations are from MS/AC, at least one organisation should be from the academic sector and one from the non-academic sector.

Above these minimum requirements additional organisations irrespective of their location can participate.

Q11: What does “independent participant” mean?

A: Two legal entities shall be regarded as independent of each other if neither is under the direct or the indirect control of the other or under the same direct or indirect control as the other. More details on this definition are provided in Article 8 of the [Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation](#).

Q12: Can an International European Interest Organisations (IEIO) participate in RISE?

A: Yes. IEIOs² can participate under the same conditions as organisations established in a MS/AC. IEIO will be considered as an *academic* organisation and deemed to be established in a MS or AC country other than any MS or AC in which another participant in the same project is established.

Q13: Can international organisations (not IEIO) engaged in research and innovations activities participate in RISE?

A: Yes, but under the conditions defined in the [Annex A](#) of the Work Programme.

² 'International European Interest Organisation' (IEIO) is defined in the Rules for Participation as: "an international organisation, the majority of whose members are Member States or Associated Countries, and whose principal objective is to promote scientific and technological cooperation in Europe". Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the rules for the participation and dissemination in 'Horizon 2020 – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)'. <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/official-documents>

Q14: Can associations, federations or other types of groupings composed of several members participate in RISE?

A: Yes, if they are involved in research and innovation activities and if staff members of the concerned association, federation or other type of grouping (formally recognised inter-university consortia, clusters of local authorities, etc.) are involved in the secondments. If the secondments involve staff members of the organisations constituting the association, federation or other type of grouping, then it is required that the organisations directly participate in a RISE consortium.

Q15: Can the European subsidiary of an organisation engaged in research and innovation established in a TC not listed in the Annex A of the Work Programme participate as beneficiary in RISE and be funded for its secondments?

A: Yes, under the same conditions as any organisation established in a MS/AC, provided that the subsidiary has its own legal personality and is established in a MS/AC. On the contrary, an operating branch without legal personality and without being established in a MS/AC cannot participate on its own and shall participate through its parent organisation. However, because the parental organisation is established in a TC not listed in the [Annex A](#) of the work programme its secondments will not be eligible for funding.

Q16: Can a TC not listed in Annex A of the WP participate in RISE?

A: Yes, it can participate in RISE. However, the secondments from TC not listed in the [Annex A](#) of the WP are not funded unless the Commission deems participation of the entity essential for carrying out the action funded through RISE.

The essential nature of the participation must be endorsed by the expert evaluators.

Academic and Non-academic Sectors

Q17: How is the validation of an entity for participating in H2020 done?

A: The validation process of an entity is managed centrally for all entities participating in H2020. Every entity must have at least a draft Participant Identification Code (PIC) during proposal submission. It can be obtained easily by the Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR) of the organisation by following the instructions in the [Participant Portal](#) (PP).

Q18: Who defines the sector an organisation belongs to?

A: The sector an organisation belongs to for the purposes of a RISE action is established based on the information provided by the organisation at the time of its registration in the PP and validated according to the relevant documents (e.g. Statute, etc.) submitted to the Unique Registration Facility (URF).

Q19: What defines an organisation as “academic” or “non-academic”?

A: A participating organisation in RISE is defined under the “academic” or the “non-academic” sector based on the information provided at the time of the validation by URF (see previous FAQ). Please note that the eligibility of the intersectoral secondments depends upon this categorisation. If you believe that the validation is incorrect, the LEAR of your organisation can ask for a correction and change the organisation’s legal classification through the PP. The access can be found in “[My Personal Area](#)”.

Academic organisations include:

- public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees,
- public or private non-profit research organisations whose primary mission is to pursue research,
- and IEIOs (see above).

Non-Academic organisations include any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector. A possible non-academic organisation could be a profit institution involved in research or innovation activities such as businesses, SMEs, multi-national companies, as well as NGOs, public sector entities, governmental bodies, charities etc.

Partners and Beneficiaries

Q20: What is the difference between partner organisations and beneficiaries in a RISE projects?

A: RISE foresees two types of participants: *beneficiaries* - based in the MS/AC, and *partner organisations* based in TC. They both contribute to the implementation of the research and innovation project and to the hosting of seconded staff members. However, the **beneficiaries** sign the grant agreement and claim costs. In addition, they are responsible for the implementation of the action. Conversely, the **partner organisations** do not sign the grant agreement nor claim costs. Partner organisations must include a letter of commitment in the proposal. Beneficiaries are not required to sign letters of commitment as they sign the grant agreement.

Q21: Are partnership agreements required?

A: The partnership agreements are not mandatory but are strongly recommended.

Q22: If there are, for instance, five partner organisations of TCs participating in a RISE consortium, should there then be five letters of commitment?

A: Yes, all partner organisations have to include a separate letter of commitment in the proposal and the evaluators will be instructed to disregard the contribution of any partner organisation for which no such evidence of commitment is submitted.

Secondments

Eligible secondments

Q23: Which secondments are eligible for funding in RISE?

A: Only the following secondments are eligible for funding:

- Secondments between an academic organisation in one MS/AC to a non-academic organisation in another MS/AC and vice versa (intersectoral only);
- Secondments from a MS/AC organisation to a partner located in a TC (irrespective of the sector of the organisations involved);
- Secondments from an organisation located in a TC to a MS/AC on the condition that the TC is eligible for funding, as specified in the Annex A to the Work Programme.

Q24: Which secondments are not eligible for funding in RISE?

A: The following types of secondments are not eligible for funding in RISE:

- Secondments between institutions located within the same MS/AC or the same TC;
- Secondments between academic or between non-academic organisations located in different MS/AC;
- Secondments between organisations located in different TC;
- Secondments to a MS/AC from organisations located in a TC not eligible for funding according to the Annex A to the Work Programme. However, these secondments must be included in the proposal to allow the assessment of the contribution of these TC organisations to the implementation of the RISE project. Secondments from MS/AC to those TC are eligible.

Q25: What secondments must be described in the proposal?

A: The following secondments must be listed in the Part A of the proposal:

- a. **Intersectoral secondments** between MS/AC.
- b. **International secondments** between Europe (MS/AC) and TC and vice versa. Even if secondments from some TC to MS/AC are not eligible for funding, they must be indicated in the proposal.

Other possibilities of secondment will not influence the evaluation and will not be funded by EU, and therefore must not be included in the proposals (neither in Part A or Part B).

Q26: Are secondments between two non-independent organisations eligible?

A: No, they are not eligible. Even if all other eligibility criteria are met, secondments between two organisations which are not independent from each other since under the direct or indirect control of the other or under the same direct or indirect control as the other (based on Article 8 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation) are not eligible.

Q27: Which secondments from and to an IEIO are eligible in RISE?

A: The following secondments from/to an IEIO are considered eligible:

- From IEIO to a non-academic organisation in a MS/AC and vice versa (even if the MS/AC is the same country of establishment of the IEIO since the IEIO is deemed to be established in a Member State or Associated Country other than any Member State or Associated Country in which another participant in the same action is established).
- From IEIO to a TC and vice versa (under the same conditions of other MS/AC).

Participating staff

Q28: Which staff members are eligible for funding?

A: The staff members eligible for funded secondments must fulfil two cumulative conditions:

1. Be actively engaged in or linked to research and/or innovation activities at the sending organisation for at least six months (full-time equivalent) prior to the first period of secondment.
2. Support the research and innovation activities of the project.

Q29: What is meant with "a staff member engaged/linked to research and/or innovation activities at the sending institution"?

A: For a RISE project it is of relevance that the seconded staff members are people involved in the research activities at the sending institutions. Hence, the engagement/linkage is related to the role of the staff member.

Q30: What types of staff members can be seconded?

A:

- Early stage researchers (ESR) - no PhD and < 4 years of experience in research;
- Experienced researchers (ER) - PhD or > 4 years of experience in research
- Technical staff, administrative or Managerial staff (TAM).

Q31: Can a PhD candidate be seconded within a RISE project?

A: PhD candidates are eligible for funding if the following cumulative conditions are met:

- The candidates have the relevant expertise to carry out the R&I activities of the action;
- The candidates fulfil all other eligibility criteria including inter alia (1) being at least ESRs which implies having obtained the degree entitling them to embark on a doctorate, (2) having been linked/actively engaged in the R&I activities of the sending organization for at least 6 months (full time equivalent) prior to the first secondment and (3) being covered by an appropriate contractual framework allowing them to work full-time on the R&I activities of the project during the secondment under the instructions of the beneficiary

Q32: Can a master candidate be seconded within a RISE project?

A: Master candidates do not normally fulfil the eligibility conditions and are therefore not eligible for funding unless the following cumulative conditions are exceptionally met:

- The candidates have the relevant expertise to carry out the R&I activities of the action;
- The candidates fulfil all other eligibility criteria including inter alia (1) being at least ESRs which implies having obtained the degree entitling them to embark on a doctorate, (2) having been linked/actively engaged in the R&I activities of the sending organization for at least 6 months (full time equivalent) prior to the first secondment and (3) being covered by an appropriate contractual framework allowing them to work full-time on the R&I activities of the project during the secondment under the instructions of the beneficiary

Q33: Can the same staff member be seconded from two different organisations at different occasions?

A: In principle, no. However, this is allowed if the seconded person change organisation during the implementation of the project and therefore becomes a staff member of another organisation of the RISE consortium and it has been there for 6 months.

Q34: How long can the same staff member be seconded to different organisations?

A: Yes, the same staff member can be seconded to different organisations within the limit of 12 cumulative months during the whole project lifetime.

Project Implementation

Q35: Are there restrictions with regard to the balance of secondments within a RISE project?

A: No. The important aspect is that the secondments are relevant for the execution of the proposed project. The quality of the interaction between the participating organisations will be an important element of the assessment.

Q36: Can a staff member be seconded part-time and work on other projects during the secondment?

A: No, the staff members shall be seconded full-time during the secondment period.

Q37: Are traveling periods considered within the secondment duration?

A: Yes, the duration of the secondment is counted from the day of departure to the day of return.

Q38: Are there limitations with regard to the secondments' budget per country?

A: There are no limitations to the budget per country, but the balance of secondments between participants will be taken into account by the evaluators.

Q39: Can secondments be split?

A: Secondments of the same staff member may be split in several stays over the duration of the project. But the total of all split stays for the same staff member may not be less than 1 month or more than 12 months over the full project duration. The minimum period of 1 month can be reached only by cumulating split stays within the same secondment (same staff member, same sending organisation, same hosting organisation).

Q40: Can the participation to a conference be considered as a secondment?

A: No, the participation to a conference is not itself eligible as a secondment unless the conference is considered part of the R&I activities of a secondment already on-going. In all cases, the beneficiaries can reserve (e.g. via internal arrangements) part of the EU contribution triggered by eligible secondments to cover the organisation of general networking activities.

Q41: Which documents will be requested to demonstrate the reintegration after secondments?

A: No documents shall be provided to the REA during the implementation of the project to justify the re-integration of the staff member. However, the participants shall be able to provide evidence of re-integration upon demand and in case of ex-post checks.

Q42. What are appropriate networking activities?

A: The sustainability of the project will be reinforced through joint activities such as training courses, workshops, summer schools, seminars, conferences etc. in which the project participants take part. Such networking activities aim at sharing knowledge, acquiring new skills and developing careers for research and innovation staff members. In addition, regular (at least once per year) meetings will be the backbone for planning and implementing the research and innovation project. Participation in such networking activities is **not** *per se* a secondment.

Q43: Can the staff members leave the sending institution after the RISE project?

A: Secondments require a **built-in return** mechanism: staff should be reintegrated in their seconding organisation after the end of the exchange period in order to maximise the transfer of knowledge. The length of this reintegration period is not defined.

EU contribution

Q44: What will the EU contribution fund?

A: The EU financial contribution is composed of:

- a *staff member unit cost* of 2,000 EUR per month, plus
- an *institutional unit cost* of 2,500 EUR per secondment month. The institutional unit cost is split into:
 - *research, training and networking costs* of 1,800 EUR per month of secondment and
 - *management and indirect costs* of 700 EUR per month of secondment.

Q45: How should we use the Category A 'staff member unit cost'?

A: The Category A shall be fully used for the benefit of the individual staff member (2.000 EUR per person-months). It does not constitute a salary but an additional contribution to cover the travel and subsistence costs linked to the secondment.

The Category A is paid directly to the seconded staff member or managed centrally by the beneficiary according to the specific needs of the secondment.

No 'institutional costs' can be financed with the Category A 'staff member unit cost'

Q46: How should we use Category B 'Institutional costs'?

A: The institutional costs are deemed to cover the research, training, networking, management and indirect costs linked to the secondments.

If decided internally by the partnership (e.g. via a partnership agreement), this category can also:

- cover general networking and training events within the project;
- be reshuffled amongst different secondments depending on the financial necessities of each;
- be used to further increase the top up allowance of the staff member (ex: for secondments to certain countries where travel and subsistence costs can be more expensive than the unit costs granted under category A):
 - provided that this does not prevent the implementation of the R&I of the project (ex: funds should remain available to cover the research, training and networking activities planned).

The beneficiaries can agree internally to distribute this contribution within the partnership in light of the necessities of the project.

However, regardless of the internal arrangements concluded among the participants:

- The beneficiaries shall always use the EU funds for the best benefit of the project and use the resources in light with the principles of efficiency, economy and effectiveness;
- Each beneficiary must report the unit costs per category as calculated based on the actual duration of its outgoing secondments and the incoming secondments from third country partners.

Q47: Which records shall we keep to justify the use of the EU contribution?

A: In case of ex-post audit the beneficiary must not demonstrate actual expenditure incurred but justify by any appropriate means that:

- The secondments actually took place within the dates reported. Example: travel tickets, lab books, timesheets, etc...
- The staff member seconded was eligible:
 - Being a staff member of the organisation in light of national legislation/internal practices,
 - Being ESR, ER or TAM
 - Fulfilling the 6 months (full-time equivalent) prior involvement requirement
- The provisions of article 32 of the grant agreement were complied with

Concerning the obligation to use the category A 'staff member unit cost' to cover the travel and subsistence costs of the staff member the beneficiary must demonstrate having fully used the 2.000 EUR for the staff member (e.g. travel tickets, hotel accommodation, direct transfer/s to the staff, etc...).

The REA does not impose specific recording modalities. The nature of the records to be kept will depend on the internal accounting principles and practices of the participants but these shall be adequate enough to demonstrate unequivocally the actual duration of the secondments and compliance with eligibility conditions and contractual requirements.

In terms of records keeping each beneficiary is responsible for (1) the outgoing secondments of its staff members and (2) the incoming secondments from third country partners.

Q48: How is the EU contribution calculated?

A: The financial contribution to a RISE project is calculated on the basis of unit costs. The total is a fixed amount (4,500€ in total) per person-month of secondment. The EU contribution is calculated by multiplying the unit cost by the number of completed eligible secondment-months.

Q49: How will the applicants indicate the amount requested in the proposal?

A: The estimated EU budget contribution in the proposal is automatically calculated from the information on planned eligible secondment-months provided in the Part A of the proposal. A summary budget table is also present in the part A.

Q50: Who reports the secondments?

A: Each beneficiary reports the secondments of its own staff seconded to other organisations plus the secondments of staff from TC partners to its organisation.

Q51: Who receives the EU contribution? The hosting or the sending institution?

A: The EU contribution is received by the coordinator. The coordinator shall distribute the contribution to each beneficiary according to its own staff seconded to other participants to the RISE consortium plus the secondments of staff from TC partners to its organisation. Other financial arrangements may be agreed in the partnership agreement depending on the specific necessities of each project.

Q52: Can EU funds be transferred to TC?

A: The EU contribution must be directly managed by the beneficiaries of the project established in MS/AC. However, under the responsibility of the sending organisation established in the MS/AC, the EU contribution can be transferred to the TC. It is highly encouraged to define these financial arrangements in a partnership agreement according to the needs of the project.

Q53: Is it allowed that an organisation from a TC not listed in Annex A to the WP sends staff on secondments to MS/AC on their own (TC) budget?

A: It is allowed and also highly welcome and encouraged that an organisation from a TC not listed in Annex A to the WP participate to a RISE project using its own budget or other external funds for sending staff on secondments to MS/AC.

Q54: How will incomplete months be reimbursed?

A: Subject to fulfilling the condition of completing a minimum period of one month, an incomplete month will be reimbursed pro-rata per day at 1/30 of the total units' cost, i.e. 150 €/per day.

Proposal

Q55: What is the Part A of a proposal?

A: The [Part A](#) of a proposal is the administrative part of the proposal and is divided into 4 sections. Each section is filled directly in the relevant interface of the Participant Portal.

- **Section 1:** General information (including abstract)
- **Section 2:** Information on participants
- **Section 3:** Budget and secondments tables
- **Section 4:** Ethics table
- **Section 5:** Call specific questions

Q56: What is the Part B of a proposal?

A: The Part B of a proposal describes the joint research and innovation project, its planned research and innovation activities, impact, and it consists in a PDF document structured as indicated in Annex 4 to the [Guide for applicants](#). A limit of 30 pages applies to the total part B from sections 2 to 4.

Q57: If ethical issues are present in a RISE proposal, how are they treated?

A: With regard to ethics, the applicant must submit an ethics self-assessment if the proposed research and innovation project presents ethical issues. At the end of part B, a [self-assessment form](#) is present consisting of 10 points ranging from the involvement of Human and human embryos to dual use and other ethic issues.

Guidelines for the ethics self-assessment under H2020 are available on the [Participant Portal](#).

Q58: What is the operational capacity and how is it evaluated?

A: The capacity to implement the proposed project is evaluated based on a description of:

- the profile of the people who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the proposed work;
- any significant infrastructure or major items of technical equipment, relevant to the proposed work;
- any partner organisations (not beneficiaries) contributing towards the proposed research and innovation project.

These elements will be assessed independently from the three award criteria stipulated in the Annex 2 of the Guide for Applicants.

Q59: Are projects that have no international participation equally evaluated than others that have?

A: Yes. Proposals are evaluated solely on the basis of the pre-determined award criteria as described in the Work Programme and in the Guide for applicants.

Q60: Shall the names of the staff involved in the secondments be indicated in the proposal?

A: No. Only the profile of the staff involved in the secondments shall be indicated in the proposal.
