

Marie Curie European Reintegration Grants (ERG)

Frequently Asked Questions

Warning: *The answers to Frequently Asked Questions do not supersede the rules and conditions laid out, in particular, in Council and Parliament Decisions relevant to the Sixth Framework Programme, the Specific Programme, the Human Resources and Mobility Work Programme, Calls for proposals, or the Guidelines on the evaluation and selection of proposals. These documents are available at: <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm>*

1. General information

Q: What are Marie Curie European Reintegration Grants (ERG)?

A: This action aims at providing financial support for the return and reintegration of researchers from the EU and Associated States into professional scientific careers in a host organisation in their country of origin after benefiting from a Marie Curie Action.

Q: Who can apply?

A: A researcher from the EU or Associated States who has just completed a Marie Curie fellowship of at least two years, either under the Sixth Framework Programme (Research Training Networks, Host Fellowships for Early Stage Training, Host Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge, and Intra-European Fellowships), or under any other training and mobility action from previous Framework Programmes.

Q: Who has responsibility to the European Commission for the reintegration programme?

A: The host organisation will have to sign the ERG contract with the European Commission whereby it commits itself to hire the researcher for at least two years so as to carry out a research project.

Q: Who pays what?

A: The Marie Curie grant is a lump sum to be used as a contribution to the scientific costs relating to the researcher's project at the reintegration host. The salary of the fellow has to be paid by the host institution. In case the project concerns a researcher returning to the Less Favoured Regions in the EU, new Member States or to an Associated Candidate Country, the grant can also be used as a contribution to the salary costs of the researcher.

Q: How does it work?

A: The researcher applies to the Commission jointly with the host institution at least six months before the end of the training/mobility period. The proposal should be based on a well-defined project that will not only endorse but also give added value to the benefits gained during the previous period of mobility. If the proposal is selected, the Commission signs a contract with the host in the form of a grant of one year duration which will commit it to ensuring an effective and lasting reintegration of the researcher for a period of at least two years.

Q: Which research topics are supported?

A: Proposals from all areas of scientific and technological research of interest to the European Community are welcome; there are no priority areas. Research areas covered by the EURATOM treaty are however ineligible.

Q: When to apply

A: Applications can be submitted in the first six months of the last year of the initial training/mobility period. An open call for proposals was published on 15 October 2004 with closure dates on 19 January 2005, 19 April 2005, 19 July 2005, 19 October 2005, 19 January 2006, 19 April 2006, and 19 July 2006, at 17.00 (Brussels local time). Proposals can be submitted at any time and will be evaluated in batches following each of these closing dates.

Q: How to apply

A: Firstly, interested researchers should read the ERG Handbook, prepared by the Commission, as a guide to understanding the rules for participating in this scheme (available on the Marie Curie Actions website, http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/publications_en.html). Once they have decided to prepare a proposal, applicants should read all relevant documents carefully. These are included in the InfoPack available for each call for proposals published on the CORDIS website:

http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=164

The legal documents (listed in annex II of the Handbook and in chapter VII of the Guide for Proposers) might also help applicants to understand the evaluation process, the rules for participation, contractual and financial issues, etc. better. The application is made through the on-line Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) <http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/subprop.cfm>

2. Host organisations

Q: In which country should the Marie Curie researcher look for a return host organisation in the framework of the ERG?

A: Host organisations should be located in a Member State or an Associated State. Priority is given to the reintegration of a researcher in his or her country or region of origin.

Q: What are the characteristics of eligible host organisations?

A: The eligible host institutions for Marie Curie European Reintegration Grants are organisations active in research or researcher training located in EU Member States or Associated States. The following types of research organisation can take part:

- National organisations (e.g. universities, research centres, etc.)
- Commercial concerns, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Non-profit or charitable organisations (e.g. NGOs, trusts, etc.)
- International European interest organisations (e.g. CERN, EMBL, etc.)
- The European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

Q: Can the host organisation be a big industrial company or an SME?

A: The host institution can be an industrial company, (including SMEs), provided they have all the necessary infrastructure, human resources, etc. needed to run a two-year research project. The quality of the host institution is also one of the evaluation criteria and should be described in the project proposal.

Q: What are the contractual commitments of the host organisation in the researcher's reintegration country towards the European Commission?

A: The European Commission signs a contract with the (re)integration host in a Member State or Associated State, in the form of a grant of one year duration, which commits it to ensuring an effective and lasting reintegration (attested by adequate legal means) of the researcher (for at least two years). Evidence that researchers will be integrated on a longer-term basis in the (re)integration host will be taken into account in a positive way during evaluation.

3. Eligible researchers

Q: Who can apply?

A: A researcher from the EU or Associated States, who has just completed a Marie Curie fellowship of at least two years either under the Sixth Framework Programme (Research Training Networks, Host Fellowships for Early Stage Training, Host Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge and Intra-European Fellowships), or under any other training and mobility action from previous Framework Programmes.

Q: Is there a way for third country researchers to benefit from the Marie Curie ERGs?

A: Non-nationals from Member States or Associated States can only benefit if they have resided legally and have had their main activity (work, studies, etc.) for at least four of the last five years before the start of their fellowship in Member States/Associated States, and they are treated as nationals of the Member State in which they have resided the longest.

Q: Does the Commission carry out pre-checks, on a one-to-one basis, regarding a candidate's general level of excellence or eligibility?

A: No, it is up to the candidate to present the information on his/her initial mobility/training fellowship in a way that the external evaluators will be satisfied that he/she complies with the rules for participating in this scheme. For more specific advice, applicants are invited to contact their National Contact Point at <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/ncp.htm>

4. Project implementation

Q: What is the average duration between the proposal submission closure date and the signing of the contract between the European Commission and the host institution?

A: It usually takes six to eight months from the deadline for proposal submissions until the signing of the contract.

Q: Does a researcher have to start the return and reintegration project immediately after finishing his/her mobility project, or is he/she allowed to spend a few additional months abroad before returning to his/her home country?

A: The ERG fellowships should start immediately after the end of the initial fellowship or at the latest six months later in well justified cases where the agreement of the Commission has been obtained. If there is a delay, a justification must be sent to the Commission Services.

5. Financial and contractual aspects

Q: What does the funding cover?

It consists of a grant of a maximum amount of €40 000 to be used within one year following the term of the Marie Curie action. The grant is to be used as a contribution to the scientific costs relating to the researcher's project at the reintegration host and CANNOT be used for the researcher's salary. In case the project concerns a researcher returning to the *Less Favoured Regions in the EU, new Member States or to an Associated Candidate Country*, the grant can also be used as a contribution to the salary costs of the researcher.

Q: Is it possible to pay the salary of the returning researcher through an externally funded research project (by the European Commission or other international or national public organisation)?

A: The host institution has to provide evidence that there is a contractual commitment with the researcher for a minimum period of 2 years whatever the financial source is. There should however be no dual financing of the same items if there is more than one contract with the Commission.

Q: Are there any specific requirements regarding the two-year work contract with the return host organisation, such as a minimum monthly salary, number of work hours per week, etc.?

A: The contract between the researcher and the host organisation should be in conformity with local legislation.

Q: Could the ERG be used to finance other personnel costs in the host organisation?

A: Yes, the grant may cover the cost of hiring a technician or a student on a full or part-time basis depending on the specific needs of the project.

Q: Can the work contract between the host organisation and the researcher include teaching or is full-time dedication to the research project compulsory?

A: In principle, fellows must work full-time on their training project. Exceptionally, part-time work and the corresponding extension of the project duration can be accepted for family reasons if this does not interfere with the execution of the project.

6. Proposal preparation and submission

Q: When to apply

A: Applications should be sent during the last year of the initial training/mobility action and at least six months before the end. An open call for proposals was published on 15 October 2004 with closure dates on 19 January 2005, 19 April 2005, 19 July 2005, 19 October 2005, 19 January 2006, 19 April 2006 and 19 July 2006 at 17.00 (Brussels local time). Proposals can be submitted at any time and will be evaluated in batches following each of these closing dates.

Q: Who should register as the proposal coordinator in the EPSS?

A: It is strongly recommended that the potential research fellow (the individual researcher) registers as the proposal coordinator for the purposes of the EPSS system, and applies for the

coordinator username and password. By so doing, the fellows receive a username and password which enables them to write all sections of the proposal. They will also receive a 'partner' password which can be passed on to the host organisation so that the host can enter their own details on page A2 (if necessary).

If the host organisation applies for the coordinator username and password, the fellow will neither be able to enter his or her own details nor complete part B unless the host shares the coordinator password with the fellow. (The partner password is not sufficient as it allows access to the A2 form only.)

When using the EPSS system, on the web page called 'Part A' the pages of the proposal are represented by three links labelled A1, A2 and A3. Users will note that the name of the coordinator appears next to the A2 form. This simply indicates that that form belongs to the proposal being created for that coordinator. It is the details of the host organisation which must be entered into the A2 form.

Q: When filling in the registration form for the EPSS, how do applicants choose the theme that corresponds to the Marie Curie ERG?

A: The 'themes' are available on the relevant call information page. For example, for ERG, go to the call page for ERG and select 'Areas and instruments addressed within this call' and the activity code Mobility-4.1 will appear. The same refers to other Marie Curie actions. Selecting the theme is not critical for the registration and will not influence the proposal submission in any way.

Q: Should the yearly budgetary breakdown related to the implementation of the project and the planned research activities cover the full duration of the project or only the first year supported by the ERG?

A: It is recommended that this information be provided for the full duration of the project since it would prove still further the serious preparation for the reintegration programme. But the requested costs to be covered by the EC can refer only to the eligible costs for the first year.

Q: Should the proposal include a draft work contract, including salary for at least two years, for the applicant individual researcher in the host organisation in the return country?

A: No, it is not compulsory to attach such a document at the submission stage but it should be specified in part B of the proposal that the host is ready to provide contracting arrangements with the researcher for a minimum of two years if the proposal is successful. Evidence of the host institution's commitment to the researcher will be verified by the European Commission during the negotiation phase.

Q: Can a two- or three-year regional or national grant intended to pay the salary of reintegrating researchers be considered as a guarantee for effective and lasting reintegration?

Yes, but an agreement/work contract must be signed between the host institution and the fellow.

7. Evaluation

Q: Approximately how long does the evaluation process take?

A: The total duration is between four and eight months, including evaluation and contract preparation.

Q: How are proposals evaluated? Who are the evaluators? How many evaluators assess each proposal? How are evaluators selected? Does everybody have access to the guidelines for evaluators?

A: The Guidance Notes for Evaluators address these issues in detail. The general principles are set out in the Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Selection Procedures (the 'Evaluation Manual'). These documents are available from the call page http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=164

Q: When and where are the preliminary evaluation results expected to be published?

A: The preliminary evaluation results are usually published on the web three or four months after each cut-off date, but they should be seen as purely informative before the final decision is made by the Commission. ERG preliminary evaluation results are available on the Call progress page for ERG on CORDIS: <http://www.cordis.lu/mariecurie-actions/erg/status.htm> Applicants should read the introductory note carefully in order to understand the status of their proposal in the preliminary list.

Q: What happens after the publication of the preliminary evaluation results?

A: The European Commission takes a formal decision about the final evaluation results and informs each proposer personally about the status of his/her proposal. Successful proposers are then invited to enter into negotiations.

Q: Are there any statistics available from the first ERG call for proposals with respect to the number of applications submitted and the number that were successful?

A: For the first closing dates in 2003 and 2004, the number of proposals submitted for each call ranged between 30 and 100, approximately 90% of which were eligible. At the end of each evaluation, the success rate of every batch of proposals has been over 85%.