



Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Staff Exchanges (SE) 2021

Call: MSCA Staff Exchanges 2021 ([HORIZON-MSCA-2021-SE-01](#))

Opening date: **07 October 2021**

Deadline date: **09 March 2022 17:00:00 Brussels time**

I. Horizon Europe

[Horizon Europe](#) (2021-2027) is the new research and innovation framework programme of the European Union and it offers opportunities for both collaborative research and mobility of researchers.

Horizon Europe programme countries

- **27 European Union Member States (MS)**

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden

- **Horizon Europe Associated Countries* (AC) ¹**

Legal entities from Associated Countries can participate under equivalent conditions as legal entities from the EU Member States, unless specific limitations or conditions are laid down in the work programme and/or call/topic text. The current association status² is as follows:

The countries associated with Horizon Europe are: Norway and Iceland.

The countries with whom association negotiations are concluded are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo³, Serbia, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The association agreements with Israel, United Kingdom⁴, Tunisia, Morocco, and Faroe Islands are under negotiations.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon- Euratom_en.pdf

² Switzerland is not considered a candidate associated country for the time being

³ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

⁴ The UK will participate in all parts of the Horizon Europe programme with the only exception of the EIC Fund (which is part of the EIC Accelerator of Horizon Europe that provides investment through equity or other repayable form)

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

Under the Horizon Europe, the MSCA programme aims at creating an excellent research base in Europe by offering research and training grants to equip researchers with new knowledge, skills, international as well as inter-sectoral experience. It is open to all research domain (bottom-up principle) and researchers with any nationality. There are four different Actions with different objectives, aiming at creating scientific excellence:

- [MSCA Doctoral Networks](#)
- [MSCA Staff Exchanges](#)
- [MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships and](#)
- [MSCA COFUND](#)

This flyer outlines the scope and modalities to participate in the [Staff Exchanges \(SE\)](#) Action. The flyer aims at helping the Indian scientific community and innovators in applying for the grant, providing guidance on the formalities to comply with and facilitating project preparation. It is without prejudice to the call text, topic conditions and documents provided in the call text itself as published in the Funding & Tenders Portal, which remains the basis for applying and should always be consulted in full (see [HE Main Work Programme 2021–2022 – 2. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#)).

II. MSCA - Staff Exchanges Action (SE)

Objectives

The [MSCA Staff Exchanges Action](#) (MSCA-SE) allows for exchanging of staff and sharing knowledge and ideas at all stages of the innovation chain. The scheme fosters a shared culture of research and innovation that welcomes and rewards creativity and entrepreneurship and helps turn ideas into innovative products, services or processes. It is open to research, technical, administrative and managerial staff supporting R&I activities from across the globe.

The MSCA-SE action funds short-term international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility of R&I staff through so-called “secondments”. The aim is to support the development of sustainable collaborative projects between different organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (in particular SMEs/startups) based in Europe and beyond. Exchanged staff benefit from new knowledge, skills and career development perspectives and international exposure. Organisations will benefit from transfer of knowledge, increased collaborative networks and increased research and innovation capacities.

Research areas⁵

All disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities and Economic Sciences) are eligible for funding. In other words, the calls are bottom-up i.e.:

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf page 95

the field is freely chosen by the applicant (apart from some atomic energy research that is covered by the EURATOM Treaty)⁶.

Activities

The following activities are supported:

- Support implementation of a joint R&I project by seconding and/or hosting eligible staff members;
- Three dimensions of mobility: inter-sectoral, international and interdisciplinary;
- Networking activities, organisation of workshops and conferences;
- New skills acquisition and career development perspectives.

Eligibility

The MSCA-SE is open to researcher, administrative and managerial staff. It could involve staff from academic and non-academic sectors⁷, based in Europe (see above list of EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries) and outside Europe (third countries/e.g. India).

Given the specific nature of MSCA-SE, additional eligibility criteria listed hereunder apply. This section also contains eligibility conditions, which apply during action implementation but cannot be verified at proposal stage.

Participating organisations

- Applications must be submitted by a **consortium** including at least three independent legal entities in three different countries, two of which established in a different EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country;
- It is open to partnerships of universities, research institutions and non-academic organisations (in particular SMEs/startups) both from Europe and Third Country (e.g. India);
- If all participating organisations are from the same sector (i.e. either only academic or only non-academic), there must be at least one organisation from a non-associated Third Country (e.g. India);
- Above this minimum number of three, the participation of organisations from any country is possible under the conditions provided by the Horizon Europe Rules for Participation and Dissemination.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/call_ptef/pt/h2020-call-list-descr-msca-itn_en.pdf

⁷ Academic: consists of public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research organisations whose primary mission is to pursue research, and international European interest organisations

Non-Academic: includes any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon Europe Rules for Participation. Examples (not-exhaustive) include: industry (SMEs etc.), charities, NGOs, government/public bodies, national archives, libraries, mentors for Startups within an Incubator would qualify as eligible staff participant etc.

Staff eligible for secondment

- Any type of staff contributing to proposed R&I activities (researchers, administrative staff, managerial staff, technical staff);
- Secondments are open for researchers at any career stage (from doctoral candidates⁸ to postdoctoral researchers⁹);
- Seconded staff members must be actively engaged in research and/or innovation activities for at least one month (full-time equivalent) at the sending institution before the first period of secondment;
- After the period of secondment, seconded staff should return to their sending institution, thus maximising the impact of the action for exchanging and sharing knowledge and long-term collaboration;
- Secondments must be among different countries.

Duration

- The **maximum** duration of the project is **48 months** from the starting date set out in the grant agreement;
- The overall EU contribution for MSCA Staff Exchanges amounts to a maximum of 360 person-months per project;
- Each staff member is seconded for a period of 1 to 2 months (may be split into several stays).

III. Funding

Who and what is funded?

- Participants from European Union member states and countries associated to Horizon Europe are **automatically funded** and are called ‘Beneficiaries’. They sign the HE Grant Agreement;
- Participants from the low-to middle-income third countries are also automatically eligible for EU funding¹⁰ and called ‘Beneficiaries’ and sign the HE Grant Agreement;
- Participants from other non-European countries, notably the industrialised countries and the emerging economies (BRIC countries i.e. Brazil, Russia, **India** and China) and Chile, are **not automatically eligible** for funding under Horizon Europe. They are called ‘Associated Partner’ and do not have to sign the HE Grant Agreement.

⁸ Enrolled for PhD programme at participating organisation/team

⁹ In possession of a doctoral degree. Possession of a doctoral degree is defined as a successfully defended doctoral thesis, even if the doctoral degree has yet to be awarded.

¹⁰ Page 2: Other third countries https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

Funding for participation of Indian entities

If selected, the Indian entity will:

- Bring in **own funding** (provided by institution or any other organisation; contribution in-kind);
- Be funded by the Government of India if a Co-Funding Mechanism for that purpose has been set up (negotiations ongoing).

EU contribution and applicable unit costs:

The allocation of funding under a MSCA-SE action comes down to a top-up allowance for the seconded staff member contributes to travel, accommodation and subsistence costs related to the secondment. The following budget categories apply:

Staff member unit cost Top-up allowance Person/month (in euro)	Institutional unit cost Person/month (in euro)	
	Research, training and networking costs	Management and indirect costs
2 300	1 300	1 000

India contribution and applicable costs:

Secondment cost of Indian staff members visiting European partner organisations will be calculated as per the Indian national/institutional funding agency norms. The budget should cover: travel, insurance, visa, accommodation and subsistence costs related to the secondment.

IV. Evaluation and Award criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by independent experts on the basis of the following award criteria:

- **Excellence** (which accounts for 50% of the score): quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives; soundness of the proposed methodology; quality of the proposed interaction between the participating organisations in light of the research and innovation objectives;
- **Impact** (30%): developing new and lasting research collaborations, improving research and innovation potential at the European and global level; credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher; suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts; and magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts;

- **Implementation** (20%): quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and quality and capacity and role of each participant, including hosting arrangements¹¹.

If selected, Indian organisation(s), called ‘Associated Partner’, will not have to sign the Horizon Europe Grant Agreement but sign a ‘**Partnership Agreement**’ with the beneficiary partner(s) to regulate the internal relationship among all the participating organisations in the project consortium.

V. **Timeline**

- Call 2021: opening on 7 October 2021 and closing on 9 March 2022;
- The proposals will be evaluated from March 2022 to July 2022 and the outcome will be shared at the earliest by August 2022;
- The approximate date for signing the Grant Agreement and starting the project is October 2022.

VI. **Application procedure**

The MSCA-SE call is published on the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#), from where you can also download the important documents (e.g. [Guide for Applicants](#) and [Work Programme](#)) for your submission.

VII. **Finding partners**

- Use your network;
- Use Partner search – [Funding & Tenders Portal](#);
- [National Contact Points \(NCP\)](#) for Horizon Europe;
- Search previously funded project - [CORDIS](#)

VIII. **Tips and Tricks (DO’s and Not Do’s)**

- Closely follow the call requirements: be in line with the action’s objectives and expected outcomes;
- Follow available guidelines: use the structure provided in the template and address all the evaluation criteria;
- Highlight the international dimension: show that your proposal addresses policy priorities and/or societal challenges;
- Get a second opinion: have your proposal proof-read by a colleague and pre-screened by your NCP;
- Sustainability of collaboration: describe the benefits of cooperation and how they can go beyond this project;
- Contact your [NCP](#) (India has no NCPs but NCPs of programme countries can help).

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/temp-form/ef/ef_he-msca_en.pdf

IX. Where can I get support?

If you have questions get in touch with us

- EU DEL India | delegation-india-ri@eeas.europa.eu
- EURAXESS India | india@euraxess.net
- MSCA National Contact Points: check [here](#)

Examples of Successful MSCA-SE Projects with India

Project 1 | ECOBOTICS.SEA (1 January 2019 -31 January 2022)

ECOBOTICS.SEA is an international research and training project that will meaningfully extend the current state-of-the-art on robotics for the analysis and monitoring of marine species communities, focusing mainly on aquatic biodiversity.

The partner network is composed of 3 universities and one R&D institutes and 3 companies located in EU member states and one partner from a third country/India, i.e. the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa. The consortium is highly interdisciplinary, aggregating excellence from various domains, including robotics, biomimetics for water/underwater systems, automation, biology, ecosystem preservation, entrepreneurship and anthropology applied to species preservation. As can be seen from factsheet, all European partners obtained funding under Horizon Europe and the Indian partner agreed to participate without funding and hence has to fund the cost for the exchange of staff between Europe and India.

For details: <https://ecobotics.isr.uc.pt/>
<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/218075/factsheet/en>

Project 2 | InvisiblesPlus – (1 February 2016 -31 January 2020)

This MSCA-RISE project called InvisiblesPlus is constituted of 13 European universities and research institutes and 14 partners from third countries, amongst which two from India: Harish Chandra Research Institute, Allahabad and University of Delhi.

The project focuses on Neutrino and Dark Matter phenomenology and their connection, with emphasis on the role of the symmetry relating matter and antimatter. Experimental and theoretical aspects are encompassed. It is first transnational programme addressing the V and DM properties at large, their interfaces, and in addition the connections of their particle/antiparticle asymmetries with those of the visible universe.

For details: <http://www.invisiblesplus.eu/>
<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/200226/factsheet/en>