

The background features a dark blue gradient with faint, light-colored circular patterns and a scale. The scale is a large arc on the left side, with numbers ranging from 140 to 260 in increments of 10. There are also several smaller circles and dashed lines scattered across the background, some with arrows indicating direction.

MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE FELLOWSHIPS

- Prestigious for the PI and host research group
- Prestigious for the fellow
- Makes mobility easy, opens new horizons
- Excellent career stepping stone
- Great proactive alumni organization for afterwards

.....it is **so much more than just a post-doc**

A COMPLETE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

First common mistake:

- **Two-way (three-way for GFs) transfer of knowledge** is not clearly articulated or is too generic
- **Clearly identify** specific (scientific) skills, areas of expertise and/or technical knowledge that the fellow will gain during the fellowship
- **Clearly identify** some specific (scientific) skills, areas of expertise and/or technical knowledge that the fellow will bring to the host group (BONUS – say how that knowledge will be transferred; for example, “*the fellow will teach ≥ 4 host group members technique A over the course of the fellowship*”)

SECOND COMMON MISTAKE:

- **Generic statements** – you may feel you have “covered a criterion” but these generic statements have no added value and will mean that your proposal is indistinguishable from hundreds of similar proposals
- **If a section of text could be copied and pasted into another proposal then it is not grant winning text** regardless of the the subject of that particular section of text (e.g. open science practices)
- Everywhere that you can **use project specific examples** to show what you plan to do – this approach makes your proposal genuine, convincing and helps it to stand out from other proposals
- **Read the prompts in the Part B template carefully** – they will help you include the right information and give each section the correct emphasis. Don't assume you know what is required in each section

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE EXCELLENCE SECTION

- **Interdisciplinarity** – avoid generic statements, highlight specific areas, be real - exaggeration is not convincing
- **Gender dimension** – this is not about gender balance in research teams
- **Open science practices** – many applicants focus on open access publishing which is an obligation. Think about more OS practices (eg. European open science cloud, data repositories, digital identifiers, open peer review etc.). For more information: https://rea.ec.europa.eu/open-science_en and <https://www.openaire.eu/open-science-europe-overview>
- **Planned training activities** should be clearly articulated and cover both scientific skills and soft/transferrable skills – this is another area where you should be specific about both the skill and how it will be taught. Many applicants give vague generic statements about soft/transferrable skills transfer etc.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE IMPACT SECTION

- In Excellence you will have described the “**quality and appropriateness of the researcher’s professional experience, competences and skills**” (e.g. the researcher’s CV/experience/skills/appropriateness for the described project) – **LOOKS BACKWARDS**
- In Impact you need to **LOOK FORWARD** and describe how the fellowship will strengthen the researcher’s career prospects. Once again be specific and avoid generic statements (use the copy-paste test). You need to describe **specific measures** and **expected contribution of proposed skills development to the future career of the researcher**
- **Dissemination and exploitation:** be specific, identify potential content and target journals/conferences etc. With respect to exploitation, the demand for detail is growing – identify intellectual property that might need protection or that could be exploited, give a brief strategy outline
- **Communication activities** – project specific is best, identify topics and messages, identify audiences, identify means and media, include feedback mechanisms
- Scientific/Economic/Technical/Societal Impact – **do not exaggerate, do not use a vague generic statement, try and give a realistic quantified assessment of mid-term impact**

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE IMPLEMENTATION SECTION

- **Consistency** – do not make a mistake (e.g. deliverable timing in text and Gantt different)
- **Understand the difference between a deliverable and a milestone. Deliverable definition** = A report that is sent to the Commission or Agency providing information to ensure effective monitoring of the project. There are different types of deliverables (e.g. a report on specific activities or results, data management plans, ethics or security requirements). **Milestone definition** = Control points in the project that help to chart progress. Milestones may correspond to the achievement of a key result, allowing the next phase of the work to begin. They may also be needed at intermediary points so that, if problems have arisen, corrective measures can be taken. A milestone may be a **critical decision point in the project** where, for example, the consortium must decide which of several technologies to adopt for further development. **The achievement of a milestone should be verifiable.**
- **Risks** – cover different types of risk (scientific and administrative). Take time and space to address this point, it is a very common source of weakness.
- **Resources and effort** – be realistic and once again specific – avoid generic statements


A COMMON SOURCE OF CONFUSION

- **Non-academic placement (NAP), secondment or short visit** – what are the differences?

NAP = up to 6 months after fellowship spent at a non-academic host; **secondment(s)** = up to half of program spent during the fellowship at a secondary host with a secondary supervisor from any sector (to gain extra skills or to undertake part of the work); **short visit** = time away from the primary host but still under the supervision of the primary host (e.g. fieldwork, beam time etc.)

- These are **not required** but are often seen positively, but they **must be justified within the program, must add value and require additional supporting text throughout the proposal** – (such as, the second supervisor's credentials must be included, the specific training activities to be undertaken during the time away from the primary host must be described, they must be planned and shown in the Gantt chart, the infrastructure and capacity of the secondary host must be established etc.). If you include them make sure you do all the work around their inclusion to support them otherwise they will become a source of weaknesses.

	Secondment(s)	Non-Academic Placement
General principles		
Maximum Duration	<p><u>European Postdoctoral Fellowships:</u> Up to half of the standard project duration²⁵.</p> <p><u>Global Postdoctoral Fellowships:</u> Secondments are permitted for up to half of the outgoing phase duration²⁶.</p>	Up to 6 months duration.
Timing	<p><u>European Postdoctoral Fellowships:</u> at any time during the standard project duration.</p> <p><u>Secondments</u> can be divided into multiple shorter periods.</p> <p><u>Global Postdoctoral Fellowships:</u> at any time during the outgoing phase of the project. Secondments are not permitted during the mandatory return phase of the project.</p> <p><u>Secondments</u> can be divided into multiple shorter periods.</p> <p>A maximum of three months of secondment can be spent at the start of the project at the beneficiary (or associated partners linked to the beneficiary) before going to the associated partner for the outgoing phase. This period will be deducted from the overall maximum time allowed for secondments and no further secondment periods are allowed at the beneficiary.</p> <p>All periods of secondment are counted as an integral part of the outgoing phase and must be within its limits of duration.</p>	Additional period that takes place only after the standard duration of the fellowship; cannot be divided in multiple periods.

	Secondment(s)	Non-Academic Placement
Where	Any country worldwide	MS or AC
Sector	Any sector (secondments may take place in one or more organisations)	Non-academic sector only ²⁷ (only one organisation allowed)
How to fill in the application forms		
Part A Section 2 Participants 	Do NOT encode the secondment organizations as a participating organisation.	The organization hosting the placement MUST be encoded as a participating organisation (= associated partner).
Part A Section 3 Budget	Do NOT encode (as no additional budget is allowed for secondments).	ADD the number of months requested for the non-academic placement as a separate line (up to 6 months are allowed).
Description in Part B-1	Yes. Secondments should be described in part B-1 and the evaluators will assess their relevance and quality in the respective criterion. Secondments should be included in the Gantt chart .	Yes. Non-academic placement should be described in part B-1 and the evaluators will assess their relevance and quality in the respective criterion. Non-academic placement should be included in the Gantt chart .
Description in Part B-2	Secondment hosts must be listed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 within part B-2 template as an associated partner.	Non-academic placement hosts must be listed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 within part B-2 template as an associated partner.
Supporting Document in Part B-2	None. Do not include letter(s) of commitment.	None. Do not include a letter of commitment.

ONE LAST THING:

- **Respect the font and format rules**
- Make your proposal **easy to read** – think of the evaluator who has to read many proposals. **Do not try and cheat and squeeze in more text by using figures/images with small text** – it will backfire.

Good Luck with your proposal!