

MSCA Actions

MSCA Choose Europe¹

New scheme supporting long-term recruitment of excellent researchers through a 2-phase model: EU-funded initial phase + institution-funded second phase. Ideal for building sustainable research careers.

MSCA Choose Europe for Science is a completely new scheme launched under the Horizon Europe Programme. It introduces a novel two-phase model of researcher recruitment and funding to attract and retain excellent talent in Europe. **Unlike the well-established MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, which support individual researchers for shorter periods within predefined academic environments, this completely new scheme introduces a two-phase model combining EU-funded early-stage recruitment with a follow-up phase funded by the host institution.** This dual structure aims to enhance **long-term employability and strengthen institutional research capacity across Europe.** The programme is designed not only to attract excellent researchers to Europe but also to retain them, particularly in regions where research institutions are still consolidating their international competitiveness.

In this context, the European Centre can help you in supporting applicants throughout the application process, providing methodological guidance, helping to shape strategic alignment with EU research priorities.

1. Funding Model: Unit Contributions

- The EU contribution takes the form of unit contributions, aligning with the 2021 Commission decision for MSCA actions under Horizon Europe.
- Choose Europe for Science Allowance:
- €6,700 per researcher per month during the initial phase (24 or 36 months).
- Additional allowances:
- Long-term leave allowance (for maternity, paternity, sick, or special leave >30 days).
- Special needs allowance (for researchers with certified disabilities where participation would otherwise not be possible).

2. Covered Costs in the Initial Phase

- The €6,700/month allowance may be used to cover:
- Researcher remuneration (including salaries, employer and employee social security contributions, taxes, and other mandatory deductions).
- Mobility and family costs, where applicable.
- Training, research, and networking activities.
- Project management and indirect costs.

¹ More info, [workprogramme](#), page 148

- Note: The gross monthly remuneration must not fall below €6,700 during this phase.

3. Second Phase Conditions

- Lasts 24 months following the initial phase.
- Funded by the beneficiary, using complementary sources (e.g. institutional, regional, EU funds other than Horizon Europe).
- Remuneration must remain attractive and competitive at national level.
- Aims to support long-term employability and career development of recruited researchers.

4. Employment & Work Conditions

- Researchers must be employed via an employment contract or equivalent direct contract with full social security coverage.
- Full-time employment is the default; part-time allowed with at least 50% FTE.
- All relevant costs and employment details must be clearly specified in the vacancy notice.

5. Programme Architecture

Two-phase model:

- Initial phase: 24 months (for a 48-month fellowship) or 36 months (for a 60-month fellowship).
- Second phase: Always 24 months.
- Maximum action duration: 60 months (48-month fellowship) or 72 months (60-month fellowship).
- Minimum of three researchers must be recruited per proposal.
- Researchers must be recruited within the first 12 months of project start.

6. Eligibility Criteria

Participating Organisations:

- Single entity from an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country.
- No affiliated entities may participate.
- International organisations are eligible if established in an EU/Associated Country.

Recruited Researchers:

- Must possess a doctoral degree at the time of vacancy notice deadline.
- Must comply with MSCA mobility rule:
- Not have resided or carried out their main activity in the country of recruitment for more than 12 months in the 36 months before the vacancy deadline.
- Cannot be permanently employed by the host institution.
- Must be EU or Horizon Europe Associated Country nationals/long-term residents if most activities are outside the EU/Associated Country.

7. Budget Limitations and Flexibility

- Maximum EU contribution per beneficiary: €3.5 million.

- If multiple successful proposals exceed this cap, the beneficiary must choose which one to implement.
- Complementary funding (e.g., Cohesion policy funds) may be used provided no double funding occurs.

8. Evaluation and Award Process

- Single panel evaluation.

Scoring:

- Excellence: 50% (threshold: 3/5)
- Impact: 30%
- Quality and efficiency of implementation: 20%
- Minimum total score for funding: 70%.
- Seal of Excellence for proposals scoring $\geq 85\%$ but not funded due to budget limitations.

In case of tie scores ("ex-aequo"), prioritization is based on:

- Excellence
- Impact
- Career prospects
- Geographical diversity (if needed)

9. Deliverables and Legal Provisions

- Legal structure: Only unit contributions allowed.
- Required deliverables:
- Mid-term meeting
- Career development plan
- End-of-training and follow-up questionnaires
- Data management plan (mid-term and final)
- Beneficiaries must ensure free access to necessary results and background for recruited researchers.

MSCA Doctoral Networks²

Supports structured, international PhD programmes across sectors and disciplines. Strong focus on transferable skills, joint supervision, and long-term collaboration. Matchmaking supported via 4EU+ and SEED4EU+.

The MSCA Doctoral Networks remain a cornerstone of the Horizon Europe programme, aimed at structuring high-quality doctoral training through international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral collaboration. Building on well-established

² More info, [workprogramme](#), page 118

implementation rules, the scheme continues to offer robust financial and institutional support to foster innovative and impactful PhD programmes across Europe.

In preparing this proposal, applicants can benefit from the expert guidance and research support services provided by the European Centre, which can assist with proposal design, institutional coordination, and alignment with European best practices in doctoral training. **Additionally, a series of thematic matchmaking events within the 4EU+ Alliance are being planned to facilitate networking among potential applicants and partner institutions. These projects can also be easily linked to the ongoing SEED4EU+ or 4EU+ mini-grant schemes.** These events are intended to stimulate collaboration and help build high-quality consortia with complementary expertise.

Through this project, the consortium will contribute to the objectives of the MSCA Doctoral Networks by:

- Delivering structured, high-quality doctoral training programmes with a strong focus on transferable skills and interdisciplinary research.
- Fostering collaboration across academic and non-academic sectors, thereby increasing the career prospects of participating doctoral candidates.
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability and European impact of the programme by embedding institutional learning, shared supervision models, and dissemination through established networks and platforms.

MSCA COFUND³

Co-finance regional or institutional doctoral/postdoctoral programmes. Leverages existing schemes, encourages cross-faculty collaboration, and offers high success rate. Builds capacity in research talent management.

The MSCA COFUND programme provides an excellent opportunity to co-finance regional, national, or **international fellowship and/or doctoral training programmes**, supporting both institutional development and researcher careers. Charles University is well-positioned to leverage this opportunity, building on its successful implementation of the ongoing MSCA COFUND Charleston programme, which has already demonstrated the university's capacity to manage international researcher mobility and structured training schemes.

Applicants can benefit from support provided by the European Centre, including guidance on programme design, legal and financial structuring, and strategic

³ More info, [workprogramme](#), page 140

alignment with MSCA standards. This support ensures the development of high-quality, competitive proposals that meet Horizon Europe's excellence and impact requirements.

Furthermore, COFUND provides a valuable platform for cross-faculty and multidisciplinary collaboration. The scheme enables faculties and departments working on related or complementary topics to pool expertise and design coherent, innovative research training environments. These internal synergies not only improve the quality of researcher supervision and training but also strengthen institutional identity and strategic research priorities.

In addition, the **MSCA COFUND call has a notably higher success rate compared to many other Horizon Europe funding schemes**, making it an attractive and realistic opportunity for long-term capacity building in research management and talent development.

Funded through unit contributions:

- €3,300/month per doctoral researcher.
- €4,700/month per postdoctoral researcher.
- Covers researcher remuneration, mobility and family costs, training, research, networking, and management costs.
- Special needs and long-term leave allowances available where applicable.
- Up to €10 million per beneficiary per call.
- Part-time employment allowed (min. 50% FTE).
- Co-funding from the institution.

MSCA Staff Exchanges⁴

Funds mobility of researchers and staff across countries and sectors. Strengthens partnerships and enables knowledge sharing. Open to researchers and support staff alike. Can link with 4EU+ mini-grants or 4EU+ Seed projects.

The MSCA Staff Exchanges scheme under Horizon Europe supports international, intersectoral, and interdisciplinary collaboration through the secondment of research and innovation staff. This flexible programme enables researchers at all career stages, as well as technical and administrative staff, to gain new knowledge, skills, and connections through structured mobility and knowledge-sharing activities. The European Centre offers targeted support for applicants, including advice on consortium building, budget planning, and proposal writing. Participation in this scheme is particularly valuable for

⁴ More info, [workprogramme](#), page 134

teams aiming to build or expand long-term strategic partnerships, especially with non-academic and international partners.

Staff Exchanges are also ideal for establishing or deepening collaborations across sectors and disciplines, and may serve as a stepping stone for more ambitious projects such as MSCA Doctoral Networks or COFUND initiatives. **Matchmaking activities within platforms such as the 4EU+ Alliance can help identify suitable partners and topics of mutual interest for future proposals. These projects can also be easily linked to the ongoing SEED4EU+ or 4EU+ mini-grant schemes.**

Key info:

1. Funding Model

- Top-up allowance: €2,710 per person/month for seconded staff.
- Institutional contributions:
- €1,300/month for research, training, and networking.
- €1,000/month for management and indirect costs.
- Special needs allowance available on request.

2. Who Can Be Seconded

- Researchers (including doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers).
- Administrative, managerial, and technical staff supporting R&I activities.
- Must be active in R&I for at least 1 month at the sending institution before secondment.

3. Project & Secondment Rules

- Project duration: max. 48 months.
- Secondment duration: 1–12 months per person (can be split).
- Max. EU contribution: 360 person-months per project.
- Secondments must be full-time and take place between different countries.
- If all partners are from the same sector, a non-associated third country partner is required.
- Intra-sectoral secondments within EU/Associated countries allowed only if interdisciplinary and limited to 1/3 of total duration.

4. Consortium Requirements

- At least three independent legal entities in three different countries.
- At least two organisations must be from different EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries.
- Both academic and non-academic sectors encouraged.
- Affiliated entities cannot participate.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Scored on:

- Excellence (50%)
- Impact (30%)
- Quality & Implementation (20%)

Minimum total score: 70% for funding eligibility.

MSCA Postdoctoral fellowships⁵

Very competitive flagship scheme for individual postdocs to carry out high-quality research in Europe or globally. Boosts careers through mobility, skills development, and international cooperation.

The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships are a flagship Horizon Europe funding scheme aimed at supporting excellent postdoctoral researchers in advancing their careers through international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral mobility.

The scheme is open to researchers from any discipline and nationality, offering two streams:

- European Fellowships (12–24 months in EU/Associated Countries)
- Global Fellowships (12–24 months outside EU + mandatory 12-month return phase)

Charles University applicants can benefit from support provided by the European Centre, including help with eligibility checks, proposal preparation.

Key info:

1. Funding

- Living allowance: €5,990/month (gross, subject to national deductions)
- Mobility allowance: €710/month
- Family allowance: €660/month (if applicable)

Plus:

- €1,000/month for research, training, networking
- €650/month for management and indirect costs

2. Eligibility

- Doctoral degree required at the call deadline.
- Max. 8 years of research experience after PhD.
- Must comply with the mobility rule (not residing in the host country more than 12 months in the past 36).
- Open to all nationalities; reintegration and Global Fellowships have nationality/residency requirements.

3. Project Structure

- European Fellowships: 12–24 months.
- Global Fellowships: 24–36 months (including 12-month mandatory return phase).

⁵ More info, [workprogramme](#), page 126

- Optional non-academic placement (6 months) at project end.

Seal of Excellence awarded to high-quality unfunded proposals scoring $\geq 85\%$.

WIDERA 2025

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Newly the Competitiveness Compass (2025) focused on 3 priority areas (policy objectives): closing the innovation gap, decarbonisation and competitiveness and reducing excessive dependencies and increasing security. The proposal should identify which of the priority areas the project will contribute to⁶.

Destination 1: Improved access to excellence⁶

DESTINATION I (IMPROVED ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE)	DEADLINE	EU CONTRIBUTION PER PROJECT (M€)	TOPIC BUDGET (M€)	EXPECTED NO. OF GRANTS	TYPE OF PROJECT
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-01-ACCESS-01:</u> European Excellence Initiative (EEI)	20 Nov 2025	2.00-5.00	80.00	27	CSA
<u>CSAHORIZON-WIDERA-2025-02-ACCESS-01:</u> EIC pre-accelerator – Widening	18 Nov 2025	0.30 – 0.50	20.00	50	CSA
<u>HORIZOCSAN-WIDERA-2025-03-ACCESS-01:</u> Hop-on facility	4 Sep 2025	0.20 – 0.60	40.00	90	RIA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-04-ACCESS-01:</u> Support for R&I policy making in the EU enlargement countries	16 Sep 2025	3.00	3.00	1	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-05-ACCESS-01:</u> Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys in widening countries	15 Oct 2025	5.00-8.00	24.00	4	CO-FUND

Key info:

1. Main objectives

- Build up R&I capacities in widening countries.
- Focus on national and regional R&I reforms and investments, to advance to the competitive edge at European and international level to resolve the existing differences between countries that are leaders and laggards.

⁶ More info, [workprogramme](#), page 16

- Contribute to the development of a pan European innovation ecosystem and thus to innovation.

2. Eligibility

- Coordinator from Widening country and min. 2 partners from other EU Member States or Countries associated to HE.

3. Project structure

- Project duration from 3 to 5 years

4. Comments

- EEI will be covered centrally at Charles University under the 4EU+ Alliance.
- Teaming for excellence 2025 (HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-ACCESS-01-01-two-stage) was open on Dec 3rd, deadline for 1st stage on Apr 10, 2025. Next call is expected in 2026.
- Twinning 2026 (institutional networking) is expected in 2026.
- The Hop-on Facility will open the opportunity for new participants from widening countries to join ongoing RIA projects under pillar 2 and the EIC pathfinder projects of Horizon Europe that have not yet any partner from a widening country.

Conditions:

- Choose only from the list of eligible RIA projects.
- Proposal must be submitted by a coordinator of the relevant project
- No more than 10% of the proposed budget can be allocated to the coordinator for integration of a new Widening beneficiary
- EC provides support as in the previous rounds by assisting with outreach to the coordinating university and contributing to the preparation of the project proposal.
- Based on past experience, it is advisable to act swiftly, as coordinating universities often stop accepting new partners once initial slots are filled by early applicants.

Destination 2: Reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system (ERA)⁷

DESTINATION I (IMPROVED ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE)	DEADLINE	EU CONTRIBUTION PER PROJECT (M€)	TOPIC BUDGET (M€)	EXPECTED NO. OF GRANTS	TYPE OF PROJECT
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-01:</u> Rolling out the ERA Policy Agenda results	18 Sep 2025	1.50 - 2.00	26.00	13	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-02:</u> Enable sustained coordination and guidance at the European level on institutional non-profit open access publishing	18 Sep 2025	2.00	2.00	1	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-03:</u> Research and innovation to provide evidence that support reforms of research assessment	18 Sep 2025	2.00	2.00	1	RIA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-04:</u> Investigating and addressing career barriers faced by underrepresented and marginalised researchers	18 Sep 2025	2.00	2.00	1	RIA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-05:</u> Programme-level collaboration	18 Sep 2025	2.00	4.00	2	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-06:</u> Strengthening of the European Science for Policy Ecosystem	18 Sep 2025	2.00	2.00	1	CSA
<u>HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-06-ERA-07:</u> Science comes to town 2027	18 Sep 2025	6.00	6.00	1	CSA

Key info:

1. Main objectives

- Focuses on building the necessary capacity to support participation in the R&I process at the level of R&I institutions and ecosystems.
- Uptake of shared EU values and principles (ethics and integrity of R&I, evidence-informed policymaking, freedom of scientific research, societal responsibility, gender equality, equal opportunities, diversity and inclusiveness).

2. Eligibility

- Coordinator from Widening should not be from Widening country

3. Project structure

- Project duration 3 years.

4. Comments

- 7 topics structured around 4 priority areas (PA) of the Pact for R&I in Europe.
- Principle of excellence remains the cornerstone for all investments under ERA
- The call “Investigating and addressing career barriers faced by underrepresented and marginalised researchers” will be covered centrally at Charles University.

⁷ More info, [workprogramme](#), page 39

- At the European Centre, we support also ERA chair call (bring outstanding academic with proven research excellence and management skills to universities and research institutions (braingain)). Next ERA chair call is expected in 2027.