

MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship 2026 Call Belgian webinar

Perspectives from my MSCA PF fellowship

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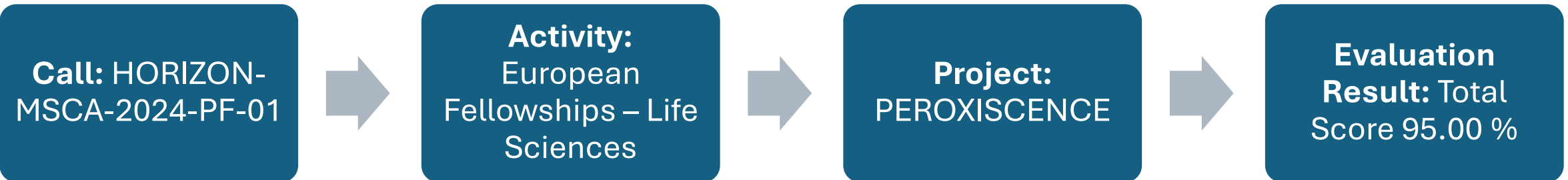
Brief Introduction

Duration: 24 months



Host Institution: ULB, Brussels, BE

Secondment 1: 7 months at Labiris Research Institute, Brussels, Belgium

Secondment 2: 1 month at University of Münster, Münster, Germany



General Advice

- Make sure you are using the MSCA template of 2026 - Part B might change slightly from one year to another
- Consult the MSCA Work Programme and annexes
- Familiarize yourself with the “Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal”  European Commission | EU Funding & Tenders Portal
- Postdoctoral Fellowship Handbook Call 2025 

- ✓ Common mistakes to avoid
- ✓ Strengths & Weaknesses – Examples from previous evaluation summary reports (ESR)
- ✓ Extensive guidance for each section

1. Excellence #@REL-EVA-RE@#

1.1 *Quality and pertinence of the project’s research and innovation objectives (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art)* #@QUA-LIT-QL@#

At a minimum, address the following aspects:

- Describe the quality and pertinence of the R&I objectives; are the objectives measurable and verifiable? Are they realistically achievable?
- Explain the research context of your project and introduce your project’s subject.
- Explain the importance of the research being carried out and how it addresses a challenge/priority at a global/European level.
- Describe the specific research objectives (ROs) of the project. These should give the evaluators an insight into the research to be carried out during the project. Moreover, it is important that the research objectives are feasible.
- Each research objective ideally should correspond to the research work packages. For example, research objective 1 is the objective for research WP 1. Number the objectives O1, O2, O3 etc. and include the corresponding work package in brackets at the end of each objective (e.g. WP1).

Advice on preparing your proposal

Start as soon as possible, preparation, revision & submission takes time

Contact & get to know your future supervisor and host lab(s)

Get to know your host institution → Is there a dedicated department (e.g., EU Liaison Office)?

- ✓ Institutional policies (Research Data Management, Knowledge Transfer Office, etc.)
- ✓ Quality and capacity of the host institutions and participating organizations
- ✓ Hosting arrangements (International Welcome Desk)
- ✓ Training activities (Career Development Center for Researchers)
- ✓ EU “Human Resources Excellence in Research” award



- ✓ Research focus of the host lab
- ✓ Qualifications and profile of the supervisor (For beneficiary & for the associated partners for secondment, if applicable)
- ✓ Key research facilities, Infrastructure and Equipment
- ✓ Previous and current involvement in EU-funded research and training programmes/actions/projects

Criterion 1 – Excellence (Weight: 50%)

Scientific aspects

- Top-down/Bottom-up approach
- Provide specific Research Objectives (ROs), e.g. RO1: Characterize the contribution of phospholipid remodeling in counteracting ferroptosis during quiescence
- Connect Work Packages (WPs) to ROs, e.g. WP1 will address RO1; WP1.1, WP1.2, etc.
- Include preliminary results (if possible, in the form of a figure), to establish credibility for your proposal
- Explain state-of-the-art, gaps in the literature, novelty aspects of ROs

Enhance clarity & readability

- Add figures that explain the main idea of your proposal. Illustrations help in comprehension.
- Make sure to mention the information from figures and/or tables in the main text as well
- Provide all required information in the appropriate section and subsection

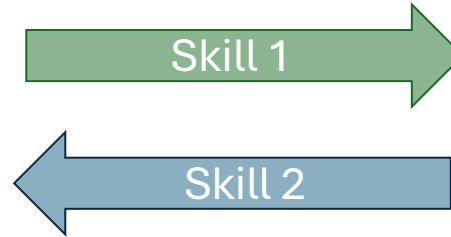
Interdisciplinarity and appropriateness of the methodology

- Mention methodological approaches, interdisciplinarity, open science practices, gender dimension, research data management

Criterion 1 – Excellence (Weight: 50%)

Researcher

- Possesses a diverse set of skills relevant to the proposal
- Potential to achieve professional maturity after the fellowship
- Capable to transfer knowledge



Host Institution/Lab

- Infrastructure and training opportunities relevant to the proposal
- Expertise necessary for proposal implementation
- Can benefit from researcher's transferable skills

Training and the Two-way transfer of knowledge

- Explain why you are the suitable person to carry out the proposed research
- Include innovative ideas that advance/expand your current skills
- Show that you have skills that *can be transferred* to your host lab
- Reference relevant research experience (and publications)
- Show that you have knowledge of the host lab → Plan to get training on scientific aspects that the host lab has expertise in and that will help advance your research and develop your competences (e.g. super-resolution microscopy)
- Show that you know the host institution → Plan training activities that enhance your long-term career goals (e.g. oral and written scientific communication, project management, etc.)
- Be as specific as possible, present well-defined Training Objectives

Criterion 2 – Impact (Weight: 30%)

Dissemination and Communication plan

- ✓ Include a broad range of target audiences: Scientific community / Industry / General public / Policymakers
- ✓ Different communication channels: Open access publication(s), Conferences, Formal lectures/workshops/seminars, Public talks, Project logo/webpage, Social media, Participation in public science communication events (e.g. European Researcher's Night)
- ✓ Be as specific as possible: How many publications, which journals, which conferences, which events you plan to attend,
- ✓ Connect with the Gantt chart

Scientific, societal and economic impacts

- ✓ Scientific: What is the broader impact/significance of your research
- ✓ Societal: Relevance to national/european/global goals (e.g., improving the competitiveness of the National and EU healthcare industry)
- ✓ Economic: Provide an estimate of how much (euros/\$), do not just mention “more economically viable”

Criterion 3 – Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation (Weight: 20%)

- ✓ Construct a detailed work plan and make sure to include separate Project management and Dissemination & Communication work packages (WPs)
- ✓ Include a Gantt chart: describe Work Packages, Milestones, Courses, Secondments, Dissemination & Communication, Deliverables (include mandatory deliverables), Project Management
- ✓ Describe the activities and interconnections between the WPs
- ✓ Very important!! Provide a good risk & mitigation plan
- ✓ Why is your host institution the ideal location for the proposed research? What infrastructure and facilities, analytical equipment, and software tools will be made available?
- ✓ Hosting arrangements: Describe how you will be integrated into the country and the lab (e.g. International Welcome Desk or equivalent)

Concluding remarks

- ✓ Follow the template from the start
- ✓ Connect WPs with ROs
- ✓ Be as specific as possible, show that you have a detailed plan
- ✓ Make sure all the info is provided in the main text as well, not just in figures/tables
- ✓ Make sure you provide all the required info in the correct subsection
- ✓ Explain convincingly the two-way transfer of knowledge
- ✓ Highlight your relevant research experience and publications – Show why you are suitable and motivated
- ✓ Describe what you will gain from the MSCA fellowship (academic skills, career perspectives)
- ✓ Emphasize how the host lab/institution is suitable for you and your proposed research

Good luck!!!