

The evaluation process as seen by an evaluator

HE-MSCA-PF-2023

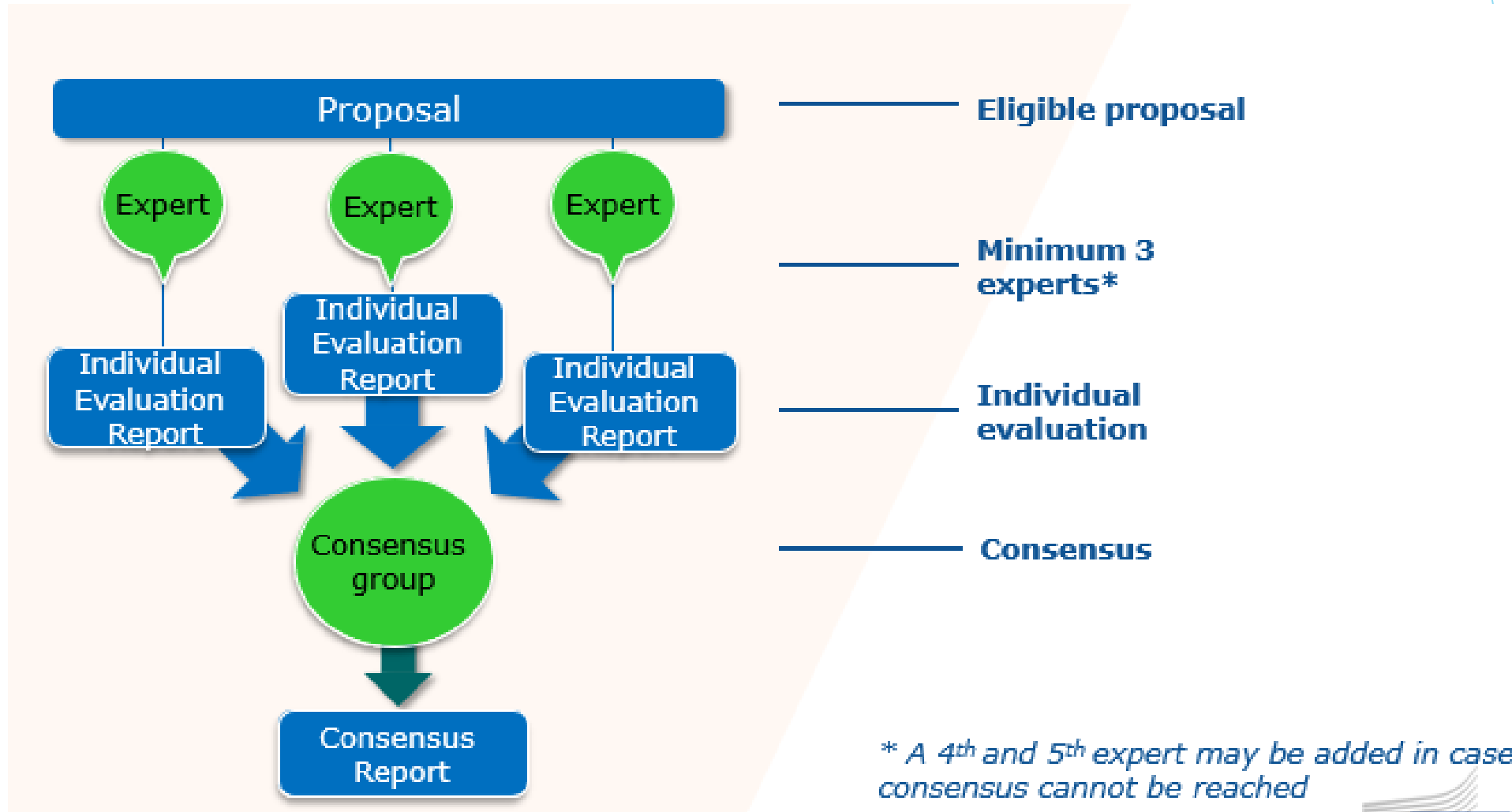
Aicha Bounaim, SLB

NFR MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 15. April

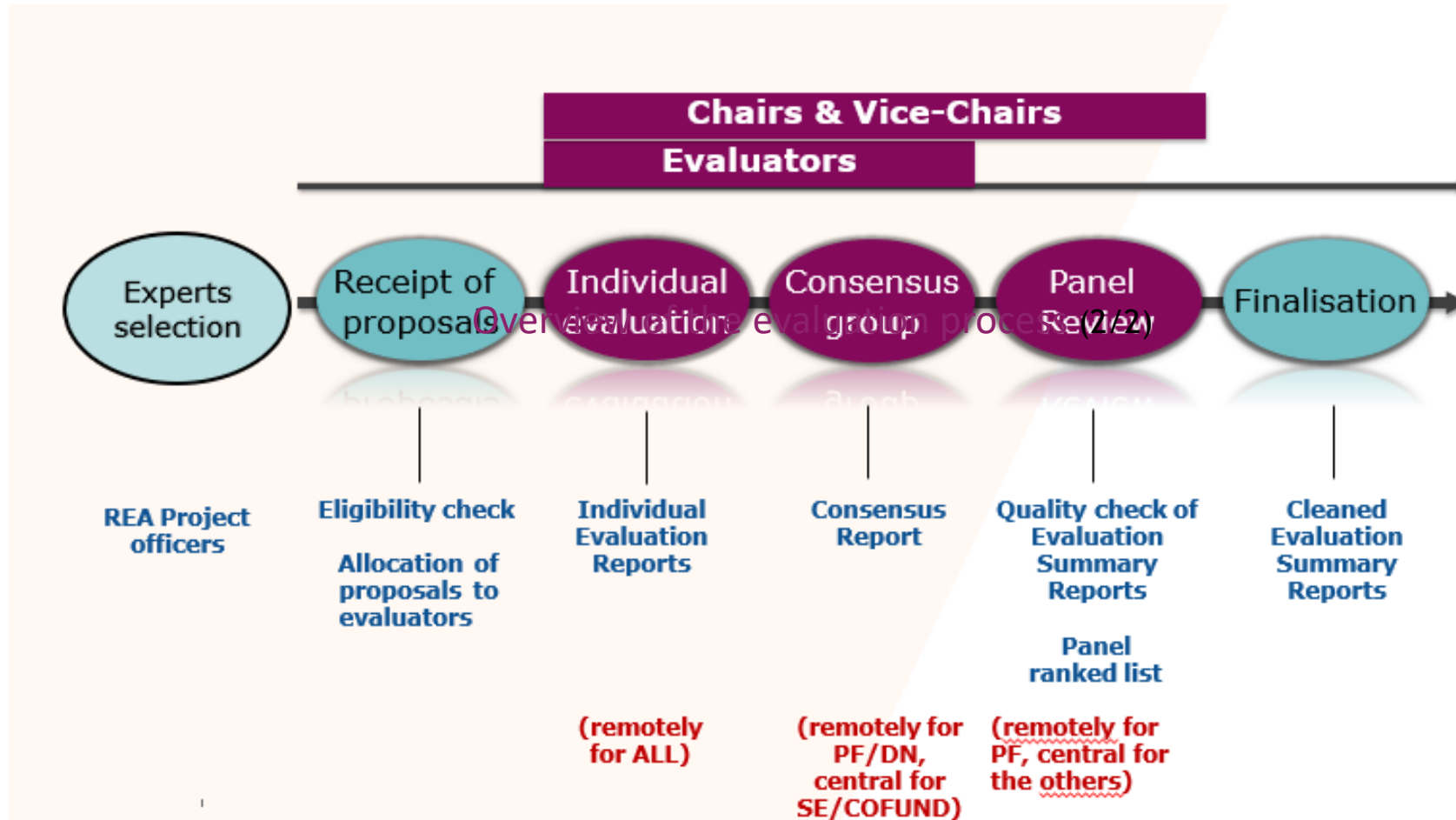
With many years as expert for the European Commission, and in particular, for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF), I would like to share with you useful information about

- ▶ The evaluation process
- ▶ How to prepare your proposal
- ▶ Where to find useful information related to MSCA-PF call

Overview of the evaluation process (1/2)



Overview of the evaluation process (2/2)



SEP – system for Submission and Evaluation of Proposals

Evaluation criteria

The three main evaluation criteria are:

1. **Excellence** - weighted 50%
2. **Impact** - weighted 30%
3. **Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation** - weighted 20%

2 THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

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This chapter presents the key aspects to take into consideration in the evaluation of the 3 main criteria.

Each **criterion** is divided into **sub-criteria** as presented in the first three parts of this chapter.

Each **sub-criterion** contains several **assessment points** that are numbered across each criterion. The sub-criteria and their respective assessment points are summarised in tables presented in this chapter.

The numbered assessment points provided in this chapter correspond directly to the **questions** formulated in the **Assessment Grid** (AG), which is provided to you as a separate document to guide you through the evaluation.

Although not mandatory, the use of the **Assessment Grid** is highly recommended to ensure that all sub-criteria have been covered in the evaluation of each proposal.

You can download the interactive assessment grid from the SEP dashboard. For this, please make sure that you are in the evaluation session of this HORIZON-MSCA-2023-PF call and not that of previous calls.

The fourth part of this chapter provides information on how **secondments** and **non-academic placements** should be evaluated in proposals that include them.

Note that specific practical instructions on the preparation of the Individual Evaluation Reports and on how to formulate your comments in the form of strengths and weaknesses are provided in chapter 3.

Scoring

- ▶ It is important that the **scores reflect the comments**
- ▶ **A score of 5 means EXCELLENT!**

SCORING SCHEME	
EXCELLENT	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.
VERY GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
FAIR	The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
POOR	The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
The proposal FAILS to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.	

Evaluation Process Steps

- ▶ Each of the experts prepares an Individual Evaluation Report
- ▶ Rapporteur drafts Consensus Report (CR) reflecting their comments
- ▶ Once comments agreed, experts discuss and agree on scores of each criterion
- ▶ CR is reviewed by Vice-Chairs for consistency
- ▶ Final version becomes Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) sent to the applicant



Horizon Europe

Evaluation Form (HE MSCA)

Version 1.0
18 June 2021

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

HE-MSCA-PF-2023

Evaluation in numbers...

- ▶ **24,048 IERs** (Individual Evaluation Report) tasks
- ▶ **8,016 CRs** (Consensus Report) tasks allocated to experts
- ▶ More than **3,800 experts**
- ▶ Average workload **8 tasks per expert**

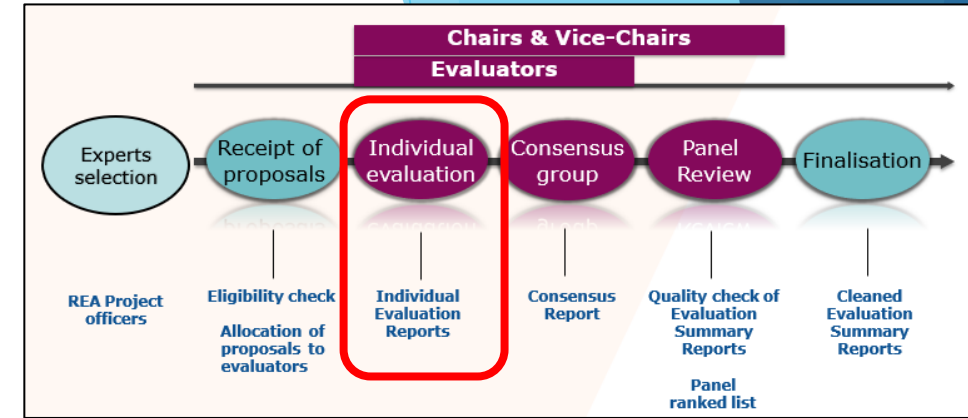
My Role as Vice-Chair (VC) in the evaluation

- ▶ **VC DOES NOT evaluate the proposals**
- ▶ VC is the first point of contact (and contact point) for the experts during the evaluation
- ▶ Monitor timely submission and quality of IERs
- ▶ Ensure quality control of the CR and moderate consensus phase
- ▶ Quality checks of the ESRs (ESR: Evaluation Summary Report)
- ▶ Rank proposals with the same score (ex-aequo)
- ▶ Accept proposals ranking in panel meetings

Role of expert during evaluation phases

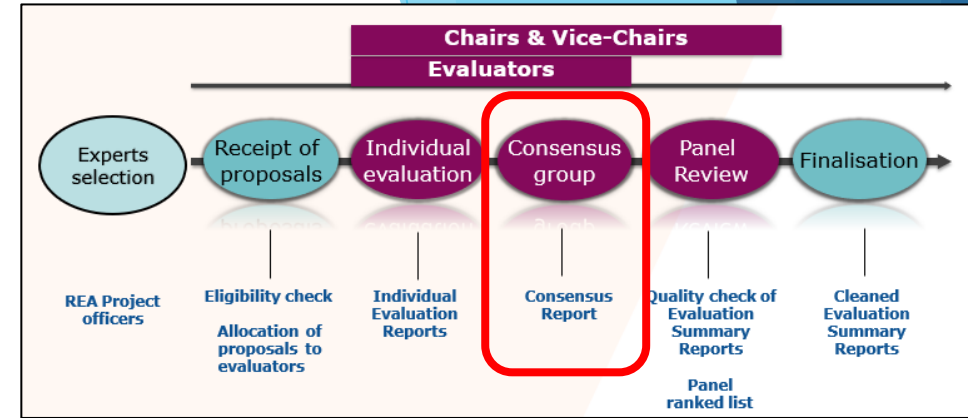
- ▶ Allocation Phase - Remote
- ▶ Evaluation Phase - Remote
- ▶ Consensus Phase - Remote
- ▶ Central Phase / Evaluation Summary Report Phase - in Brussels

VC's main tasks - IER Phase



- ▶ Contact experts to introduce ourself
- ▶ Check the quality of first 3 IERs of each expert
- ▶ Monitor progress of IER work and timely submission
- ▶ Report to PO (Project Officer) late or unresponsive experts
- ▶ Each VC has a pool of experts to monitor (between 8-10)

VC's main tasks - CR Phase

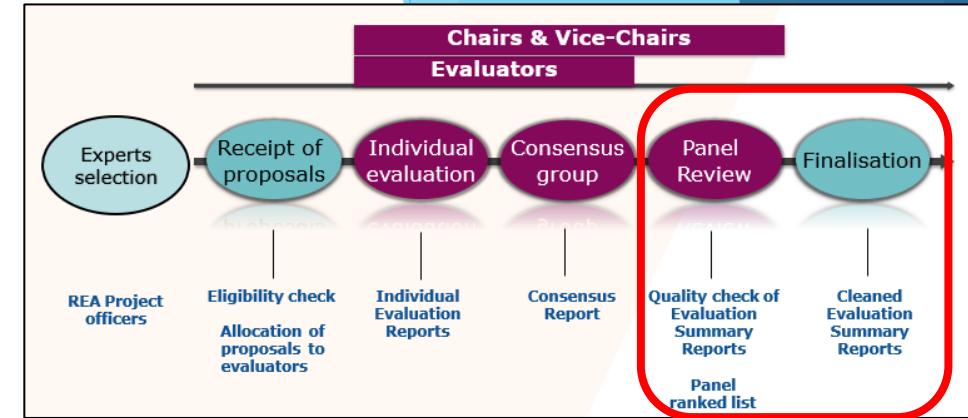


- ▶ Send email to **Rapporteur** with instructions about the approach
 - ▶ Monitor **CR progress**
 - ▶ Ensure **quality control** of the CR
 - ▶ Assist rapporteur in difficult consensus
 - ▶ Report to PO late or non-responsive experts
-
- ✓ VCs monitors the proposals of their assigned rapporteurs (and will receive the respective Review ESR task)

ESR quality check -What is it?

ESR quality check includes:

1. ensuring that all comments appear **under the correct criterion**
2. ensuring that **no double penalization** is present
3. ensuring that the ESR does not contain **any contradiction**
4. ensuring absence of **factual errors** and **critical factual statements**
5. ensuring that **no recommendations, inappropriate terms** are present
6. ensuring that instructions related to **formatting** and **wording** are applied
7. the section “**Overall comments**” is correct (empty or including appropriate statement)
8. checking that other sections are appropriately fulfilled



E-Learning and Training for Experts

2023_MSCA-PF-Module for all Experts

START COURSE



This module has been designed to help all Experts (both Evaluators & Rapporteurs) to learn how to assess proposals submitted for the Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships programme (HE-MSCA-PF), and draft the related evaluation reports.



MSCA-PF-2023 Review ESRs for VCs

Dear Vice Chair,

Welcome to the EuSurvey MSCA-PF-2023 Review ESRs for VCs.

The Quality Check is the last step in order to finalise the ESRs. This task is of particular importance, because once you complete it and the final PO makes the Final Review, the ESRs will be ready to be officially communicated to the applicants.

Languages

English ▾

Contact

[Contact Form](#)

Main Novelties



Main Novelties in Submission

- ▶ **Part B1:** The font size of text in tables should be of **font 11** - alignment with standard application form template. No longer a restriction on the use of tables in the proposal.
- ▶ **Part B2:** The **Letter of Commitment for Non-Academic Placements is no longer required** - the Letter of Commitment is ONLY required for Global Fellowships
- ▶ **Part B2:** Addition of Section 8 **“Environmental considerations in light of the MSCA Green Charter”**

Main Novelties in Submission

- ▶ **Criteria 2.1:** Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher and contribution to his/her skills development
 - ▶ **Specific measures** to enhance career perspectives and employability of the researcher
- ▶ **Criteria 2.3:** The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts
 - ▶ The impacts of the project **may be scientific, economic/technological and societal**

ENG proposals with Artificial Intelligence (AI) relevance

“Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions – with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals.

AI-based systems can be purely software-based, acting in the virtual world (e.g. voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (e.g. advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones or Internet of Things applications).”

NAP-Non Academic Placement

FOCUS ON SECONDMENT AND NON-ACADEMIC PLACEMENT (NAP)

- ✓ Secondment and NAP are optional: proposals should not be penalised if secondment and NAP are not included
- ✓ If a secondment and/or a NAP are not compliant: the proposal should be evaluated as if they were not included
- ✓ If a NAP is not valid, but it is an (eligible) secondment, the proposal should be evaluated as including a secondment

Gender and diversity aspects

▶ Links:

- ▶ Gendered innovations Policy Review:
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/33b4c99f-2e66-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
- ▶ Factsheet on gendered innovations:
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/667d9e3e-2e03-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

The **gender and diversity aspects** under **sub-criterion 1.2** relate to the content of the planned activities, and not to gender balance in the teams in charge of carrying out the research. Further guidance on methods of sex / gender analysis and the issues to be taken into account, can be found in the links below.

- [Gendered innovations Policy Review.](#)
- [Factsheet on gendered innovations.](#)

Open Science Practices

Open Science practices: include early and open sharing of research (for example through pre-registration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing); research output management; measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs; providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows); participation in open peer-review; and involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

Open Science - under **sub-criterion 1.2**, please assess how appropriate **open science practices** are implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology and how the choice of practices and their implementation is adapted to the nature of the work, in a way that will increase the chances of achieving the objectives. In Horizon Europe, there are mandatory and recommended open science practices:

Mandatory open science practices:

Proposals generating/collecting data and/or other research outputs must include an explanation on how the data will be managed and made openly accessible, where possible. Please evaluate the following:

- **Research data management and management of other research outputs** as explained in the proposal.
- **Open Access to research data** (where possible) as explained in the proposal.

Key takeaways...

- ▶ The evaluation process is a Fair process performed by experienced Experts

As applicant, choose carefully:

- ▶ Your Panel: ENG, CHEM, ENV, LIF, MAT, PHY, SOC, ECO
- ▶ **Abstract** and **Descriptors** are important
- ▶ **Multidisciplinary** proposals are encouraged

Chemistry (CHE), Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC), Economic Sciences (ECO), Information Science and Engineering (ENG), Environment and Geosciences (ENV), Life Sciences (LIF), Mathematics (MAT), Physics (PHY)

Some advise to applicants

- ▶ **Read all call documentation** and any relevant EU policy documents
- ▶ **Be familiar with the evaluation criteria**
- ▶ Make it easy for Evaluators/Experts to **find the information in your proposal**
- ▶ Evaluators will be **experts**, but **not necessarily in your exact area**
- ▶ Include diagrams, images, tables if appropriate
- ▶ **Set clear Objectives / Expectations**
- ▶ **Research previous / current projects**
- ▶ How your proposal goes beyond the **state of the art**
- ▶ Find colleagues/friends to **read drafts** / simulate the evaluation criteria
- ▶ **Manage well your time** - The proposal will take time to write

Horizon Europe Programme Structure

Pillar I	Pillar II	Pillar III
<p data-bbox="428 719 665 748">Excellent Science</p> <p data-bbox="428 861 677 882">European Research Council</p> <p data-bbox="428 1005 644 1065">Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions</p> <p data-bbox="428 1150 677 1172">Research Infrastructures</p>	<p data-bbox="733 711 1309 782">Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness</p> <p data-bbox="733 839 817 861">Clusters</p> <ul data-bbox="792 896 1309 1182" style="list-style-type: none">- Health- Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society- Civil Security for Society- Digital, Industry and Space- Climate, Energy and Mobility- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment <p data-bbox="733 1218 1258 1239">Non-nuclear direct actions of the Joint Research Centre</p>	<p data-bbox="1411 739 1658 768">Innovative Europe</p> <p data-bbox="1411 875 1702 896">European Innovation Council</p> <p data-bbox="1411 989 1742 1011">European Innovation Ecosystems</p> <p data-bbox="1411 1103 1735 1160">European Institute of Innovation and Technology</p>

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

Useful Links

- ▶ Horizon Europe MSCA 2024 Postdoctoral Fellowships Call:
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-msca-2024-pf-01-01>
- ▶ Evaluation and award:
 - ▶ Award criteria, scoring and thresholds are described in [Annex D](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes
 - ▶ Submission and evaluation processes are described in [Annex F](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes and the [Online Manual](#)
- ▶ Topics Q&As: [Topic Q&As](#)

Find Host Organisation / Search Partner

- ▶ To find a host organisation
 - your network will be an invaluable source
 - you can also [check the list of hosting offers \(expressions of interest\) published on Euraxess](#) and other job portals from research institutions interested in supporting your application
- ▶ Partner search:
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search>
- ▶ https://msca-net.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MSCA_PF2023_handbook_final.pdf