FP7: Marie Curie Actions

Initial Training Networks (ITN)

CLUSTER, Louvain-la-Neuve, 3-4 juin 2008
NCP FNRS
Monique Septon
The 7th Framework Programme
The specific programmes

- Cooperation – Collaborative Research
- Ideas – Frontier Research
- People – Human Potential
- Capacities - Research Capacities

Main FP7 Countries

EU-27

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK

Associated Countries (FP7)

Albania, Croatia, Iceland*, Israel*, Liechtenstein*, Montenegro, FYR Macedonia*, Norway*, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, Bosnia Herzegovina (in the process of associating to FP7)

*except Euratom
International Cooperation Partner Countries and Other Third Countries

- **ICPC**
  
  Low income, lower-middle income and upper-middle income countries
  
  Providing minimum conditions, these countries can participate and receive funding

- **OTC**
  
  Not part of the previous groups (US, Japan, Canada, Australia...)
International Cooperation Partner Countries - ICPC
FP7 People Specific Programme
Overview of Marie Curie Actions

Host Actions
- Initial Training Networks ITN
- Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways IAPP
- International Research Staff Exchange Scheme IRSES

Individual Actions
- Intra-European Fellowships IEF
- International Incoming Fellowships IIF
- International Outgoing Fellowships IOF
- European Reintegration Grants ERG
- International Reintegration Grants IRG

Also funded: COFUND, Researchers’ Night etc
FP7 (2007-2013) “People” Specific Programme
- Marie Curie Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial training</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Training Networks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life-long training and career development</strong></td>
<td>25-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-European Fellowships / European Reintegration Grants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-funding of regional/national/international programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry dimension</strong></td>
<td>5-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International dimension</strong></td>
<td>25-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing &amp; Incoming* International Fellowships; International Cooperation Scheme; International Reintegration grants; Support to researcher ‘diasporas’*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific actions</strong></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility and career enhancement actions; Excellence awards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Open to third-country nationals
Objectives and Policy Context

- Make Europe more attractive to researchers
- Structuring effect on the European Research Area through transnational and intersectoral mobility in order to create a European labour market for researchers
- Strengthen human potential by:
  - Encouraging people to become researchers
  - Encouraging researchers to carry out their research in Europe
- Transnational and intersectoral mobility
- 4.7 Billion €
- 100% funding (exception to the EC rule)
FP7 People Specific Programme
Marie Curie Actions

Principles

- Skills and competence development at all stages of researchers career
- Open to all research areas addressed under Treaty
- Strong participation from enterprises
- Reinforce international dimension
- Appropriate gender and work/life balance
- Good working environment, transparent recruitment and career development
Marie Curie Initial Training Networks
ITN
Objectives

- Strengthen and structure Initial Training of Researchers at European level
- Attract students to scientific careers
- Improve career perspectives by broad skills development (including private sector needs)
- Directed at early-stage researchers
Main features

- International network of participants
- Joint research training Programme:
  i. Training through research
  ii. Complementary competences modules
  iii. Exposure to both academies and private sectors
- Mutual recognition of the quality of the training
- Four years contracts
PARTICIPANTS
Who are the participants?

- National organisations, e.g. universities, research centres, etc… whether private or public
- Commercial enterprises, especially SMEs
- Non-profit or charitable organisations : NGOs, trusts, etc…
- International European Interest Organisations : CERN, EMBL, …
- The Joint Research Centre of the EC
- International organisations : WHO, UNESCO, etc…
Participants from which country?

→ 4 categories

- EU Member States (MS)
- Associated Countries (AC)
- International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC)
- Other (non-AC, non-ICPC) Third Countries (OTC)

Funding under conditions

Non official guideline: ICPC and OTC account for 25%
Trans-national mobility

- Researchers can be nationals of any country other than the country of the premises of the host institution.

- Nationals of ICPC or OTC can only be recruited by hosts located in MS or AC.

- Researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity in the country of the host for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment.
ITN typically set-up as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ITN</th>
<th>Country of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi-site ITN</strong></td>
<td>≥3 Participants from 3 different countries (MS or AC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Additional Participants: MS, AC, ICPC or OTC*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Can only be funded if a special agreement is foreseen between the country and the EU, or in very exceptional cases where funding is essential for the training programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No more than 40% of the total EC contribution may be allocated to the benefit of organisations within one country in Multi-sites ITNs.
In certain cases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ITN</th>
<th>Country of Participant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twinning ITN</strong></td>
<td>Well-established transnational collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Participants from 2 different countries (MS or AC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mono-site ITN</strong></td>
<td>1 Participant from MS or AC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Contracting organisation(s) take(s) full responsibility for executing the proposed research training programme
- Recruited researchers are expected to benefit from the informal network (secondments)

The nature of the existing international collaboration and the way in which this will be exploited in the proposed training programme must be described in the proposal.
Direct or indirect **involvement** of **private business sector** as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Full Network Partner</strong></th>
<th><strong>Associated Partner</strong></th>
<th><strong>Level</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer research training &amp; <strong>Recruit</strong> eligible researchers</td>
<td>Provide research training, <strong>complementary skills courses</strong>, (communication, enterprise cycles, innovation, IPR, …) <strong>secondments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member of the Supervisory Board:</strong> definition of skills requirements for targeted researchers</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A few tips

The majority of the proposals is written by Academics

BUT involvement of industry should be at the highest possible level

- Proposals should include clear evidence of the commitment of industry to be involved
- The expected minimum involvement is Level 3

- The level of commitment of industry will be assessed by the expert evaluator under each of the evaluation criteria.
- In fields known to have strong interactions with industry, proposals are likely to receive a less favorable assessment if they only foresee industry involvement at the lowest level.
ELIGIBLE RESEARCHERS

Marie Curie Actions in FP7: ITN
Eligible researchers: Member States, AC, ICPC and OTC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Criteria at the time of recruitment</th>
<th>Duration of appointments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INITIAL TRAINING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Early stage researchers \((\geq 80\%)\) | 0 \leq\text{Research experience}\leq 4\text{ years}  
No PhD | 3-36 months |
| Experienced researchers | PhD or at least 4 \text{ years of research experience}  
& Research experience \leq 5 \text{ years} | 3-24 months |
| **TRANSFER OF NEW COMPETENCES** |
| Visiting scientists \((\text{a limited number})\) | Experienced researchers \((\text{experience} \gg 4\text{ years})\)  
with outstanding stature in international training and collaborative research | \geq 1\text{ month}  
Multiple stays |
Visiting Scientists recruitment

- To complement the network’s capacity to transfer new knowledge + strengthen supervision of the network-wide training activities
- Should be **exceptional** and duly justified in the proposal, with explicit reference to the punctual training events he/she would be expected to provide or organise
- The duration of appointment should not exceed what is reasonable

The role of visiting scientists and the value added by their involvement in the training programme will be assessed by the expert evaluators.
Typical ITN Activities

- TRAINING
- NETWORKING
- INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES open to external researchers
Training activities

- **Training on scientific and technological knowledge through research**: individual personalised projects within the frame of the research topics defined by the network.

- Provision of **structured training courses**: tutoring, lecture courses, teaching
  
  - available either locally or from another participant of the network.
  
  - local training programmes are expected to be coordinated to maximise added value, e.g. joint syllabus development, opening up of local training to other network teams, joint Ph.D. programmes, etc.
**Training activities**

- **Intersectoral visits** and **secondments**
- Development of **network-wide training activities**: *workshops, summer schools*
  - exploitation of the **interdisciplinary** and **intersectoral** aspects of the project
  - exposure of the participants to different schools of thought
  - provide **complementary training** in IPR, project management, presentation skills, language courses, ethics, communication, entrepreneurship, proposal writing, task coordination…
  - **visiting scientists** may contribute to such activities
  - coordinated by a clearly identified **Supervisory Board**
Training activities

- **Personal Career Development Plan** established for researchers recruited for ≥ 6 months

- **Early Post-Docs**

  **Training objective:**
  o make them more independent
  o provide them the skills to become team leaders in a near future

  **Training activities:**
  o intersectoral or interdisciplinary ToK
  o taking part in the management of the research project
  o organisation of training events

The expert evaluators must be able to see from the proposal how the opportunities offered within the network would be exploited for the career enhancement of these early « postdocs ». 
Networking activities

- Organisation of scientific/managerial network meetings
- Invitation of external experts
- Attendance to international conferences and workshops
- Electronic networking (internet webpages, email, video conferencing)
- Collaboration with other ITNs in similar or complementary fields
- Organisation of a final network conference widely publicised
International Conferences and other training events open to external researchers

- Opportunity for the recruited researchers to exchange knowledge with more experienced researchers
- Opportunity for the members of the network to disseminate the skills and knowledge that the teams have to offer
- Open training events can be international conferences, workshops, seminars, summer schools, etc...

- Full details of the contents, quality and expected number of participants of such events should be given and fully justified in the proposal.
- Justification and integration of the proposed events in the joint training programme will be assessed by the expert evaluators.
Supervisory Board co-ordinating network-wide training

- Each network should have a clearly identified Supervisory Board.
- It ensures that scientific and technological training is balanced with complementary skills training.
- It is composed of representatives of each of the participants in the network as well as external representatives.
- Industry must be involved to give the researchers being trained the widest possible employment prospects.
Results of the 2007 Call

- Eligible proposals: 902
- Stage 2: 196 proposals – 184 passed thresholds
- Two step submission/evaluation, 142 experts
- Funded proposals: 68
- Success rate: 7.50%
- Fierce competition: 407 (45%) failed to achieve one or more thresholds
- S&T usually OK but 399 failed the training, the implementation or impact criterion
  BUT training, implementation and impact: 70% of total score
Call 2008

- Call identifier: FP7-PEOPLE-ITN-2008
- Budget: 185M€
- Call date: 4 April 08
- Deadline: 2 September 08
- Single stage submission/evaluation
- Evaluation results: January 09
- Contract signatures: March 09 onwards
The Size of an ITN

- The size of the network should reflect your needs and the aim of the project, but
  - Indicative number of partners (Guide for Applicants):
    - 6 – 10
    - Average number of partners in 2007: 9
  - FP6 indicative number of researchers/months:
    - 72 – 999 with average of 300 (last call)
  - FP7 Call 1, stage 2 submitted proposals: average 539 researchers/months
  - 80/20 ESR/ER split
Marie Curie Actions in FP7: ITN

Number of projects vs Number of participants

- Number of participants:
  - 1: 1
  - 4: 1
  - 5: 2
  - 6: 7
  - 7: 6
  - 8: 11
  - 9: 8
  - 10: 13
  - 11: 2
  - 12: 7
  - 13: 5
  - 14: 4
  - 16: 1

- Number of projects:
  - 1: 1
  - 4: 1
  - 5: 2
  - 6: 7
  - 7: 6
  - 8: 11
  - 9: 8
  - 10: 13
  - 11: 2
  - 12: 7
  - 13: 5
  - 14: 4
  - 16: 1
Tips on writing your ITN proposal
Your Project is mainly defined in

... PART B of the proposal forms

- PART B addresses the evaluation criteria
  - ...which vary according to MCA
  - ...and have different weightings and thresholds

- General structure of Part B for ITNs and IAPPs is:
  - Cover Page, Table of Contents
  - S & T Quality
  - Training/Transfer of Knowledge
  - Implementation
  - Impact

The Evaluation Panels are quite wide in scope: important to grab the attention of experts quickly with strong summaries of clear research objectives and training needs
## Weighting and thresholds for ITNs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific quality of the project</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and/or ToK activities</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall threshold of 70% applies
Evaluation

- 8 panels: CHE, ECO, ENG, ENV, LIF, MAT, PHY, SOC
- 3 observers and independent observers (confidentiality, conflict of interest)
- Individual Assessment Report (IAR)
- Consensus Meetings
- Consensus Report
- Review Panels
- Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)
Marie Curie Actions in FP7: ITN

S&T Quality Criterion

- S&T objectives of the research programme, including in terms of inter/multi-disciplinary, intersectoral and/or newly emerging supra-disciplinary fields
- Scientific quality of the research programme
- Appropriateness of research methodology
- Originality and innovative aspect of the research programme
- Knowledge of the state-of-the-art
S&T Quality Tips (positive)

- Excellent overview of state-of-the-art in this research area
- Precise and detailed research work plan
- Scientific quality and originality of the proposal are excellent
- Research method is appropriate and well described
- The project is timely and novel
- A series of well defined and relevant project objectives
- The multidisciplinary is well demonstrated
S&T Quality Tips (negative)

- Interdisciplinary aspect of the project is not very strong
- Clear references to state-of-the-art and scientific originality are missing
- The final research outputs and the practical results of the training programme should be more clearly described
- Role of the industrial partners is not well explained
- A precise description of the research methodology is missing
Training Criterion

- Quality of the training programme
  - Consistency with the research programme
  - Complementary skills offered: Management, Communication, IPR, Ethics, Grant writing, Commercial exploitation of results, Research Policy, entrepreneurship, etc.

- Importance and timeliness of the training needs, e.g. multidisciplinary, intersectoral, and newly emerging supra-disciplinary fields
Marie Curie Actions in FP7: ITN

Training Criterion

- Multi-site proposals: Adequate combination of local specialist training with network-wide training activities
- Mono-site/twinning proposals: Adequate exploitation of the international network of the participants for the training programme
- Appropriateness of the size of the requested training programme with respect to the capacity of the host
Training Tips (positive)

- The training programme is very well structured and is fully consistent with the research programme.
- Local and network-wide training will be provided.
- Complementary skills training is well thought of.
- The training topics are well identified and defined.
- The role of the participants are well described and exploitation of the network potential is adequately considered and discussed.
Training Tips (negative)

- The role of the Supervisory Board should be better defined
- Reason for the need of Visiting Scientist should be given
- Description of the training project for each researcher is too vague
- Average number of ESRs per partner seems exaggerated
- The role of the associate partners and their participation in the training events should be more clearly defined
Quality of Training - Suggestions

- Training in research methods and techniques
- Personal Development Plan
- Complementary skills training – ethics, research management
- Transferable skills training
- Graduate School Provision
- Conferences, seminars, public fora etc
Implementation Criterion

- Capacities (expertise / human resources / facilities / infrastructure) to achieve the research and adequate task distribution and schedule
- Appropriateness of industry involvement
- Adequate exploitation of complementarities and synergies among partners in terms of research and training
- Non-ICPC participation – essential to the objectives of the research training programme
Implementation Criterion

- Appropriateness of the overall management of the training programme (responsibilities, rules for decision-making)
- Networking and dissemination of best practice among partners. Clarity of the plan for organising training events (workshops, conferences, training courses)

Also: consider the clarity of the recruitment strategy
- Competitive international recruitment
- Equal opportunities
- Coherence with ‘Code of conduct for recruitment of researchers’
Implementation Tips (positive)

- The type and frequency of meetings seem appropriate
- The industrial partners play an essential and active role both in the training and research and aspects of the proposal
- The recruitment strategy is clearly defined
- The management structure is clear and appropriate to the proposed project
- The plan for dissemination of project results is well done
- Set up a research project “menu” for ESRs to choose from (director of training)
Implementation Tips (negative)

- The industry involvement is poor in comparison to the industrial importance of the project theme and potential results
- Description of a research PhD theme for each ESR is not provided
- More details should be provided on the milestones and deliverables within the workplan
- Limited rules for decision making
**Impact Criterion**

- Contribution of the proposed training programme to the career prospects of the fellows
- Provision to establish longer term collaborations and/or lasting structured training programme between the partners’ organisations, including between private and academic partners
- Where appropriate, justification of the training events open to external participants and their integration in the training programme
Impact Criterion

- Where appropriate, mutual recognition of the training acquired by multi-partner hosts.
- Where applicable, relevance of the role of the visiting scientist with respect to the training programme.
Impact Tips (positive)

- Clear impact of the involvement of visiting scientists
- Good prospects for potential long term collaborations
- The involvement of industrial partners will be mutually beneficial for the companies and for the ESRs/ERs
- The project can offer great career opportunities to both ESR and ER involved
- The training proposed by the network is such that probably no single institution in Europe would be capable of providing it on its own
Impact Tips (negative)

- The proposed impact, as described [in the field of science] is not convincing
- The number of visiting scientists is too high and not appropriate for the proposed programme
- The impact could have been addressed more thoroughly
- The lack of training in an industrial context is a major drawback
- The description of the impact in the scientific community outside the network should be elaborated upon
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
ITNs - Key Issues

- **Ratio ESR/ER:**
  - ‘The total amount of ESRs and ERs should be reasonable and in line with what is recommended in the Guide for Applicants’ (80/20)

- **Visiting Scientists:**
  - Exceptional and duly justified in the context of the training programme

- **Conferences:**
  - ‘should be proportionate to the proposed research training programme’
  - ‘is an opportunity for the recruiter/researchers to exchange knowledge with more experienced researchers from outside the network’.
ITNs - Key Issues

- Mutual recognition of the quality of the training
- Involvement of industry should be at the highest possible level
- Training activities. Commission really wants joint syllabus development, opening up of local training network teams, joint PhD programmes…
- Exposure to both academies and private sector
- IPR to be considered in practical terms, eg publications, director, small IPR group
ITNs - Key Issues

- Role of the Visiting Scientists
  - Addressed under training & impact

- Industrial participation
  - Addressed under all four criteria

- Conferences and events
  - Addressed under training, implementation, impact

Aspects that are assessed under more than one evaluation criteria will count under each of these criteria.
Definition of Fellow’s Allowance

- These are all flat rates
- Living
  - Basic salary
  - Varies according to research experience
- Mobility
  - Relocation costs including language courses
  - Varies according to family situation
- Travel
  - Every 12 months travel from location of origin to fellowship location
- Career exploratory
  - Fellowships at least 1 year to spend on career development activities
## Researchers Salaries for I TNs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Employment contract (*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early-Stage researchers</td>
<td>34,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced researchers (&lt; 5yrs)</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Scientist (4 - 10 yrs experience)</td>
<td>68,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS (&gt; 10 yrs experience)</td>
<td>103,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) €/Yr

Net salary: ~45% of the above

Salaries are inclusive of all compulsory deductions
Correction factor applied for cost of living

- BE - 100
- CH - 116,3
- DE - 101,5
- FIN - 112
- FR - 104,4
- IT - 103,9
- NL - 101,2
- PT - 91,4
- SP - 95,5
- SW - 108,9
- UK - 109,2
Allowance Rates - Activities carried out by the Researchers and managed by the Researchers

- Travel costs - depending on distance
  €250 - €2500

- Living and mobility allowance
  Without family: €500 per month
  With family: €800 per month
  *Correction factor applied for cost of living*

- Career Exploratory allowance (*)
  €2000 for stays of more than one year

(*) not for VS
Allowance Rates - Activities carried out by the Researchers and managed by the Host Institution

- Training / research costs of eligible researchers (*):
  - Lab-based research: € 600 per month
  - Non-lab-based research: €300 per month

(*) Not for VS
Benefits for the Host Institution

- **Research Training**
  - Fixed amount €600 researcher/month

- **Organisation of international conferences etc**
  - €300 researcher/day for those outside ITN and for duration of event

- **Management Activities**
  - Mono-site and Twinnings: 3% max of the total EC contribution
  - Multisite: 7% max of the total EC contribution

- **Contribution to overheads**
  - 10% of direct costs except for subcontractors
Last but not least…

- People Programme focus is on ITN now
- Non scientific programme = more freedom than in other programmes
- Fellowships are very valuable as stepping stones
- Fellowships and ITNs are to be used to build working relationships for networking and future FP7 R&D projects
Marie Curie Actions in FP7: ITN

Links

- NCP-FNRS
  http://www.ncp.fnrs.be/
- CORDIS
  http://cordis.europa.eu/mariecurie-actions/
- The Charter and the Code
  http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter/
- European Researchers’ Mobility Portal
  http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/index_en.cfm
- Marie Curie Vacancies
  http://mc-opportunities.cordis.lu/
Thank you for your attention