

2. Activities to be implemented in 2007

Activity 1: Initial Training of Researchers

1 Marie Curie Action: "Initial Training Networks" (ITN)

PEOPLE-2007-1-1-ITN

1.1. Introduction and objective of the action

The action aims to improve career perspectives of early stage researchers in both public and private sectors, thereby making research careers more attractive to young people. This will be achieved through a trans-national networking mechanism, aimed at structuring the existing high-quality initial research training capacity throughout Member States and Associated countries in both public and private sectors.

The action will be implemented by supporting competitively selected networks of organisations from different countries engaged in research training. The networks will be built on a joint research training programme, responding to well identified training needs in defined scientific or technological areas, with appropriate references to interdisciplinary and newly emerging supra-disciplinary fields.

The action will be primarily for researchers from Member States and Associated countries, but also open to researchers from third countries.

1.2. Technical content/scope

Participants: A participant in this action is an organisation that is a member of a network selected by the Commission which contributes directly to the implementation of the joint training programme of the network, by recruiting and employing and/or hosting eligible researchers, by providing specialised training modules or by participating in other dedicated network actions.

Normally, a network in this action shall be composed of at least three participants (e.g. universities, research centres, companies, SMEs) established in at least three different Member States or Associated countries, of which two must be in Member States. Single research organisations in a Member State or Associated country or twinning of research institutions between different Member States or Associated countries can also be considered under this action. In the case of twinning at least one organisation should be established in a Member State. In cases of twinning or single organisations, the participants need to demonstrate clearly that the necessary elements of the research training programme that they wish to implement (including the issue of mutual recognition of the training quality by all collaborating organisations) are effectively addressed through well-established, trans-national collaborations with other research institutions, without the latter formally being part of the network. The contracting organisation would take full responsibility for executing the proposed training programme. The trainees are expected to benefit from these informal networks, including through active mobility toward the partner organisations during the training period.

Direct or indirect involvement of organisations from different sectors is considered essential in this action, including full participation by industry, as defined in the section 3 "Implementation principles" of Chapter I "Context", as appropriate to the research discipline. Industry participation will be foreseen at three levels (in decreasing order of involvement):

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- Full network partner: if appropriate to the network and taking into consideration the research discipline;
- Provider of research training and complementary training including secondment opportunities;
- Members of the supervisory board of the network, which would be expected to define the skills requirements for the early-stage researchers.

In all cases, the involvement of industry should be at the highest possible level, in function of the nature of the joint training programme and the research field.

Training Programme: Participants of the network will apply for support in the frame of the execution of a joint training programme. These training programmes will address in particular the development and broadening of the research competences of the early-stage researchers.

Training will be primarily focused on scientific and technological knowledge through research on individual, personalised projects, complemented by substantial training modules addressing other relevant skills and competences, e.g. in the field of management and financing of research projects and programmes, intellectual property rights and other exploitation methods of research results, entrepreneurship, ethical aspects, communication and societal outreach.

Due attention should be paid to the quality of the joint research training programme, with provision for supervision and mentoring arrangements and career guidance, while exposing the researchers to other disciplines and sectors represented in the network through visits, secondments and other training events. The joint training programme shall exploit complementary competences of the participants in the network, including from industry, as well as other synergies and should reflect existing or planned research collaborations among the partners. It shall require the mutual recognition of the quality of the training and, if possible, of diplomas and other certificates awarded.

Each network will have a clearly identified supervisory board co-ordinating network-wide training. The board will ensure that scientific and technological training through personalised research projects is balanced with complementary skills training, appropriate to the needs of each recruited researcher. It will also establish active and continuous communication and exchange of best practice among the network participants to maximise the benefits of the partnership.

Training events offered within the network (e.g. conferences, summer schools and specialised training courses), may be open to both the researchers recruited in the network and to external researchers.

The size of the joint training programme and of the network will depend on the nature and scope of the training activities to be undertaken by the network, as well as on considerations regarding management and effective interaction among the participants.

The maximum duration of the programme to be supported will normally be four years from the date of commencement specified in the contract.

Each researcher will establish, together with her/his personal supervisor in the host organisation, a *Personal Career Development Plan* comprising his/her training needs (including complementary skills) and scientific objectives and will later on report upon the success with which these objectives were met. In this way the researchers will be encouraged to play an active role in shaping their own training programme and professional development.

Eligible researchers: This action supports the initial training of researchers, typically during the first five years (or full-time equivalent) of their careers in research. The initial training phase is predominantly directed at *early-stage researchers*, and includes inter alia training in the frame of doctoral programmes. Support for *early-stage researchers* will be for periods of 3 to 36 months. The initial training can also include the period after having obtained a doctorate, within the first five years mentioned above, in which case support, based on the definition of *experienced researchers*, will be limited to 24 months maximum. In all cases eligibility will be determined at the time of recruitment.

The total period for support of a researcher under a network will be limited to 3 years overall. An individual researcher may not be recruited as an *early-stage researcher* and subsequently as an *experienced researcher* within the same network.

With a view to complementing a network's capacity to transfer new knowledge and strengthen supervision, the action can also support the setting up of a limited number of senior "visiting scientists" positions (both in public sector and enterprise partners) for experienced researchers. Support for such positions would be typically for multiple stays within the network, each with a duration of at least one month.

Early-stage researchers are defined as those in the first four years (full-time equivalent) of their research careers, starting at the date of obtaining the degree which would formally entitle them to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the research training is provided, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is envisaged.

Experienced researchers must, at the time of recruitment (i) be in possession of a doctoral degree, independently of the time taken to acquire it, or (ii) have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience, including the period of research training, after obtaining the degree which formally allowed them to embark on a doctorate in the country in which the degree/diploma was obtained or in the host country (irrespective of whether or not a doctorate was envisaged).

Visiting scientists addressed under this action must be *experienced researchers* with outstanding past achievements in international training and collaborative research, and originate from either the public or private sector.

Rules of mobility and conditions of nationality applicable to eligible researchers: Researchers must be nationals of a Member State, Associated country or third country other than the country of the premises of the host organisation where they will carry out their project. Researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc) in the country of their host organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the date of selection by the host institution. Short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

These mobility rules do not apply to the hosting of eligible researchers by international European interest organisations or by international organisations located in any of the Member States or Associated countries.

A researcher holding more than one nationality will be able to carry out a period of mobility in the country of his/her nationality in which he/she has not resided during the previous 5 years. Short stays such as for holidays are not taken into account.

Researchers from Member States or Associated countries who can provide evidence that they have legally resided and have had their principal activity (work, studies, etc) in a third country for at least three out of the last four years immediately prior to the selection by the host institution, will for this eligibility criterion be considered as eligible to benefit

from support under this action in any Member State or Associated country, including in their country of origin.

For the purpose of this action, non-nationals from Member States or Associated countries having legally resided and having had their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Member States/Associated countries for at least three out of the last four years, measured at the date of selection by the host organisation, are treated as nationals of the Member States/Associated countries in which they have resided the longest.

Community Contribution, Rates and Evaluation Criteria: The Community contribution and rates under this action are based on the Funding Scheme "Support for training and career development of researchers", set out in *Annex 3* of this Work Programme and may be associated to:

- the recruitment of researchers to be trained;
- the recruitment of the senior "visiting scientists";
- Networking costs and the organisation of short training events (workshops, seminars, summer schools and conferences). Where these events are open to researchers from outside the network, additional reimbursements are foreseen.

The evaluation, selection and award criteria are set out in *Annex 2*.

1.3. Expected impact of the action

Projects under the action are to contribute to the structuring of existing high-quality initial research training capacity throughout Europe in both public and private sectors. By bringing complementary providers of research-training from different countries together to focus their efforts in broad initial training programmes, the projects under this action are expected to deliver better overall quality of initial research training in Europe. This will not only help to develop future generations of researchers more capable of contributing effectively to the knowledge-based economy and society, within and between public and private sectors, but also add to the intersectoral and trans-national employability of these researchers and to the attraction of young people to a research career.