

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A WINNING MSCA-ITN PROPOSAL

At Elvesys – Microfluidics innovation center, we already had 10 MSCA-ITN-ETN proposals accepted. Let's share our experience!

Are you ready to write the perfect proposal?

BE STRAIGHTFORWARD, REVIEWERS HAVE NO TIME

Summarize your ideas at the beginning of each paragraph
No unnecessary details, just what is **essential**
It is better to **repeat** 10 times 3 keys ideas than 3 times 10 ideas



SURPRISINGLY, TRAINING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SCIENCE!

EU wants to train highly qualified young researchers to build the next pioneers generation in a specific field

→ Training is more than essential, **invest time building your training programme**



GATHER THE RIGHT PLAYERS AND WIN THE GAME

EU only funds outstanding consortia addressing big **societal or technical challenges**

- Identify a major societal issue
- Present it **clearly and briefly**, and explain how you will solve this issue
- Demonstrate you have gathered the **best partners in Europe** to take up this challenge + to train the next generation of researchers on this specific topic

NB: Reviewers appreciate **previous collaboration** between partners



HIRE A PROJECT MANAGER

The administrative management of ITN projects is quite complex: it is smart to dedicate part of the management costs for a project manager's salary



RESPECT THE 3 "I"s RULE

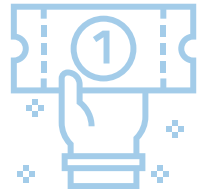
INTERSECTORAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY, INTERNATIONAL
Each ESR should have 2 supervisors, in **2 different sectors**, **2 different countries** and from **2 different fields**



EXCELLENCE

INDUSTRIALS ARE YOUR WINNING TICKET TO GET FUNDING

- Don't integrate companies to look pretty in the proposal, the EU wants them to have a **true role** in the project, to **implement industrial applications/approaches**
- Involve the non-academic beneficiary in the training and supervision of each ESR
- Make the most of each other's skills: **universities train in technical skills, industrials in soft skills** (business, innovation, market-driven research, scientific communication...).



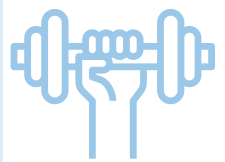
COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE ESRs' PROJECT, BUT NO DEPENDENCY

- Clearly show **interactions** between the ESRs
- Ensure that no ESR project depends too much on the results of another ESR
- Integrate **secondements** (<30% of the time) to promote transfer of knowledge



ESRs MUST BE TRAINED BY THE BEST!

- Pls: **good track record** of scientific achievements + experience in supervising ESRs
- Each ESR needs to be **co-supervised** by an academic and non-academic partner.



HELP THE REVIEWERS

Stay simple, be clear and precise
Integrate **figures and schema** to illustrate your project



The guide for applicants is your best friend!

Read it carefully, note every point you have to address. Make sure that you have a **100% fit** – even with 90%, your proposal will be rejected

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/guides_for_applicants/h2020-guide-appl-msca-itn_en.pdf



IMPACT

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD!

For dissemination, 100% of the researchers write they will publish papers and present their work during conferences: be different and **innovative**, don't forget it is a **competition**

- Imagine original training forms (MOOC, hands on trainings, pitch competition, teamwork...)
- Think of unusual ways to reach the general public for dissemination (interventions in schools, YouTube videos, taking part in science popularization events...)



SHOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT

- Be very precise: mention **specific journals/conferences** you are targeting, give dates, explain how you will reach your goals
- Be real: if you plan dissemination on TV, mention specific contacts you already have to help you reach your goal
- ESRs need to be clearly involved in the dissemination aspects (video on their project, social network management, TedX talks...)



Clearly highlight how the contribution of the non-academic sector enhances the career perspectives of the ESRs

IMPLEMENTATION

DON'T NEGLECT THE RISKS ANALYSIS, YOU RISK LOSING YOUR PROJECT

Half a page is not enough → every project has risks, you must show you considered them carefully. Brainstorm with your colleagues, identify the major risks, and detail them precisely with **appropriate mitigations measures**



DON'T BE TOO AMBITIOUS

- Do not underestimate the time required for each task
- Think carefully about the **milestones and deliverables**: they have to be achievable, coherent and help you structure the project



THE GENDER BALANCE IS A CRITICAL POINT

Make sure you address this aspect – not only in the recruitment of the ESRs, but also in the steering committee (be sure to involve ESRs in the steering committee)



Prove that each institution has the appropriate facilities to carry out the work!



DON'T BE LATE!

Avoid last-minute submission (typos, meaningless sentences...)



EVERYTHING MATTERS

Don't neglect the impact and implementation sections! It accounts for 50% of the grade.

RESUBMISSION: TAKE REVIEWERS' REMARKS INTO ACCOUNT!

Read carefully **the evaluation report** and take the remarks into account.

Even if no « weaknesses » are mentioned, have a look at what is not « excellent » in the strengths, and improve those parts.
Remember to specify that it is a resubmission!



You need a **microfluidic innovative SME** for your H2020 consortium?

The ELVESYS Microfluidics innovation center brings its expertise to more than **30 European research projects**.

LET'S BUILD A SUCCESSFUL ITN CONSORTIUM TOGETHER!



The European Union hopes that more and more young researchers will join European research companies in order to translate their research activities into products that will address the needs of society, thus boosting Europe's economy and quality of life. At Elvesys, we share the same goals and we are glad to bring our experience in innovation, market-driven research, and entrepreneurship to ESRs, academic labs, and even other companies. We hope that by providing this infographic, we can help you during the application process. Good luck!

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