

EUROPEAN PROJECT WRITING

Training for PhD. students, early-stage researchers, junior academics new to European project applications and research support staff involved in grant preparation

Trainer: prof. RNDr. Jana Sedláková, PhD. (Expert for European project evaluation for various European institutions, including the European commission)

Course Description: This intensive two-day training program (16 hours) provides PhD students and early-stage researchers with comprehensive skills in European project proposal writing through a balanced combination of expert instruction and hands-on practice. Participants will learn to navigate the European funding landscape, understand evaluation criteria from a reviewer's perspective, and master the essential components of competitive proposals including excellence, impact, and implementation sections. The course covers everything from identifying suitable funding calls and defining SMART objectives to developing robust methodologies, creating realistic work plans and budgets, and designing effective dissemination strategies. Through interactive lectures, practical writing sessions where participants draft their own project proposals, peer review exercises, and group discussions, attendees will gain both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in crafting compelling proposals that align with European funding requirements. By the end of the training, participants will have developed a draft proposal, received peer feedback, and acquired the tools and confidence needed to successfully compete for European research funding. The main emphasis will be given on preparation of Marie Curie Skłodowska Postdoctoral Fellowship but extension to other types of calls can be added, if required.

Training objective: To provide participants with fundamental skills in project writing, including understanding project structures, developing clear objectives, and avoiding common pitfalls.

2 working days – in total 16 hours

PRE-TRAINING (1 week before)

- Reading: Sample Guide for Applicants + Template
- Assignment: bring a 1-page research idea

COURSE PROGRAM

DAY 1: INTRODUCTION & EXCELLENCE		
Focus: Understanding evaluation criteria + Building the core of your proposal		
Morning Session		
8:00-8:30	Welcome & Introduction	30 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick intro round • Course roadmap 	
8:30-9:30	SESSION 1: Project Structure & Documents	60 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where to find suitable call • Key documents: Guide for Applicants, Evaluation Guide, Proposal Template • Project lifecycle overview • Deep dive: How evaluators read proposals • Red flags evaluators look for 	
9:30-9:45	Break	15 min
9:45-11:15	SESSION 2: Excellence - Part 1	90 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-of-the-art: What makes it convincing? • Innovation and beyond state-of-the-art • SMART objectives workshop • Open science & data management (brief overview) 	
11:15-11:45	Discussion & Q&A	30 min
11:45-12:30	Lunch Break	45 min
Afternoon Session		
12:30-13:00	SESSION 3: Excellence - Part 2	30 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology fundamentals • Methodological challenges and their mitigation • Quick tips: Common pitfalls in Excellence section • Parts related directly to MCSA PF 	
13:00-15:00	PRACTICAL TRAINING 1: Draft Your Excellence Section	120 min
	Structured writing time with support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13:00-14:30 Individual writing • 14:30-15:00 Peer review in pairs 	
15:00-16:00	Group Discussion & Feedback Session	60 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 presentations of the Excellence section (10 min each) • Group feedback using evaluation criteria 	

EVENING HOMEWORK (Optional but recommended)

- Refine Excellence section based on feedback
- Read provided materials on Impact and Dissemination strategies

DAY 2: IMPACT & IMPLEMENTATION		
Focus: Completing your proposal + Understanding the full picture		
Morning Session		
8:00-8:15	Day 1 Recap & Questions	15 min
8:15-9:15	SESSION 4: Impact	60 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination vs. Communication vs. Exploitation IP management basics Three impact dimensions: Scientific, Economic/Technological, Societal Credible impact pathways Parts related directly to MCSA PF 	
9:15-9:30	Break	15 min
9:30-11:00	SESSION 5: Implementation	90 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work package structure & logic Deliverables vs. Milestones (clear definitions) Creating realistic Gantt charts Budget essentials & common pitfalls Risk analysis framework Parts related directly to MCSA PF 	
11:00-11:30	Quick Q&A + Setup for Afternoon	30 min
11:30-12:15	Lunch Break	45 min
Afternoon Session		
12:15-14:15	PRACTICAL TRAINING 2: Complete Your Draft Proposal	120 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12:15-13:15 Draft Impact section 13:15-14:15 Draft Implementation overview (work packages, timeline, budget outline) 	
14:15-14:30	Break	15 min
14:30-15:30	PRACTICAL TRAINING 3: Proposal Evaluation Exercise	60 min
	Peer evaluation simulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14:30-14:45 Brief on evaluation criteria & scoring 14:45-15:15 Evaluation of exchanged drafts 15:15-15:30 Feedback to proposal owners 	
15:30-16:00	FINAL SESSION: Wrap-up & Next Steps	30 min