

COURSE “PROJECT WRITING AND GRANT MANAGEMENT”

19 April 2022

PROGRAMME

Hour (EEST time)	Topic	Speaker
10:00-12:00	Introduction to the EU research landscape. Funding opportunities. Conceptualization and writing project proposals.	Tsanko Gechev, CPSBB
12:00-13:00	<i>break</i>	
13:00-14:00	Experience of the Agricultural University in grant writing and management.	Vladislav Popov, AU Plovdiv
14:00-15:00	Implementation and management of scientific projects. Profession project manager.	Vasil Kolev, CPSBB



Content:

General principles for preparation of grant proposals

Project types:

- Individual grants
 - Short term fellowships (travel, specializations)
 - Long term fellowships
- Projects for teams/Team leaders

Funding organizations

Writing, application, and project management

Examples of successful projects

Q & A



General rules when preparing grant applications

Identification of the funding agency depending on your goals (e.g. short-term specialization abroad, long-term research, establishment of your own group, cooperation with other organizations).

Good structure of your grant application, regardless of project size:

- Topic description. **Scientific Excellence**. Current state of art. How your project contributes to advancement in the field.

This is the first and arguably the most important part, which “grabs” reviewers’ attention.

- **Impact**. What are you going to achieve with the project: for yourself (career development, learning techniques, important results) for the scientific community (e.g. important advance in the area) and for the society (e.g. development of a new beneficial technology, educating young researchers, new jobs etc.).
- **Implementation**. This part is also important for the large project and should not be underestimated (may not be present in small grant applications).



General rules when preparing grant applications

Regardless of the type and size of the project proposal, follow the general rules:

Identify the most suitable funding body and call for your own goals.

Start the work (grant preparation) well before the submission deadline. Most grant applications require months of preparation.

Leave yourself enough time for “polishing” of the project proposal before submitting it.

Once you are ready with the proposal, ask a colleague for external expert opinion. He/she can see things that you/your team overlooked, so this is very useful.

In the large multi-million projects, engaging a consultancy company may be useful.

Polish the grant application, eliminate any typing errors and bad formatting: this irritates reviewers.



The EU research landscape. Grant types

Individual grants

Short-term grants (1-3 months): for specialization abroad, for learning techniques, for education, for specific work tasks.

They are easy to write and relatively easy to get. Can be very useful.

- FEBS
- EMBO
- COST (STSM)
- IUBMB
- DAAD, IAEA и др.

Long-term projects (1-3 years): For specific research.

Very competitive, require extensive preparation.

- Marie S. Curie (up to 2 years – normal, up to 3 years – outgoing)
- EMBO (up to 2 years)
- FEBS (up to 3 years)
- AvH (up to 2 years), HFSP (up to 3 years) и др.

Collaborative projects and projects for your own groups

Very competitive, require extensive preparation.



The EU research landscape. Funding organizations

Horizon Europe. The largest EU research and innovation programme. Vast opportunities for individual fellowships and large collaborative projects (examples later).

ERC (European Research Council). Competitive grants for teams and group leaders

EMBO, FEBS. Opportunities for both short- and long-term fellowships in Europe

AvH, DAAD, and DGF. Funding bodies in Germany. Offer both short-term and long-term fellowships, as well as large collaborative projects.

BNSF (Bulgarian National Science Foundation). Good opportunities for research in Bulgaria: from small grants for young researchers to medium (250 K BGN) and large (>1 M. BGN) research grants.

NFO, NSF, HFSP, IAEA etc. – opportunities for research in Europe and overseas (global fellowships)



Postdoctorant fellowships: General overview

Offered by various funding organizations

Different eligibility criteria

- Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships
- EMBO Fellowships
- FEBS Fellowships
- IUBMB Wood-Whelan Research Fellowships
- Alexander von Humboldt Fellowships
- ERC grants and others

Short- and long-term fellowships

Opportunities for career development and cooperation with other organizations (universities, research organizations, companies)



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

Funded by the European Commission (Horizon Europe)

Support researchers' careers and foster excellence in research.

Eligibility: Researchers with PhD who wish to carry out research abroad

PFs help researchers gain experience in other countries

The hosts can be both academic and non-academic organizations

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

Prestigious and attractive, but also highly competitive (<10% success rate)

Excellent salary, depending on the country (CCC: 3000-4880 EUR)

Additional benefits (mobility and family allowance: 600+500 EUR)

Research, training, and networking costs (800 EUR p.m.)

Management and indirect costs (650 EUR p.m.)

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

2 types of Postdoctoral Fellowships:

European Postdoctoral Fellowships. Open to researchers moving within Europe or coming to Europe from another part of the world. Take place in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. Last between 1 and 2 years. Researchers of any nationality can apply.

Global Postdoctoral Fellowships. Fund mobility outside Europe. Last between 2 to 3 years, of which the first 1 to 2 years will be spent in a non-associated Third Country, followed by a mandatory return phase of 1 year to an organisation based in an EU Member State/Associated Country. Only nationals or long-term residents of the EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries can apply.

Short-term secondments possible anywhere in the world

ERA Fellowships for Widening countries!



EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships

Prestigious, support excellent postdoctoral researchers throughout Europe and around the world.

Mobility to an EMBO member state.

Both short-term (up to 3 months) and long-term fellowships available.

Fellowship rates depend on the country (45-90 EUR/day)

As MSC PF, the EMBO PF are very competitive (<10% for the LTF)



FEBS Fellowships

The Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS) fellowships support both doctoral and postdoctoral researchers throughout Europe and around the world.

Eligibility: The applicant must be a member of FEBS.

Both short-term (up to 3 months) and long-term fellowships available.

Summer Fellowships for doctoral and MSc students.

Fellowship rates depend on the country (22,500 – 44,000 EUR/year)

The long-term FEBS Fellowships are very competitive.

FEBS Excellence Awards available.



IUBMB Wood-Whelan Research Fellowships

Granted by the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB).

Support junior biochemists and molecular biologists, from countries that are full or associate members of IUBMB (Bulgaria included)

Global fellowships for postdoctoral and doctoral researchers.

Duration up to 4 months. The fellowship covers travel and incidental costs, as well as living expenses, to a maximum of US \$4,000



**INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND
MOLECULAR BIOLOGY**

ERC Grants

Funds excellent PIs who want to establish their own groups.

Bottom-up approach. Researchers of any nationality.

Starting grants. Researchers with 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD. Grant of 1.5 Mil. EUR for up to 5 years.

Consolidating grants. 7-12 years of experience. 1.5 Mil. EUR for 5 years.

Advanced grants. 2.5 Mil. EUR for 5 years.

Synergy Grants. Awarded to a group of two to maximum four PIs. Grant to a max. of 10 Mil. EUR for 6 years. Additional 4 Mil. EUR possible.

Highly competitive (<5% success rate)



Grants for Germany

Alexander von Humboldt (AvH) fellowships:

Fellowship + family allowance + child allowance + language courses

Postdocs: 2,670 EUR, duration 6 – 24 months

Experienced researchers: 3,170 EUR, duration 6 – 18 months

Alexander von Humboldt Professorship: top researchers, up to €5 million

DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, German Academic Exchange Service)

Academic staff exchange (professors, students)

Both short- and long-term fellowships possible

DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, German Research Foundation)

Large collaborative projects

Research in Germany

Bilateral collaboration (e.g. Germany-Bulgaria, Germany-India, Germany-RSA, Germany-China etc.)

Grants for The Netherlands

NWO (the Dutch Research Council)

- Large research projects. Curiosity driven research (0.35 - 4 M EUR)
- NWO Talent Programme:
 - Veni (280 K EUR, junior group leaders)
 - Vidi (800 K EUR)
 - Vici (1.5 M EUR highly experienced researchers)
- Collaborative programs, including bilateral cooperation
- And many more on particular scientific areas: <https://www.nwo.nl/en>

Grants for Bulgaria

Bulgarian National Science Fund (BNSF)

Individual postdoctoral fellowships “Petar Beron”: Like Marie Curie

Grants for young scientists (20 K BGN)

Grants for bilateral cooperation (20 K BGN – 250 K BGN)

Grants part from the European networks:

COST cofunding (40 K BGN)

ERA-NET (250-300 K BGN)

ERA-CAPS

Research grants (120 K BGN)

VIHREN (>1 M BGN)

Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

Coordinators are in Widening countries:

Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia

Widening Fellowships

Teaming

Establishes/upgrades new centers of excellence

Any EU country can participate

Funding up to 15.5 M EUR

Twinning

Cooperation between widening and other EU countries

Any EU country can participate

Funding up to 1 M EUR

ERA Chairs

For new groups/research departments

Funding up to 2.5 M EUR

Excellence Hubs

Formation of at least two hubs in widening countries

Funding up to 5 M EUR

More information on these web sites:

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/actions/postdoctoral-fellowships>

EMBO Fellowships

<https://www.embo.org/funding/fellowships-grants-and-career-support/postdoctoral-fellowships/>

FEBS Fellowships

<https://www.febs.org/our-activities/fellowships/long-term-febs-fellows/>

IUBMB Wood-Whelan Research Fellowships

<https://iubmb.org/activities/fellowship-programs/iubmb-wood-whelan-research-fellowships/>

German Academic Staff Service (DAAD)

<https://www.daad.de/en/>

Alexander von Humboldt Fellowships

<https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/en/>

ERC grants and other EU grants

<https://erc.europa.eu/funding>

NSF of Bulgaria:

<https://www.fni.bg/>

Personal experience:

2 NATO Grants (1 RG and 1 CLG; 1 SFP 1st stage)

2 FEBS Fellowships

2 IAEA grants

1 EMBO STF

1 Marie Curie Fellowship

1 IRSES (FP7)

2 grants from the Swiss NSF

4 X BNSF

4 Horizon 2020 grants (ITN, RISE, etc.)

1 ERA CAPS collaborative grant