



European Commission
Research Directorate General
Human Resources and Mobility

**MARIE CURIE
CONFERENCES & TRAINING COURSES**

SERIES OF EVENTS (SCF)

Handbook

for

Call: FP6-2005-Mobility- 4



MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

3rd Edition February 2005

**This handbook explains the principles of
Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses (SCF)
to be funded under the EU's Sixth Framework Programme.**

Similar documents are available for the other
Marie Curie Actions namely:

Marie Curie Research Training Networks (RTN)
Marie Curie Host Fellowships for Early Stage Training (EST)
Marie Curie Host Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge (ToK)
Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships (EIF)
Marie Curie Outgoing International Fellowships (OIF)
Marie Curie Incoming International Fellowships (IIF)
Marie Curie Excellence Grants (EXT)
Marie Curie Excellence Awards (EXA)
Marie Curie Chairs (EXC)
Marie Curie European Reintegration Grants (ERG)
Marie Curie International Reintegration Grants (IRG)

MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

They are available on our web-site:

<http://europa.eu.int/mariecurie-actions>

Comments are welcome and may be sent by e-mail to:

rtd-mariecurie-actions@cec.eu.int

Legal notice

This guide aims to make the rules concerning Marie Curie actions transparent and easy to understand, thus it serves for information purposes only and has no legal value. It is based upon a number of legal texts, in particular the Work Programme and Rules for Participation listed in Annex V of this document. Only those texts having a legal status can be referred to for the purpose of any legal or administrative proceedings.

THE ESSENTIALS

What are they?

Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses are implemented as either **Series of Events** (with at least 4 events per Series) or **Large Conferences** – for the purpose of providing training primarily to researchers with up to 10 years of experience. **The current call addresses only Series of Events. No further calls are foreseen for Large Conferences.**

Who can apply (- the “participants”)?

All proposals are submitted by legal entities (e.g. industrial/commercial firms, SME's, universities, research organisations, international organisations). A Series of Events may be proposed jointly by any number of legal entities of which at least one must be from a Member State or an Associated State.

Who can attend the conferences and training events (- the “eligible researchers”)?

If the proposal is successful, the attendance of researchers with less than 10 years of experience can be supported by the Commission, priority being given to those with less than 4 years of experience. Subject to certain conditions, the attendance of researchers with more than 10 years of experience may also be supported.

Which research topics are supported?

Proposals from all areas of scientific and technological research of interest to the European Community are accepted and there are no pre-defined priority areas.

How can the funding be used?

First of all, funding is available for the benefit of the eligible researchers as a contribution to their travel costs, their daily living expenses, and the costs of their participation in the conferences and training courses. Furthermore, the EC funding comprises a contribution to the costs linked to the organisation of the events (incl. durable equipment), and finally, funding is available to cover a part of the expenses related to the management of the project (incl. audit).

When can I apply?

A “call for proposals” was launched on 19 January 2005 with a deadline on **18 May 2005**. An additional call is expected with a deadline in 2006.

How do I apply?

Firstly, after reading this document download an “InfoPack” that provides the material you need to prepare a proposal: http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=192. Secondly, you should consult the legal documents, in particular, the “Work Programme” upon which this handbook is based (references can be found in annex V of this document).

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Foreword

This document has been updated since the previous version was published in October 2003 to take into account the latest revision of the Human Resources and Mobility Work Programme in September 2004. The changes relate mainly to the following :

- Proposals for this call must be submitted only electronically. Details are supplied in Chapter 7.
- The current call is limited to Series of Events. No further calls are foreseen for Large Conferences. All guidance concerning Large Conferences has therefore been removed from this Handbook.
- The Frequently Asked Questions at the back of the document have been modified to take into account all of the above.

1. Introduction

To help develop the European Research Area (ERA), the Commission has launched the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). This programme runs from 2003 to 2006 and is the financial tool with which the Commission can put research policy into practice and also provide the necessary financial support for scientific and technological development projects.

Within this programme, the Human Resources and Mobility (HRM) activity has a budget of 1.58 billion Euro and consists of a coherent set of actions that finance training and other career development opportunities for researchers. These are known as Marie Curie actions and aim at the development and transfer of research competencies, the consolidation and widening of researchers' career prospects, and the promotion of excellence in European research.

It is the purpose of this document to explain one out of the 12 different actions within the HRM activity, the **Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses (SCF)**. The information is essentially based upon the relevant legal texts, in particular the "Work Programme." Text that has been directly extracted from the Work Programme is shown in boxes to aid the reader.

1.1 What are the Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses

The Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses are one of the four so-called Host-driven actions devoted to the provision of structured global training and mobility schemes :

"These actions are aimed at supporting research networks, research organisations and enterprises (including in particular SMEs), in the provision of structured global schemes for the transnational training and mobility of researchers, and the development and transfer of competencies in research including complementary skills (research programme management, ethics, communication, career development, etc.). The actions concerned are intended to have a strong structuring effect on the European research system, in particular by encouraging junior researchers to pursue a research career."

Work Programme, section 2.2

The specific objectives of Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses are the following :

"These [Conferences and Training Courses] will enable junior researchers to benefit from the experience of leading researchers. Support will be given to specific training activities (including virtual ones) that highlight particular European achievements and interests."

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

1.2 How does it work?

To show how Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses work, five stages of a project “life cycle” are outlined below and illustrated in the flow chart on the following page.

Stage 1: Proposal Preparation & Electronic Submission

In the first instance, it is expected that the Host organisation(s) prepare a proposal with focus on specific training activities. The proposal can be made either by a single participant or jointly by several participants. In the latter case one of the participants will act as co-ordinator for the project. The proposal must be submitted electronically via the Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS) and must be received by the Commission before the deadline given in the call for proposals.

Stage 2: Proposal Evaluation

Once the proposals are received, a series of checks will be performed to ensure that technical eligibility criteria such as completeness and reception by the deadline are fulfilled. The Commission will then arrange for the proposal to be evaluated by individual experts who will assess it against a number of predefined evaluation criteria. Each proposal coordinator will receive a report describing the consensus opinion reached by the independent experts.

Stage 3: Negotiation and Selection

Taking into account the opinions of the experts and the available funding, the Commission will rank the proposals. For those proposals that are retained an invitation to enter into contract negotiations with the Commission will be issued. The purpose of this process is to collect all the necessary financial and technical information, in order to prepare a contract. In addition, the scientific and training programme will be defined in terms of contractual deliverables, and the maximum financial contribution from the Community will be finalised. Comments from the experts that arose during the evaluation will be taken into account at this stage.

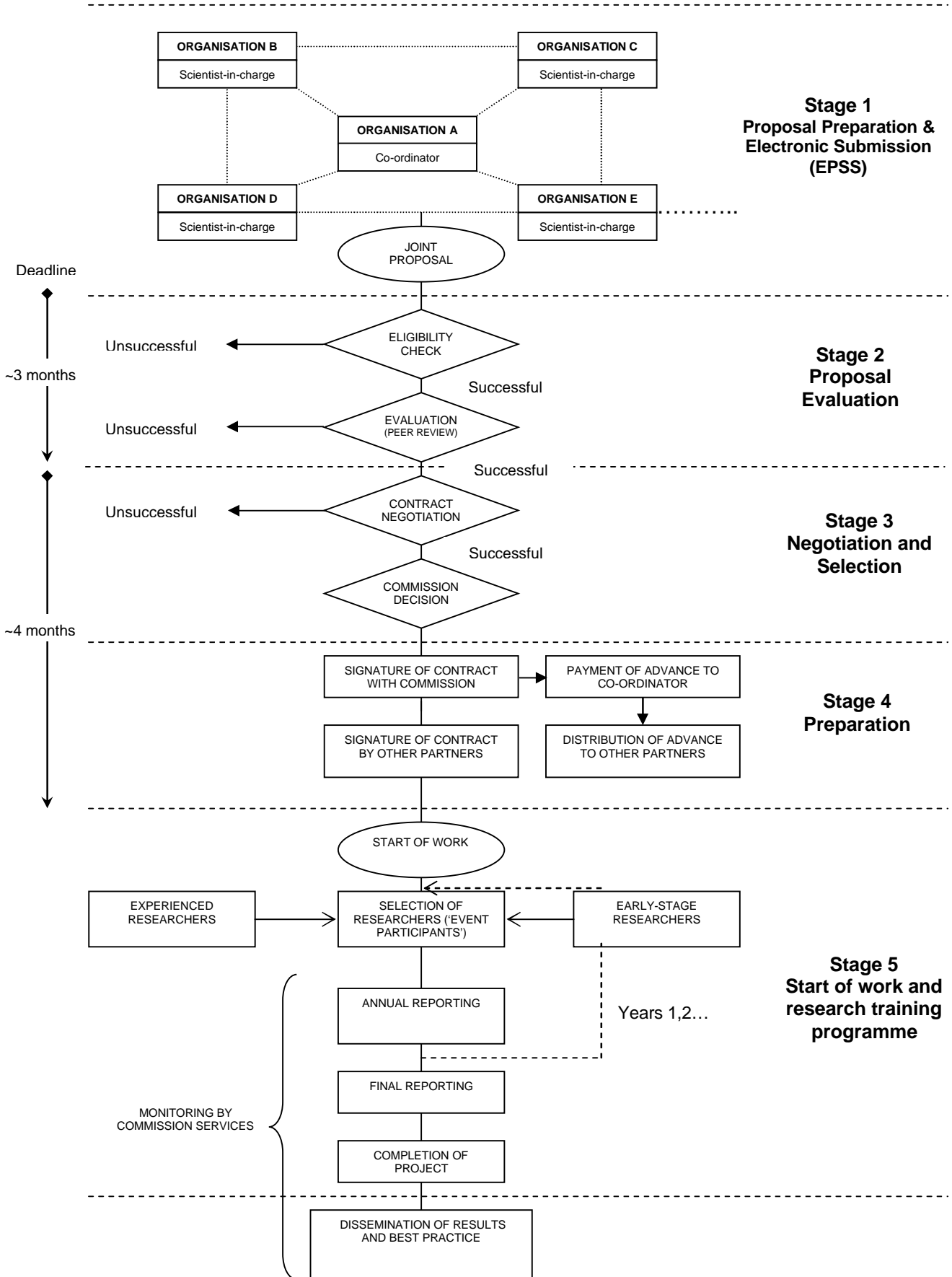
Stage 4: Project Preparation

Assuming a successful outcome of the negotiations, a draft contract will be prepared by the Commission and sent to the (co-ordinating) Host organisation for signature. In the case of multi-partner Series of Events, a consortium agreement may also be drawn up at this stage to deal with any internal issues of the group of participants. An initial pre-financing will be provided once the (co-ordinating) organisation and the Commission have signed the contract. In multipartner projects this payment may be distributed to the other participants, when they, in turn, have acceded to the contract.

Stage 5: Start of Work

Now the project can really start. The Host institution(s) will select the Early-stage and Experienced researchers to attend the events with community funding and the events will be held according to the technical annex of the contract. During the course of the project, the Commission will monitor the development of the activities on the basis of annual reports. Payments are made according to the progress made as compared to the project deliverables set out in the contract. The final payment is released upon acceptance of the final report.

"LIFE CYCLE" OF A SERIES OF EVENTS (SCF)



1.3 Differences between FP6 and previous Framework Programmes

The following table provides a correspondence between the types of events defined in FP4 (the TMR Programme), FP5 (the IHP Programme) and FP6.

FP4	FP5	FP6
Euroconference	Euroconference Euro Workshop Euro PhD Conference Eurotron Conference	Marie Curie Conferences (SCF) *
Summer School Training Course	Euro Summer School Euro Lab Course	Marie Curie Training Courses (SCF)*
	Large Conference	Large Conference (LCF)**

*A Series of Events (SCF) should contain at least 4 events. These events could be either Marie Curie Conferences or Marie Curie Training Courses, or the two types combined.

** No further calls are foreseen for Large Conferences (LCF)

2. What type of activities does it cover?

2.1 Types of Events

An SCF proposal may comprise two types of events.

*"A series of events **may combine** practical events (schools or practical training courses) with conference-style events.... ."*

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

These are defined in the Work Programme as follows:

"Training courses in this sense are schools or practical courses organised in universities, research organisations, scientific centres or industrial facilities etc, providing advanced training for eligible researchers, typically lasting from one to a few weeks. The courses are to be organised around specific scientific or technological themes, and/or address research management, ethics, communication and related subjects of value for the career development of researchers. They must have a defined syllabus. Appropriately qualified experts should provide the training. Practical courses would involve substantial hands-on laboratory or field experience for the participants."

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

"Conferences under this action are high-level scientific/technological meetings with a focused theme at the cutting edge of research bringing together researchers with a different level of experience, typically lasting a few days."

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

2.2 Number of Events

Proposals for Series of Events must include **at least 4 events**, and each one can be of either type.

2.3 Duration of events

Each event should have **duration of a maximum of 4 weeks**.

2.4 Location of events

Events in a series may have venues in different locations but will **normally** take place in Member States and/or Associated States. Other event venues i.e. in third countries may be **exceptionally** allowed if suitably justified with respect to the objectives. For instance, the organiser of a Series of Events on Arctic climate changes may wish to organise an event outside the Member and Associated States concerned since this issue crosses many borders but would retain a genuine community added value.

2.5 Size of events

The number of event participants (with or without Community support) in each event **will typically not exceed 150**.

2.6 Timing of events

It should be noted that *events which take place less than six months after the corresponding deadline for the reception of proposals mentioned in the call are ineligible*.

2.7 Duration of the Project

The duration of the contract is **up to 4 years**. All supported events must be organised within this period. Moreover, all reporting documents must have been sent by the coordinator before the end of the project.

2.8 The Research Topic

Like all other Marie Curie actions, Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses are guided by the so-called “bottom-up” principle i.e. all fields of science and technology of interest to the European Community (i.e. within the scope of the EC Treaty) are eligible for funding:

- *“Freedom is given to the proposers as to the choice of field of research for their projects. The Marie Curie actions will therefore be open to all fields of research, which contribute to the objectives of the Community as defined in Article 163 of the EC Treaty, for projects chosen freely by the applicants themselves. However, activities relating to human resources and mobility in areas covered by the EURATOM¹ treaty are not eligible under the actions in the area of Human Resources and Mobility of the Sixth Framework Programme;*
- *Great initiative is left to the proposers within the objectives of the programme and within general guide-lines (including maximum expenditure) concerning the details permitting a better realisation of the objectives.”*

Work Programme, section 2.5.1

Note that fields of research within the EURATOM programme may not be eligible for funding. However, this does not exclude fundamental research in the field of nuclear physics. Fields of research with military applications may also be ineligible.

Furthermore, projects with ethical implications (e.g. human cloning, some specific aspects of human embryo research, animal welfare etc.) will be subject to ethical review and may not be eligible for funding. For more information, please consult the following web pages:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/ethics/ethics_en.html

¹ Sixth Framework Programme for EURATOM 2002-2006, OJ 355 of 30 December 2002

2.9 The Concept of Panels

For practical organisational reasons, proposals will be classified under eight major areas of science (known as 'panels'): Chemistry; Economics; Social and Human Sciences; Engineering and Information sciences; Environmental and Geo-Sciences; Life Sciences; Mathematics and Physics. Applicants are asked to indicate on the A1 Proposal Submission Form the most relevant panel to their proposal (i.e. the core discipline). Additional keywords are used to define other disciplines involved. The choice of panel and keywords will guide the Commission in the selection of experts for proposal evaluation. Note that there is no predefined budget allocation among the panels in the call for proposals. The proportionate number of eligible proposals in each panel will be used for this purpose.

“As a general rule the distribution of the indicative budget of the calls between the research disciplines will be based “a posteriori” on the proportion of eligible proposals. Deviation of this rule will be specified in the relevant call for proposals”.

Work Programme, section 2.5.1

2.10 Coherence

The proposed events should be **coherent** and **non-repetitive**.

“The events within a proposed series should together make a coherent programme of training and professional advancement for researchers. Where they cover several themes, their grouping together should be justified from a scientific and/or training point of view or from an organisational point of view. This action shall not cover series of events consisting merely of periodic repetitions of conference-style events with identical themes.”

Work Programme, section 2.3.1.4

Coherence from a scientific and/or training point of view could involve the relation between theory and application, different contributions to the resolution of the same set of problems, etc. Coherence from an organisational point of view could be in terms of economies of scale in organising the series in the same format, with the same teaching resources, etc.

2.11 The European Dimension

In determining the research topics to be treated in an event, it is important to emphasise that they should be of strong interest for Europe and help to provide the best possible opportunities for the Early-stage and Experienced researchers to advance their careers.

“The events should highlight either particular European achievements in research or alternatively research topics in which Europe has a strong interest and where the event contributes to its uptake in Europe. This means that the subjects to be discussed or taught should be those where recent advances achieved in the Member States or Associated States are worth being passed on to researchers in the early stages of their career, or those where recent advances achieved elsewhere, in topics of interest to Europe, need to be passed on to researchers from the Member States and Associated States. In both cases, the foreseen composition of the audience and the identity of the speakers will be a factor in determining the Community added value.”

Work Programme, section 2.3.1.4

2.12 Project Size

The size of the project will depend on the nature and scope of the activities to be undertaken and on the number of eligible researchers concerned.

While it is important to stress that there are no upper or lower limits to the funding that may be provided to a Series of Events or a Large Conference, the Work Programme states the following:

“As an indication, based on the first call under this action in the Sixth Framework Programme, the size of the projects will approximately vary between € 180 000 and € 1 400 000.”

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

3. Which research organisations can take part?

3.1 How are participants defined?

Participants in this context are those organisations that will be responsible for undertaking the project and organising the event(s) to be attended by the eligible researchers. The Work Programme refers to these as “the Host organisations”. If selected for funding, the *Host organisation(s)* will be signing a contract with the Commission:

“As a general rule, the participant² of the Marie Curie actions is an organisation³ active in research or research training (universities, national or international research centres or commercial enterprises, etc) implementing Marie Curie actions and signing contracts with the Commission.”

Work Programme, section 2.5.2

3.2 Number of participants

A Series of Events can be organised with **any number of participants**. If a project has only one participant the Commission refers to it as a *mono-contractor project*, whereas Series of Event projects with two or more participants are called *multi-contractort projects*; in the latter case one of the participants will act as *co-ordinator*.

“One series of events may be organised by a single entity, which thus assumes the entire responsibility, or by several entities (local organisers), each of which would [be] responsible to the co-ordinator both for the financial part and the technical execution of the event(s), which they manage.”

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

3.3 What type of research organisations can take part?

According to the Work Programme, many different types of organisations can take part in Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses:

- National organisations (e.g. universities, research centres etc.);
- Commercial enterprises, especially those of small and medium size (SMEs);
- Non-profit or charitable organisations (e.g. NGOs, trusts, etc.);
- International European Interest Organisations (e.g. CERN, ILL, EMBL, etc.);
- The Joint Research Centre of the European Commission;
- International Organisations (e.g. WHO, UNESCO, etc.).

² In the sense of the definition specified in the Rules of participation

³ In the case of Marie Curie Excellence Awards, it may be an individual.

Definitions of some of the categories of organisations are provided in the Rules for Participation (see reference in annex V).

3.4 Where can the participants be located?

Proposals must include **at least one participant established in a Member State (MS) or an Associated State (AS)**. Additional participants may be located anywhere in the world.

*“...the participation of the third country legal entity will be permitted **over** the minimum number of participants, i.e. a single legal entity as indicated in paragraph 2.3.1.4.”*

Work Programme section 2.5.2

However, the participation of legal entities established outside the Member States & Associated States and of international organisations must be duly justified in the proposal.

*“**Participation** of legal entities from third countries and of international organisations⁴ is foreseen under the conditions provided by the rules of participation⁴ and by those in the present work programme....*

*The **financing** of these entities, particularly those established in developing countries, emerging economies or economies in transition, is possible if it is essential to attain the objectives of the action.”*

Work Programme section 2.5.2

In this context it should be noted that special conditions apply to the participation of **International European Interest Organisations (IEIO)**:

“The participation and financing of the international European interest organisations are foreseen under the conditions provided by the rules of participation.”

Work Programme section 2.5.2

In practice this means that International European Interest Organisations are allowed to participate under the same conditions as legal entities from Member States.

⁴ Decision of the European Parliament and Council (<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/participationrules/>)

An overview of the Member States and Associated States applicable at the time of writing (February 2005) is provided in the table below:

Member States	Associated States	
	Candidate Countries	Other Associated States
Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom	Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.	Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

The Associated States have signed an agreement with the Community which entitles them to the same treatment in FP6 as the Member States. Thus research organisations in these countries are eligible for Community funding under FP6.

The current status of the association agreements can be found under the following:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/iscp/countries.html>

4. Which individual researchers can be funded?

4.1 Introduction

The researchers attending the events will not be contractors with the Commission, but they will be *beneficiaries* of the contract between the Commission and the Host:

“Eligible researchers under these schemes are “third party” beneficiaries of the Marie Curie actions. They do not sign a contract with the Commission, but benefit from the Marie Curie actions and are therefore in this way beneficiaries of Community funds”.

Work Programme, section 2.5.3

The general definition of a **researcher** given in the Work Programme reads as follows:

“As a general rule, a researcher is defined as a person active in research, including at a training level, of at least post-graduate or equivalent level.”

Work Programme, section 2.5.3

4.2 Conditions for appointment of the researchers

It will be the responsibility of the participating organisation(s) (“the host institutions”) and not the Commission to select the eligible researchers who will attend the events and benefit from the Community contribution.

In this respect, it is important to note that certain conditions must normally be fulfilled and they relate to:

- The level of research experience;
- Transnational mobility;
- Nationality

These are described in more detail in the following.

4.2.1 The level of research experience

Under the Marie Curie Actions, the different career pathways of researchers are taken into account by the adoption of new definitions that attach more importance to their research experience than simply their age.

Once a researcher has obtained a diploma that gives access to doctoral studies in the country in which the diploma was obtained (without having to acquire any further qualifications) the “clock” starts ticking. In the event that a researcher has taken a break from their research career for whatever reason (e.g. working outside research, family reasons, etc.), then the clock is stopped and only starts once they resume their research career.

The Work Programme makes a distinction between **Early-stage** and **Experienced researchers**, on the basis of their experience in research:

*“**Early-stage researchers** are defined as researchers in the first 4 years (full-time equivalent) of their research activity, including the period of research training.*

The reference period to qualify for an early stage training activity:

- *is counted from the diploma giving access to doctoral studies (the degree must entitle the holder to embark on doctoral studies, without having to acquire any further qualifications) in the country in which the diploma was obtained,*
- *covers the first 4 years of experience in research or the period until a doctoral degree is obtained, whichever is shorter.*

Persons who have obtained a doctorate are ineligible for the early stage actions, independently of the time taken to acquire it.”

*“**Experienced researchers** are defined as i) researchers having at least 4 years of research experience (full-time equivalent) since gaining a university diploma giving them access to doctoral studies (the degree must entitle the holder to embark on doctoral studies, without having to acquire any further qualifications), in the country in which the degree/diploma was obtained or ii) researchers already in possession of a doctoral degree, independently of the time taken to acquire it.”*

Work Programme (section 2.5.3)

It is important to note that the reference deadline for application of the eligibility rules is the time of the selection of the researcher by the organiser(s):

“For host-driven actions, the reference deadline for eligibility is the selection of the eligible researcher by the host organisation in the framework of this action...”

Work Programme section 2.5.3

Experience criteria for Series of Events (SCF)

On the basis of the specific eligibility criteria for researchers in a Marie Curie Series of Events, **eligible researchers for SCF can be divided into 3 groups according to their level of experience:**

"This action will primarily be directed at early stage researchers. More experienced researchers will also be able to benefit from this action where the possibilities offered in the contract are not used for early stage researchers. Researchers with more than 10 years of research experience (full-time equivalent), counting from the time the degree/diploma was obtained giving access to embark on a doctorate in the country where it was awarded, will not be eligible for support, except in the case of researchers who are nationals of Member States, or Associated States active outside these states at the time of an event: these researchers shall be eligible, so that they may establish or strengthen links with the European research community (contact building effect for the transfer of knowledge)."

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

Thus, **the 3 groups of eligible researchers are:**

- Group 1 Early Stage Researchers;
- Group 2 Experienced Researchers with up to 10 years of experience;
- Group 3 Experienced Researchers with more than 10 years of experience, who are nationals of Member States or Associated States and active outside these states at the time of the event (for contact-building effect).

Selection priorities

It should be stressed that the organiser(s) should give **priority to Early-stage researchers** when selecting the eligible researchers to attend an event.

4.2.2 Transnational mobility

The standard requirement for transnational mobility in the Work Programme, section 2.3.5 does not apply to the Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses. In principle therefore eligible researchers can be nationals of the same state as that of the Host organisation.

Nevertheless, a special mobility condition applies to **researchers with more than 10 years of research experience**. These researchers must be active (in research) outside the Member States and Associated states at the time of the event in order to be eligible for funding :

"Researchers with more than 10 years of research experience (full-time equivalent), counting from the time the degree/diploma was obtained giving access to embark on a doctorate in the country where it was awarded, will not be eligible for support, except in the case of researchers who are nationals of Member States, or Associated States active outside these states at the time of an event: these researchers shall be eligible, so that they may establish or strengthen links with the European research community (contact building effect for the transfer of knowledge)."

Work Programme section 2.3.1.4

4.2.3 Nationality

- Early stage researchers and Experienced Researchers with up to 10 years of research experience may be nationals of any country (subject to the requirement for an international balance described below)
- Experienced Researchers with more than 10 years of experience must be nationals of Member States and Associated States

Requirement for an overall international balance of the project

It should be noted that the number of funded researchers who are nationals of Third countries should normally not exceed 30% of the total number of funded researchers :

"In the case of host-driven actions, a maximum of 30 %⁵ of the number of funded researcher-months can be used for third country researchers. This percentage could be exceeded in exceptional cases under the condition that the excess is duly justified as being essential to attain the objectives of the action."

Work Programme, section 2.5.3

Furthermore, no more than 30% of all the participants in each event may be nationals of the same Member State, Associated State or of third countries collectively:

"An international balance between the participants shall be guaranteed; no more than 30% of the total number of those attending each event within a series should be nationals of the same Member State or Associated State, or third countries collectively."

Work Programme, section 2.3.1.4

Since, at the time of the submission of the proposal, the organisers are unlikely to know the identity of all the event participants, the Commission does not require definitive details on participation. However, in the final distribution of nationalities at the time of the event an international balance must be achieved in the following way:

- **no more than 30% of the funded researchers** (i.e. eligible) attending each event may be nationals of third countries collectively
- **no more than 30% of the total number of researchers** (i.e. eligible and non-eligible) attending *each event* may be nationals of the same Member State or Associated State, or nationals of third countries collectively)

EXAMPLE :

The organiser of a conference with 100 event participants in total and 50 eligible event participants should check that:

- no more than 30 event participants come from the same Member State or Associated State; AND
- no more than 30 event participants come from third countries collectively; AND
- no more than 15 eligible event participants come from third countries collectively.

⁵ The percentage is to be applied for each contract except for the action *Marie Curie Series* of events for which it will be applied per event.

4.3 Gender issues

As pointed out in the general introduction to the Work Programme, the participation of women in the Marie Curie actions is particularly encouraged:

“This work programme attempts, where possible, to reinforce and increase the place and role of women in science and research, both from the perspective of equal opportunities and gender relevance of the topics covered.”

Work Programme, Introduction, 3.e)

A higher participation of women in research is a stated Community policy, and a relevant consideration under the evaluation criterion “Added Value to the Community and Relevance to the Objectives of the Action”.

*“Within this activity, particular attention is paid to:
...- the participation of women within all actions, and appropriate measures to promote a more equitable balance between men and women in research. In this context the Commission and the host organisations selected under the actions will strive for at least 40 % selection of women.”*

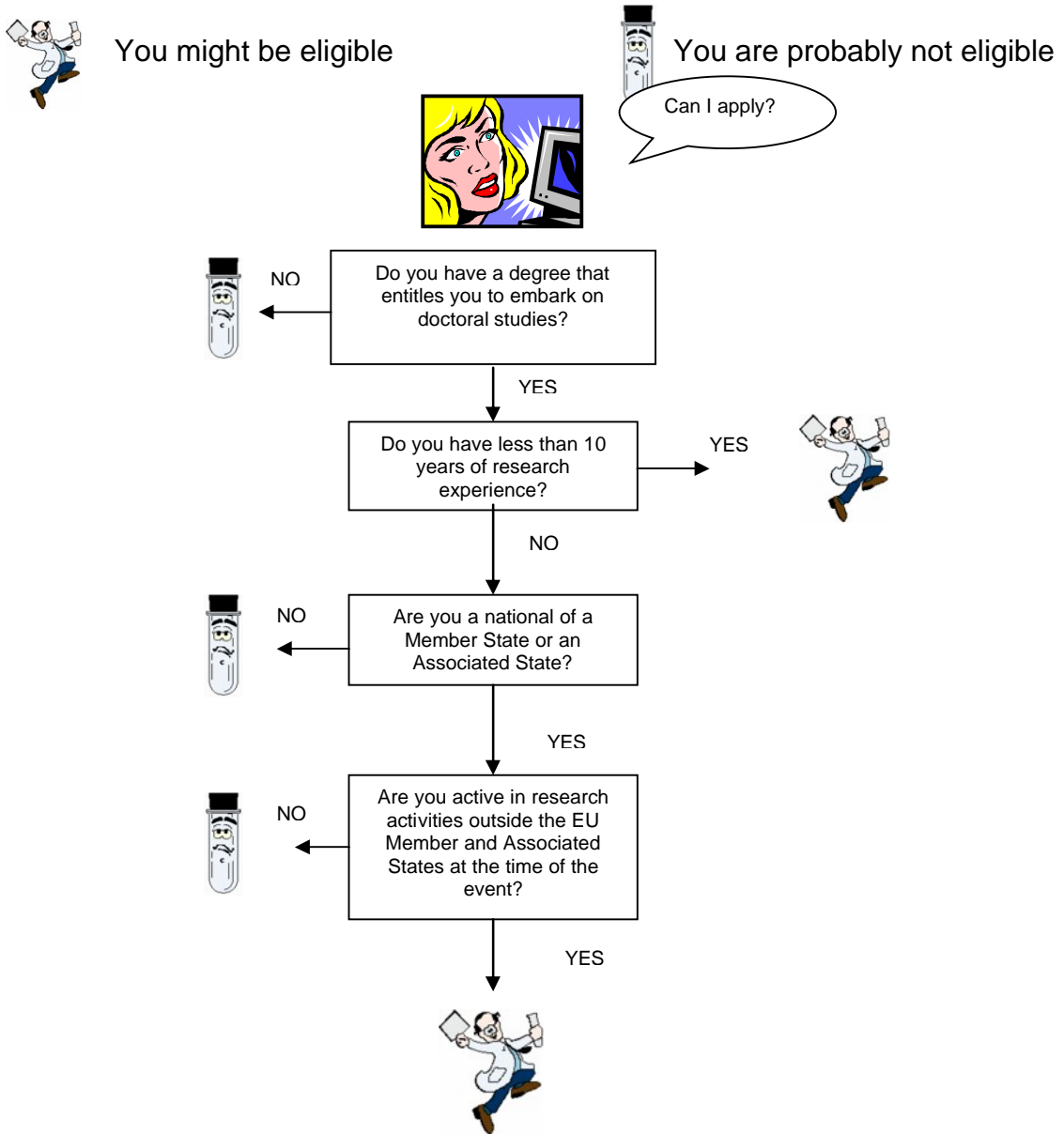
Work Programme section 2.2

4.4 Finding your way through the eligibility criteria

To make it easier for you to determine if you can participate with Community funding in an event organised in the context of a Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses project, you may wish to refer to the flow chart on the following page. Please note that this chart is indicative only and one is always advised to check the text of the Work Programme.

INDICATIVE CONDITIONS FOR SERIES OF EVENTS (SCF)

In the following flow chart, the conditions are described under which a researcher can participate with Community funding in an event in a Series of Events.



5. What are the financial aspects?

5.1 Basic do's and don'ts

The contractor(s) will be required to regularly report on the expenses that have been incurred. Some basic conditions apply regarding the charging of those expenses to the contract:

- “they must be **actual, economic and necessary** for the implementation of the indirect action; [i.e. the project]
- they must be determined in accordance with **the usual accounting principles** of each participant;
- they must be **recorded in the accounts** of the participants or, in the case of resources of third parties...in the corresponding financial documents of those third parties;
- they shall be **exclusive of indirect taxes, duties and interest and may not give rise to profit.**”

Rules for Participation, Article 14.2

5.2 Community contribution & rates

The conditions for funding the activities undertaken by the participants in order to attain the project deliverables are defined in the Work Programme, section 2.8.2 (see the table shown on the following page):

Marie Curie Actions	Eligible expenses								
	Eligible expenses for the activities carried out by the researchers				Eligible expenses for the activities carried out by the host organisations				
	- A - Monthly living allowance	Transnational mobility		- D - Career exploratory allowance	- E - Contribution to the participation expenses of eligible researchers	- F - Contribution to the research/ training /transfer of knowledge programme expenses	- G - Management activities (including audit certification)	- H - Contribution to overheads	- I - Other types of eligible expenses / specific conditions
Series of Conferences	Subsistence expenses : Real expenses up to a maximum of 150€ per day, with application of correction coefficient (cf. point 2.8)	Real expenses up to a maximum of the reference rates (cf. point 2.8) (no transnational mobility required for this action)	-	-	- Participation fees of Eligible researchers	<u>* Organisational expenses, in particular :</u> - Invitation of keynote speakers - Publication - rental of premises - webcasting * Lump sum as a fraction of total organisational costs on the basis of the number of eligible attendees supported by the participant(s)	maximum 7 % of the Community contribution	-	<u>equipment expenses</u> if : - necessary for the project - duly justified on basis of real costs - and with prior agreement of the Commission (partial depreciation, or total if indispensable, if justified by the use of the goods and if final destination of goods is determined)

5.3 What types of expenses are covered?

According to the Work Programme, the eligible expenses that can be charged to the contract may be broadly divided into:

- Expenses related to the eligible researchers ('event participants');
- Expenses related to the activities of the Host organisation(s)

These broad categories are explained in more detail in the following.

5.3.1 Expenses related to the eligible researchers ('event participants')

- **A: Living Allowance:** This refers to the contribution covering the subsistence expenses of the researchers attending the event(s). The contribution can cover up to 100% of the *real expenses* of each eligible event participant *up to a maximum* per day and per eligible event participant. This maximum is set to 150€ multiplied by the relevant correction coefficients (see Annex II). The correction coefficients are applied to take into account the cost of living in the country/countries where the event(s) take(s) place).
- **B: Travel Allowance:** This refers to a contribution to cover the costs for the eligible researcher of travelling between his/her location of origin and the location of the event(s). The contribution can cover *up to 100% of the real costs* of each eligible event participant. It is however *capped* per eligible event participant to the rates provided in Annex I.
- **E: Contribution to the participation expenses of eligible researchers:** This refers to the contribution to the event participation fees. The contribution can cover up to 100% of the participation fees of each eligible event participant on the basis of the official rates publicised for the event. It should be noted that participation fees for eligible researchers cannot exceed those charged to other participants and they should be reasonable with respect to the fees paid for comparable international events.

5.3.2 Expenses related to the activities of the Host organisation(s)

- **F: Contribution to the research/training/transfer of knowledge programme expenses** – These are all the cost incurred for the organisation of the events. They may include in particular the costs for publication, publicity, rental of venue, event secretariat as well as the costs linked to the participation of the keynote speakers (travel, subsistence...). Please note that these costs may be covered only partially by the Community contribution depending on the proportion of eligible researchers attending the event financed by the Community compared to the total number of researchers attending the event.
- **G: Management activities (including audit certification)** – These expenses cover the management of the contract and *should not exceed 7% of the EC contribution for Series of Events*. These expenses may include for instance, the work spent on the preparation of the contract deliverables and the costs linked to the audit certification of the claimed costs. It will be based upon actual expenses (e.g. towards the salary of a person assisting with the management of the project, or a contract with an external independent auditor for audit certification). In the case of public or international organisations, this certification may be provided by a competent public official;

- **I: Other types of eligible expenses/specific conditions** – expenses related to the purchase or leasing with option to buy of durable equipment in the execution of the project can be charged to the contract provided that they are:
 - necessary for the project;
 - duly justified on the basis of real costs (depreciation is to be taken into account);
 - and
 - provided that a prior approval of the Commission services has been obtained
 Depreciation is normally *partial* (i.e. pro rata of the years of use on the life-time of the equipment). Exceptionally depreciation can be *total*, if the equipment is indispensable to the project, *and* total depreciation can be justified by the use of the equipment, *and* if the final destination of the equipment after the project is determined (e.g. to be scrapped or donated free of charge).

5.4 How is the EC contribution determined?

Applicants are not required to calculate the estimated EC contribution. The Commission will calculate the EC contribution on the basis of the information provided in Part A of the Proposal Submission Forms.

Please note therefore that you are **not** required to indicate the subsistence costs (A) nor the travel costs (B) of the eligible event participants in the forms as the Commission will estimate these expenses on the basis of the applicable rates, the number of eligible researchers and applying the hypotheses and principles described in section 5.5.

Similarly, the Commission will estimate the requested contribution to organisational costs on the basis of the total organisational costs as indicated in the form A4, the proportion of fundable event participants on the total number of event participants and according to the principles described in section 5.5.

For the purpose of the estimation of the EC contribution, each participant should provide the following information in form A4 of the Proposal Submission Forms (Part A):

- The total number of Conferences to be organised by the participant;
- The total number of Training Courses to be organised by the participant ;
- The number of eligible event participants for groups 1, 2 and 3 involved in the events of the participant;
- The total number of event participants (i.e. eligible & non-eligible) involved in the events of the participant;
- The requested contribution to the participation fees for all the eligible event participants (i.e. **E**). Note that this amount should be arrived at by multiplying the participation fee per person by the total number of *eligible* event participants (i.e. the participants listed in groups 1, 2 & 3).
If the participation fee per person has been composed to cover also the costs of accomodation and meals during the event, the value of this should be deducted from the fee before calculating the requested contribution to the participation fees. This manipulation is necessary because the Commission will calculate the contribution to the daily subsistence expenses separately according to the rates set out in the Work Programme (re. A. Living Allowance above)
- The total organisational costs of all the events organised by the participant. The amount indicated under this heading should include *only* the organisational expenses (**F**) and the costs related to equipment (**I**) if applicable. The amount should *exclude* the

management of the project (i.e. **G**), which will be estimated separately by the Commission (max. 7% of the contribution), and the costs linked to the attendance of the eligible event participants (i.e. subsistence (**A**) and travel (**B**) costs which will also be estimated by the Commission).

It should be stressed that although proposers are not required to provide estimates of the subsistence & travel costs nor to indicate their precise request for a contribution to the organisational costs in the proposal forms, a full breakdown of the budget of the event(s) should be included in the part B of the proposal (section B.4.4 Financial Management).

On the basis of the information provided in Part A of the proposal, the Commission will estimate the overall amount requested for each proposal received.

If the proposal is selected by the Commission for funding, the EC contribution may be revised during the negotiation phase taking into account any recommendations made by the independent evaluators.

5.5 Example Calculation

The following example aims to explain how the Commission will estimate the requested contribution based on the information provided in the administrative forms of the proposal. It should be stressed that the figures used in the example have been chosen arbitrarily and should not in any way be regarded as 'ideal' values, which would be expected from a typical proposal.

More details on the procedure and formulae for estimating the Community contribution is provided in Annex III of this document.

Expenses related to eligible researchers ('event participants'):

Living and travel allowances (A & B): The contribution is estimated on the basis of the following *assumptions*:

- The events organised by each participant will take place in the country of the participant;
- The average subsistence expenses are set to 100€ per eligible researcher for Conferences and 80€ for Training Courses. The correction coefficients provided in Annex II shall be applied to the above averages;
- The average travel expenses are set to half of the maximum amounts indicated in Annex I for each eligible participant. However, for eligible researchers coming from the country where the event takes place, the average amount is set to 100€. Furthermore, the travel expenses for third country nationals are estimated to be 250€ higher than the travel expenses of eligible researchers coming from Member States;
- A hypothetical distribution of nationalities of event participants is defined for each event to compute the travel costs. This is done by using the relative number of researchers in the workforce for each country. A correction factor is applied to event participants coming from the country where the event takes place (+10%) and to Third country event participants (10%).
- A predefined event duration for conferences and training courses is used in order to compute the living allowances. The duration used for the calculation is derived from the data collected during the previous Framework Programme on more than 1000 supported events. For conferences, the typical duration is set to 5 days and for summer schools and training courses it is set to 10 days.

Participation fees (E): the amount provided in form A4 for each participant will be used directly to compute the EC contribution.

Expenses related to the activities of the Host organisation(s):

Organisational costs (F): the information provided in form A4 corresponds to the total organisational costs of the events to be organised by each participant. Therefore it includes the costs for durable equipment, which may be covered by the community contribution.

In order to avoid double funding the fraction of participation already covered under the expenses to the benefit of the researchers will be subtracted from the contribution to organisational costs.

Management costs (incl. audit certification) (G): the maximum of 7% of the contribution will be used to estimate the total contribution.

EXAMPLE (SCF) :

Number of participants:	1
Location of the participant:	Italy
Project duration:	4 years
Number of conferences:	4
Number of training courses:	2 (1 Training Course and 1 Summer School)

Number of eligible event participants in group 1:	100
Number of eligible event participants in group 2:	100
Number of eligible event participants in group 3:	20
Total number of event participants:	500
Participation fee according to publicised rates :	300€
Requested contribution to participation fees:	$300€ * (100+100+20) = 66,000€$
Total organisational Costs:	200,000€

The total estimated EC contribution to this project will be:

Living allowances:	131,000€	} See formulae in Annex III
Travel allowances:	87,000€	
Participation fees:	66,000€	
Organisational Costs	22,000€	
Management Costs:	23,000€	
Total estimated contribution:	329,000€	

6. Submission & Evaluation of Proposals

6.1 Submission of Proposals

6.1.1 Call for proposals

The call for proposal ref. **FP6-2005-Mobility-4** for the **Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses** was published on 19 January 2005 (OJ ref. 2005/C 13/07). It includes the timetable of the submission of proposals. The deadline by which proposals must arrive at the Commission offices is **18 May 2005 at 17.00 hrs Brussels time**. It is important to note that calls may be amended and that further calls can be published. You should always consult the latest deadline on the HRM web page - http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=192.

Please note that proposals **must be received by the Commission by the specified closing date and time of the call**. No extenuating circumstances, even if outside the control of the proposer, can be taken into account should a proposal arrive after the deadline for receipt.

6.1.2 Preparing a proposal

In order to prepare a proposal, please download the "InfoPack":

http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=192

Instructions on how to prepare and submit a proposal are given in the **Guide for Proposers for Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses**.

Each InfoPack contains the following three documents that are essential:

- The Call text as published in the Official Journal of the European Union. This will tell you the deadline for proposal submission.
- The Guide for Proposers provides a specimen of the administrative forms (known as "Part A") and instructions concerning a free-text description of the project (known as "Part B"). Detailed instructions are also provided on the electronic proposal submission process.
- The Current Work Programme of the HRM Activity. The Work Programme provides a detailed description of the Marie Curie actions, including eligibility and evaluation criteria that apply to proposals.

It is also important to consult the following documents as they elaborate on the evaluation process:

- The Guidelines on proposal evaluation and project selection procedures (the "Evaluation Manual"). This document describes the general principles and procedures that will be used for the evaluation of any FP6 proposals by independent experts.
- The HRM Activity Guidance Notes for Evaluators. These describe how the evaluation principles and procedures will apply in the HRM Activity. You may use these Guidelines to check against the specified criteria.

A complete proposal consists of the following 2 parts:

Part A: A series of administrative forms (forms A1, A2 and A4). The information in these forms is of great importance since it will be used for eligibility issues, for the calculation of the Community contribution and for the preparation of the contract negotiation.

Part B: The free-text description of the project. A series of headings and explanatory notes based on the evaluation criteria are proposed for the preparation of part B. The proposers are encouraged to address these issues in a clear, concise fashion.

Certain sections of Part B have a recommended length in terms of the number of pages. These recommendations are not mandatory, but be aware that the experts evaluators can look with disfavour on proposals which are excessively lengthy, repetitive or padded out with unnecessary or irrelevant material.

Incomplete proposals will be ineligible and therefore will not be evaluated. To be complete a proposal must include each of the relevant forms for part A as well as the part B.

6.1.3 Accuracy of Information

No original signatures are requested at the proposal stage. It is up to the proposers to ensure that all the information given is precise and correct. This information will be used in the eligibility checks and will be the basis for the evaluation and for the contract, if the proposal is selected. The participant(s) will be solely responsible for the veracity of the information given in the proposal. Note that any false declaration can result in an ineligible proposal at any stage of the process as well as in the termination of the eventual contract and in the recovery of the funds.

6.1.4 Methods for submission

Proposals for Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses (SCF) are submitted in a single stage in accordance with the instructions set out in the Call for proposals. Proposals must be received by the Commission by the closing date and time of the call.

Submission of proposals to this call should be made **electronically via the web-based Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS)**. This may be reached from the CORDIS call page:

http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=192

Details concerning electronic submission are given in the Guide for Proposers. Furthermore, a detailed "EPSS Online preparation and submission guide" is available on CORDIS.

Once you have filled in and submitted the EPSS registration form, the EPSS will send you by return email a username and password that will allow you to prepare and submit your proposal. Please note that the usernames and passwords are linked to only one proposal. Thus, for each proposal you want to prepare you have to register again.

Other methods of submission (e.g. via email or fax) will not be accepted.

The proposal Part B must be prepared in PDF ("portable document format", compatible with Adobe version 3 or higher, with embedded fonts). Other file formats will not be accepted by the system.

Only a single PDF file comprising the complete Part B can be uploaded. Any further files with annexes or additional information (company brochures, supporting documentation, reports, audio, video, multimedia etc.) will be rejected.

6.1.5 Multiple Submissions

Errors discovered in proposals submitted via the EPSS can be rectified by simply submitting a corrected version. So long as the call is not yet closed, the new submission will overwrite the previous one.

Once the deadline has passed, however, no further additions, corrections or re-submissions are accepted. The last version of the proposal received before the deadline is the one which will be evaluated, and any later material will be disregarded.

Host organisations may submit multiple applications to the same or other Marie Curie actions but their capacity to participate in those proposals simultaneously must be demonstrated clearly in the proposals.

“In case of multiple proposal submission in all other cases, including proposed participation in more than one proposal submitted in the same evaluation round of one action or in other actions open at the same time, the applicant-participants⁶ will have to demonstrate clearly the capacity to participate in those proposals simultaneously (in terms of research staff, infrastructure and management).

In case of submission of a proposal concerning a project in the same field for which the applicant-participant has received Community financing under the Marie Curie-actions under the Sixth Framework programme or under similar actions under previous Framework Programmes, the applicant⁷ has to demonstrate clearly the substantial added value of the new project in relation to the project previously financed.”

Work Programme section 2.5.4

⁶ At the appropriate organisational level of where the proposed research and training is to be executed

⁷ At the appropriate organisational level of where the proposed research and training is to be executed

6.2 Evaluation of proposals

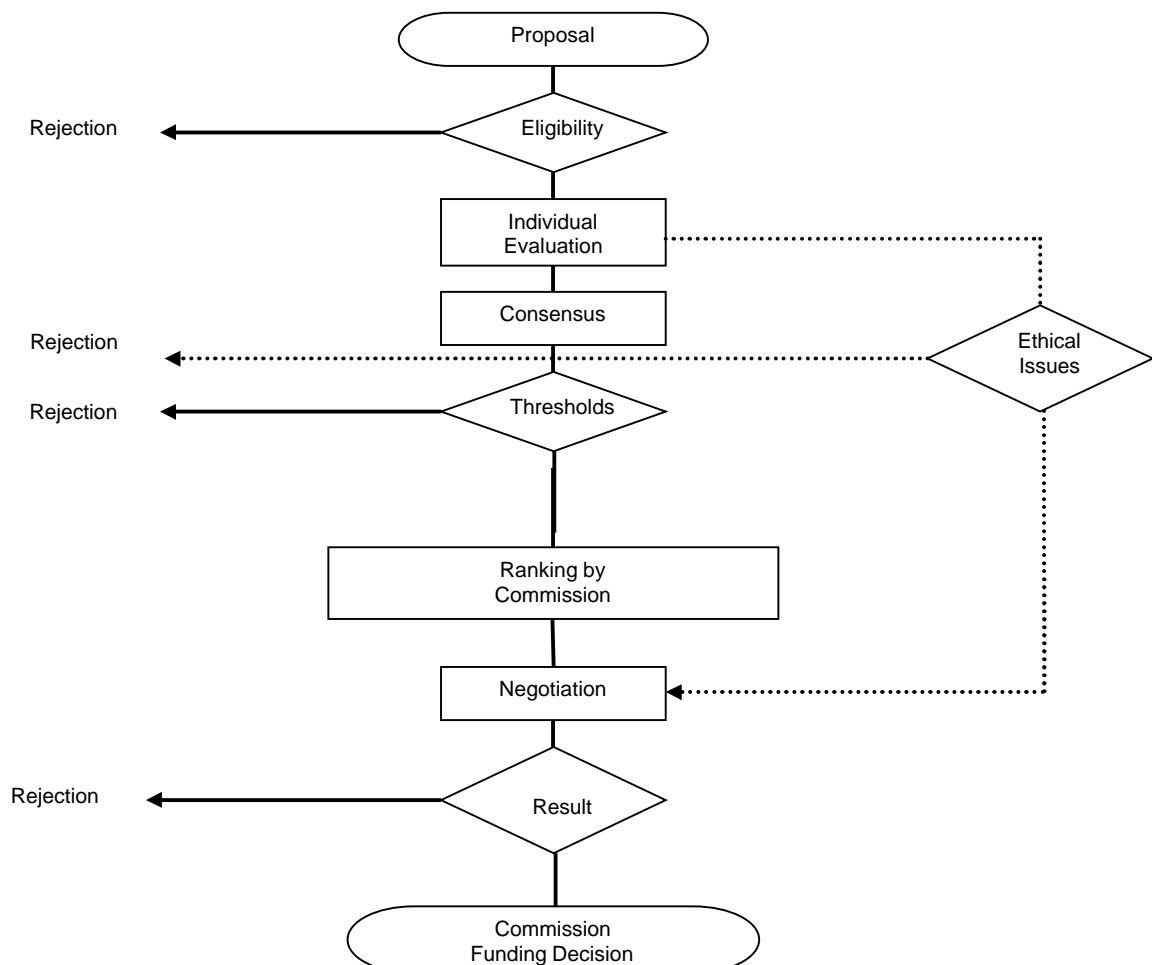
6.2.1 General Principles

The fundamental principles governing the evaluation of proposals are:

- **transparency:** a clear framework will be provided for researchers preparing proposals, for experts evaluating proposals, and for the Commission services themselves;
- **fair treatment:** all proposals will be treated alike, irrespective of where they originate, and of the identity of the applicants;
- **impartiality:** all eligible proposals will be treated impartially on their merits, subject to an independent peer review;
- **efficiency and speed:** the procedures must be designed to be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation and respecting the legal framework within which the specific programme is managed;
- **ethical considerations:** any proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles (particularly those set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union), or which does not fulfil the conditions set out in the Work Programme or in the call for proposals, may be excluded from the evaluation and selection process at any time.

6.2.2 Evaluation Process

In the following diagram, we show the overall evaluation process schematically:



Evaluation will be conducted by the Commission services with the assistance of independent experts according to the principles of “peer review”. The experts will follow the procedures of the *Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Project Selection Procedures* (the “Evaluation Manual”), and apply the criteria given to them in the Human Resources and Mobility Work Programme.

Proposals that involve ethical issues will go through an ethical review prior to the contract negotiation. This might lead to the rejection of a proposal or may raise issues, which will be included in the negotiations.

6.2.3 Evaluation criteria

In order to determine the extent to which a proposal addresses the objectives of an action, independent experts are provided with a set of criteria to which marks are attributed. These criteria are listed in Annex Mob-B of the Work Programme (and reproduced at the end of this section).

The expert evaluators use these criteria in order to assign a score to the proposal. It is therefore important to ensure that the “Part B” of the proposal addresses all the relevant criteria.

Each proposal will be evaluated by several independent experts who will mark each criterion on a scale of 0 to 5 points. Once a consensus has been reached among the evaluators, the following procedure will be applied:

- For one of the criteria, the consensus mark will be subject to a minimum threshold to ensure the excellence of the proposal in terms of the quality of the training activities and the transfer of knowledge involved;
- Each mark will then be weighted to reflect the relative importance of each criterion taking into account the objectives of the action;
- The overall score is subsequently determined by the sum of the weighted marks to which a threshold of 70% will then be applied.

Any proposal for which the consensus score of the expert evaluators falls below any of the above thresholds will be automatically excluded from funding.

Evaluation Criteria

HRM evaluation criterion	Specific questions to be posed to evaluators	Threshold score	Weighting
Scientific Quality of the Project	Quality and originality of topics Quality of content with regard to complementary skills, where appropriate Coherence between events	-	25
Quality of Research Training	Quality of training Contact building arrangements Importance and relevance of the training	4	15
Quality of the Host	Quality and capabilities of the organisers Quality of locations / infrastructures	-	10
Quality of the Researchers	N/A	N/A	N/A
Management and Feasibility	Management of the (series of) events: feasibility and credibility of proposed plans, availability of necessary resources Publicity and dissemination incl. web-site/ internet forum	-	20
Added Value and relevance to objectives	Relevance of the proposal to one or more of the specific objectives of the action Relevance of theme(s) in relation to European achievements and interests Composition of audience and identity of speakers Benefit to the organisers in terms of increased capacity to train and host conferences Extent to which European policy objectives are met e.g contribution to the European Research Area, attractiveness of science, effects on public understanding; improving gender balance, international activities	-	30

6.2.4 Ranking of proposals

Based on the overall scores of the proposals that are above the thresholds, the experts will draw-up a list of proposals placed in order of merit for consideration by the Commission. An Evaluation Summary Report will be prepared for each eligible proposal, a copy of which will be sent to the proposer. At this stage the Commission can modify the priority list given by the expert evaluators on the basis of the priorities of the programme. In such cases, the Commission will clearly indicate the motivations for the action taken.

On the basis of the above and taking into account the available budget, the Commission will draw-up a priority list of the proposals for immediate negotiation. In addition, a reserve list will be compiled consisting of those proposals that might also enter into negotiations if budget becomes available (e.g. following withdrawal of proposals etc.).

The remaining proposals that attain all the thresholds but for which no funding is available will be rejected for budgetary reasons.

7. Negotiations & Contracts

7.1 *The negotiation phase*

If the proposal has been successfully evaluated by the Commission on the basis of peer-review and has been retained by the Commission, proposers will be invited to enter into contract negotiations. During this phase the financial aspects of the proposal and the detailed implementation of the work programme will be agreed. The outcome of the negotiations will be the determination of the funding to be allocated to the project and the drafting of a technical annex that will form part of the contract. This technical annex will determine the objectives and main deliverables in terms of research and training.

In the case of proposal having gone through an ethical review at the evaluation stage any relevant issues raised will be included in the negotiations.

Assuming that the negotiations are successfully concluded, a formal Commission Decision approving the funding will be made and the proposer informed accordingly. In the event of withdrawal of applicants or other unsuccessful negotiations among the proposers initially selected, proposers from the reserve list will be contacted to begin negotiations.

7.2 *The contract phase*

A draft contract is subsequently prepared and sent to the Host institution(s) for signature.

7.2.1 *The contract*

The contract with the Commission will establish the rights and obligations of the Host and in particular the arrangements for the technical and financial implementation, eligibility of expenditure, as well as rules regarding intellectual property rights.

The contract is structured along the following lines⁵:

- a **core** text containing: the scope, duration, maximum Community contribution, deliverables, payment modalities;
- **Annex I “Description of Work”** containing the details and objectives of the project; a list of qualitative and quantitative indicators used specifically to monitor the project and an indicative schedule of events; a description of the scientific and training objectives, and of the organisation and management structure; a breakdown of the Community contribution by activity for the whole duration of the contract.
- **Annex II “General conditions”** covering standard legal and administrative provisions, the IPR regime and standard financial provisions among others;
- **Annex III “Specific provisions related to the Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses**, stipulating the obligations of the Host Organisation, the rates of Community support etc.;
- **Annex IV “Form A” – Consent of contractors to accede to the contract (if applicable)**
- **Annex V “Form B” – Accession of new legal entities to the contract (if applicable)**
- **Annex VI “Form C – Model Financial Statement**

⁵ http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/working-groups/model-contract/index_en.html

7.2.2 Contracting parties

In **mono-partner projects**, the contract is concluded between the Commission and the single Host organisation. It enters into force on signature by the two parties.

In **multi-partner projects**, the contract is concluded between the Commission and all the participants (or with a common legal structure that represents them from the legal point of view – known as ‘the consortium’)). The contract enters into force on signature by the Commission and the coordinator or on signature by the Commission and all the participants. The other participants identified in the contract shall accede to the contract and enjoy the rights and assume the obligations of participants.

Any participant joining an ongoing project shall accede to the contract and enjoy the rights and assume the obligations of participants toward the Community.

7.3 Additional information for multi-partner projects

7.3.1 Role of the coordinator

The following tasks of the coordinator will be specified in the contract:

a) to act as the intermediary between the *consortium* and the *Commission*. All information related to the *project* shall be transmitted by the *consortium* to the *Commission* through the *coordinator*, with the exceptions foreseen in the *contract*.

b) to receive all payments made by the *Commission* and administer the *Community* contribution regarding its allocation between *contractors* and activities in accordance with this *contract* and decisions taken by the *consortium*. The *coordinator* shall ensure that the appropriate payments are made to *contractors* without unjustified delay.

c) to keep accounts making it possible to determine at any time what portion of the *Community* funds has been allocated to each *contractor* for the purposes of the *project* and inform the *Commission* of the distribution of the funds and the date of transfers to the *contractors* on an annual basis.

d) to ensure that the tasks regarding the signature of the contract by the other contractors are carried out in a timely and correct manner.

The consortium may, of course, agree to entrust other tasks to the coordinator, in particular under the terms of any consortium agreement between the participants.

7.3.2 Consortium agreement

The technical implementation of the project will be the collective responsibility of the participants. The conclusion of a **consortium agreement will not be mandatory** for multi-partner projects. A consortium agreement may include:

- the internal organisation of the consortium, its **governance structure, decision-making processes and management arrangements**;
- arrangements for the distribution of the *Community* contribution among participants and among activities;
- provisions for the settlement of disputes within the partnership;
- **specific arrangements concerning intellectual property** rights to be applied among the participants and their affiliates, in compliance with the general arrangements stipulated in the contract;
- **any other provision** necessary to ensure a sound management of the project.

The consortium agreement should be signed as early as possible and preferably no later than the date on which the contract with the *Commission* enters into force.

8. Implementation of the project

At its outset, the contract will contain an agreed overall implementation plan for the full duration of the project together with its associated indicative financial plan. A pre-financing (an advance payment) will be made at the start of the project.

With the agreement of the Commission, the overall implementation plan may be modified and the detailed plan will roll forward each year, as part of the reporting schedule. However, the overall objectives and principal deliverables, as set out in the contract, will not be expected to change during the lifetime of the project.

8.1 Periodic reporting and payments

The (co-ordinating) host institution will be required to submit periodic **scientific and financial reports** to the Commission. The Commission will need to review and approve all of these documents and in doing so, it may be assisted by external experts.

Once the Commission has accepted a periodic financial report, an equivalent part of the advance will be converted into an accepted payment and will be considered as a full and final settlement of the payment for the period concerned. This will be the case only if audited cost certificates are provided with the financial statement and is also subject, of course, to any ex-post audit. If no such certificate has been provided with the periodic report, the following payment will still be considered as an advance payment.

It is the intention that projects should never be operating without an approved detailed plan, nor without a satisfactory advance payment.

8.2 Final reporting

At the completion of the project, a **final report** will assess the results of the project against its agreed objectives. The final report will also include, among others:

- q an analysis and evaluation of the potential economic and social impact of the achievements of the project;
- q a description of the project's activities and future plans regarding the use and dissemination of knowledge;
- q an assessment of the equal opportunity promotion actions.

The final report should be accompanied by a financial statement and a financial report for the final period.

9. Follow-up and monitoring

9.1 Tasks of the Project Officer

A project officer from among the Commission staff will be assigned to each project. The project officer may be assisted by other persons, internal and external to the Commission, with the appropriate technical expertise. The project officer maintains close contact with the contractor in order to ensure proper overall monitoring, as well as timely feed-back between the project and the Commission on developments needing particular attention. The tasks of a project officer include:

- serving as a permanent contact point for the project;
- arranging the follow-up of the project, including analysis of all project reports, both from the scientific/technical and financial/managerial points of view;
- attending all formal project reviews where this is deemed necessary.

9.2 Continuous Assessment

The Commission services will monitor the project so as to ensure proper work execution according to the terms of the contract, to protect the Community's financial interests, to reinforce public accountability and to ensure maximum synergy and coherence with other actions within the specific programme « Structuring the European Research Area ».

A variety of means will be used to carry out a systematic and continuous assessment of the implementation of the individual contracts and the success of the Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses activity:

- The scientific quality, training, dissemination and management aspects will be assessed by the Commission's Project Officers assisted by independent experts via on site visits, annual and final reporting (including cost statements);
- The participants, attending the supported events, will be invited to complete a questionnaire to assess their level of satisfaction and their career prospects in order to help the Commission in monitoring the impact of the activity as well as to provide feedback to the coordinator;

Reporting by the contractor is obligatory and provision will be made by the Commission to provide reporting data on-line (incl. questionnaires).

9.3 Audits

The model contract will specify an audit regime to enable the Commission to proceed to audits, dealing with **technical**, **financial**, **technological** (innovation impact), and **ethical** aspects:

- **Technical audits** may be launched at any point during the implementation of the project in order to verify that the project is being or has been carried out in accordance with the conditions indicated by the participant.
- **Financial audits** may be launched at any time, and may deal with any aspect of the financial implementation of the whole or a part of the project.
- **Technological audits** dealing with the use and dissemination of results may be launched at the end of all the projects, but may also be carried out earlier, if considered necessary by the Commission.
- **Ethical audits** may be launched at any time during the implementation of the project in order to verify that the project is respecting fundamental ethical principles and national regulations.

Various audits may be undertaken simultaneously. In particular, parallel technical and financial audits of a given project could be opportune. The Commission itself will conduct the audits or entitle another entity to do so.

Where to obtain further help

In the event that you have a question that has not been addressed in this document, you are invited to contact the Marie Cure Actions helpdesk using the following email address:

rtd-mariecurie-actions@cec.eu.int

We will endeavour to answer your questions as rapidly as possible.

Annex I: Travel allowance

The travel expenses of each eligible researcher ('event participant') is covered on the basis of real costs up to the maximum amounts indicated in the table below :

Distance¹ (km)	Maximum contribution (€)
< 500	250
500 – 1.000	500
1.000 – 1.500	750
1.500 – 2.500	1 000
2.500 – 5.000	1 500
5.000 – 10.000	2 000
>10.000	2 500

¹ Direct distance (as the crow flies) based on latitude and longitude between the two locations.

Annex II: Correction Coefficients ^{1) 2)}

The correction coefficients are applied to the daily living allowances of eligible researchers to take account of the cost of living in the country where the event takes place.

Austria	104	Belgium	100	Cyprus	95,1	Czech Republic	92	Denmark	129,1
Estonia	74,3	Finland	115,9	France	104,7	Germany	103,8	Greece	87,6
Hungary	69	Ireland	108,2	Italy	99,3	Latvia	80,7	Lithuania	76,6
Luxemburg	100	Malta	103	Netherlands	103,9	Poland	88,7	Portugal	88,7
Slovakia	68,8	Slovenia	76,4	Spain	93,7	Sweden	110,7	United Kingdom	112,5
Bulgaria	72,1	Iceland	118,9	Israel	121,6	Norway	134,2	Romania	55,1
Switzerland	124,8	Turkey	81,3						
Albania	97,3	Angola	115,9	Argentina	129,4	Australia	93,9	Bangladesh	77,9
Barbados	142,5	Belize	103,2	Benin	88,4	Bolivia	74,3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	87,5
Botswana	55,4	Brazil	82,4	Burkina Faso	78,5	Cameroon	96,1	Canada	84,5
Cape Verde	75,6	Central African Republic	109,8	Chad	112,5	Chile	86,2	China	107,3
Colombia	82,9	Congo	103,9	Costa Rica	104,7	Côte d'Ivoire	106,1	Croatia	97,3
Democratic Rep. of the Congo	144,9	Djibouti	141,8	Dominican Republic	92,4	Egypt	73,4	Equatorial Guinea	95,8
Eritrea	46,3	Ethiopia	80,2	Fiji	71,1	FYROM	77,5	Gabon	116,1
Georgia	111,2	Ghana	89,5	Guatemala	93,8	Guinea	87,1	Guinea-Bissau	132,2
Guyana	70,7	Haiti	98,4	Hong Kong	121,9	India	61,2	Indonesia	88,5
Jamaica	126,4	Japan	161,3	Jordan	99,2	Kazakhstan	117,9	Kenya	98,5
Lebanon	110,9	Lesotho	44,1	Madagascar	96,1	Malawi	105	Mali	86,6
Mauritania	72,8	Mauritius	84,5	Mexico	102,4	Morocco	89,6	Mozambique	81,7
Namibia	48,4	Netherlands Antilles	121	New Caledonia	122,2	Nicaragua	99,4	Niger	87,7
Nigeria	102,7	Pakistan	59,3	Papua New Guinea	68,3	Peru	112,4	Philippines	68,7
Russia	133,6	São Tomé and Príncipe	74,4	Senegal	81,5	Solomon Islands	97,2	South Africa	41,9
South Korea	108,3	Sri Lanka	77,8	Sudan	48	Surinam	81,5	Swaziland	42,3
Syria	108,4	Tanzania	80,9	Thailand	70,9	The Comoros	103,3	The Gambia	60,5
Togo	96,3	Tonga	72,7	Trinidad and Tobago	90,7	Tunisia	83,6	Uganda	99,2
Ukraine	123,9	United States	132,5	Uruguay	109,3	Vanuata	121,9	Venezuela	115,6
Vietnam	68,9	West Bank and Gaza Strip	112,9	Serbia and Montenegro	63,6	Zambia	66	Zimbabwe	88,5

1) These rates are based on the correction coefficients used for EC civil servants working in these countries.

2) For those countries where the correction coefficient is not available (not indicated in the table), the Commission will decide on a case by case basis.

Annex III: The estimation of the Community Contribution

Series of Events (SCF):

For each participant I, the following is defined:

$N_{i,k}$	number of eligible event participants in group k (provided in form A4);
N_k	total number of event participants (provided in form A4);
N_{conf_i}	number of Conferences (provided in form A4);
N_{cours_i}	number of Courses (provided in form A4);
$Participation_fees_i$	requested contribution to participation fees (provided in form A4);
$T_org_costs_i$	total organisational costs (provided in form A4).
Cor_i	correction coefficient associated to the location of the participant.
$Frac_funded_i = \frac{\sum_i N_{i,k}}{N_k}$	fraction of funded participants

Travel allowance:

In order to estimate the geographical spread of the event participants, the Commission assumes that an average event participant is a direct function of the demographic weight of each country in research. We can therefore estimate the distribution function of the event participants using statistics on the number of researchers in the workforce and on the demography of each country (see Table 1).

Table 1 Estimated geographical distribution of event participants (Member States only)

Country	FTE/1000 workforce ⁹	Population in thousands ¹⁰	Fraction%
A	4,86	8159	2,0
B	6,11	10346	3,2
D	6,07	82555	25,5
DK	6,46	5388	1,8
E	3,77	40683	7,8
EL	2,57	11018	1,4
F	6,14	59637	18,6
FIN	10,62	5207	2,8
IRL	5,12	3931	1,0
I	3,33	56464	9,6
L	N/A	449	N/A
NL	5,05	16195	4,2
P	3,27	10409	1,7
S	8,44	8943	3,8
UK	5,54	59088	16,6
		Total	100,0

Moreover it is assumed that, in average and for each eligible event participant :

- 80% is from the Member and Associated States;
- 10% is from Third countries (based on FP5 statistics of the HLSC activity¹¹);
- 10% more is from the country where the event is located.¹²

The average travel cost per event participant TC_i , is equal to:

$$TC_i = 0.8 * \sum_k T_{i,k} * F_k + 0.1 * 100 + 0.1 * \sum_k (T_{i,k} + 250) * F_k$$

Where $T_{i,k}$ is the average travel cost between country i and k (distance taken as the crow flies from capital to capital). For the purpose of this estimation it is assumed that the average travel cost, $T_{i,k}$ is half of the maximum amounts indicated in Annex I;

F_k is the fraction provided in Table 1.

⁹ European Commission, Towards a European Research Area - Key Figure 2001 - Special Edition Indicators for Benchmarking of national research policies, ISBN 92-894-1183-X

¹⁰ Eurostat, population statistics on 01/01/2003, available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>

¹¹ FP5, 2001 Annual Report, High-Level Scientific Conferences activity, available at <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/conferences>

¹² It should be mentioned that this estimate is very close to the statistical information collected during FP5 for the High-Level Scientific Conferences activity¹². It is therefore felt that the present estimate will allow a good estimation of the Community contribution.

It is assumed that :

- the local event participants (i.e. those coming from the country where the event takes place) will spend on average 100€ on travel.
- the average travel costs for third country nationals is estimated to be 250€ higher than for event participants located in Member States.

On the basis of these assumptions the average travel costs of eligible researchers are estimated to be :

Table 2
Estimated average travel cost per event participant as a function of the location

Event location	Total TC _i	Local	Third country	Member & Associated State
A	338	10	58,62	268,94
B	249	10	48,74	189,89
D	282	10	52,45	219,61
DK	320	10	56,64	253,15
E	414	10	67,11	336,91
EL	525	10	79,48	435,88
F	254	10	49,30	194,43
FIN	454	10	71,55	372,44
IRL	358	10	60,90	287,20
I	378	10	63,10	304,76
L	269	10	51,02	208,18
NL	259	10	49,94	199,51
P	483	10	74,82	398,58
S	415	10	67,17	337,40
UK	297	10	54,09	232,71

To take account of the fact that the eligible event participants in group 3 are likely to come from farther locations, it is assumed that the travel expenses of such event participants will be 250 € higher than the travel costs of event participants coming from the Member States¹³.

We can therefore estimate the requested contribution to travel costs of eligible researchers per participant (host organisation) using the following formula:

$$\text{Travel_costs}_i = (N_{i,1} + N_{i,2}) * TC_i + N_{i,3} * (TC_i + 250)$$

¹³ FP5, 2001 Annual Report, High-Level Scientific Conferences activity, available at <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/conferences>

Living allowance:

For the estimation of the requested funding related to the daily subsistence of eligible researchers per participant (host organisation), it is assumed that:

- $T_{conf} = 5$ days, average duration of a conference¹⁴;
 $T_{train} = 10$ days, average duration of a course or a summer school¹;
 $Subs_{conf} = 100$ €, average subsistence costs for the eligible event participants attending a conference;
 $Subs_{train} = 80$ €, average subsistence costs for the eligible event participants attending a training course;
 $Ratio_{event} = 1$, ratio between the eligible event participants attending conferences and those attending training courses,

Moreover, since:

$$N_{part_conf_i} = \sum N_{i,k} / (N_{CONF_i} + N_{TRAIN_i} / Ratio_{event})$$

$$N_{part_train} = N_{part_conf} / Ratio_{event}$$

We can estimate that:

$$Subsistence_i = Cor_i * (T_{conf} * Subs_{conf} * N_{conf_i} * N_{part_conf_i} + T_{train} * Subs_{train} * N_{train_i} * N_{part_train_i})$$

Total estimated EC contribution :

The contribution for each participant i is given as:

$$Cont_i = Subsistence_i + Travel_costs_i + Participation_fees_i + Frac_funded_i * T_org_costs_i - Participation_fees_i$$

Adding the contribution to management (max. 7%), the total estimated EC contribution is therefore:

$$EC_cont = 1/(1-0.07) * \sum_i Cont_i$$

¹⁴ based on FP5 Statistics of the High-Level Scientific Conferences (HLSC) activity

Annex IV: ERACAREERS - The pan-European Researcher's Mobility Portal

One of the major obstacles to transnational mobility is the lack of adequate information on available grants and opportunities for researchers in Europe as well as on questions related to visa, access to employment, social security rights, fiscal matters and cultural aspects when researchers move to another country.

As a response to these needs, the European Commission has launched **ERACAREERS**, the **pan-European Researcher's Mobility Portal**. The URL for the portal is:

<http://europa.eu.int/eracareers>

The most relevant international, national and sectoral research organisations are being mobilised towards the interconnection at European level of their databases and information sources.

What services does the Researcher's Mobility Portal offer?

- **Available research job vacancies** published by the different actors of the Research community (universities, industries, research organisations, foundations, etc);
- **Practical information about administrative and legal issues** when moving from one country to another, as well as up-to-date information about cultural and family related aspects (conditions of entry, social security, housing, schooling, day-care, language courses, etc)
- A versatile and powerful **job vacancies data-base** where research organisations may advertise for free their job vacancies (directly visible on the homepage under the 'What's new on this site' section)
- A **CV data-base** aimed at collecting researchers' CVs
- Access to **national researcher's mobility portals** which have been developed as part of this overall huge initiative aiming at creating a more favourable environment for researchers in Europe
- Access to **ERA-MORE**, the European Network of Mobility Centres (<http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/era-more>) providing personalised assistance in all matters related to researchers' lives when they move from one country to another
- **General information** about research policies relevant to the career development of researchers in Europe as well access to a wealth of **relevant on-line career resources for researchers**, including EMBO, Science's Next Wave Europe, Nature-jobs, Ploteus and many others

Customised assistance: ERA-MORE, the European Network of Mobility Centres

The main aim of ERA-MORE, the European network of mobility centres, launched in June 2004, is to offer national and foreign researchers customised assistance in all matters relating to their professional and daily lives before, during and after their periods abroad. In fact these mobility centres want to take the pain out of moving: they will help researchers with issues related to visas, work permits, salaries and taxation, pension rights, health

care, social security, accommodation, recognition of qualifications, day care and schooling, language courses and social and cultural issues

The Network involves all EU Member States as well as Candidate Countries and Associated Countries and the location of the centres covers a wide range of organisations, such as university information centres, research bodies, public authorities, foundations or businesses.

Annex V: Bibliography

Information on Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses

Under the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5)	http://www.cordis.lu/improving/conferences/database.htm
Under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6)	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/action/courses_en.html

Legal decisions

Decision on the Framework Programme	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/decision/
Rules of Participation in FP6	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/participationrules/
Specific decision "Structuring the European Research Area"	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/specificprogrammes/

Information on Marie Curie Actions

InfoPacks (including the Guide for Proposers and the HRM Work Programme)	http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=192
Brochure "A rough guide to the Marie Curie Actions"	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/publications_en.html
HRM Guidance Notes for Evaluators	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/pdf/guidance_evaluators.pdf

Supporting information

Brochure "The Sixth Framework Programme in Brief"	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/inbrief/
The Researcher's Mobility Portal	http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm
CORDIS FP6 service	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/
National Contact Points	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/ncps/
Information Days and other events	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/events/
IPR helpdesk	http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org
CORDIS partner search facility	http://partners-service.cordis.lu/
Ethical Issues and Rules	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/ethics/ethics_en.html
International cooperation	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/index_en.html (<i>general site</i>) and www.cordis.lu/fp6/inco/
Science and Society action plan	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/action-plan/action-plan_en.html and http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/science-society/library.htm
Guidelines on techniques for science communication with the public	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/science-communication/index_en.htm
List of Countries associated to FP6	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/iscp/countries.html

Contractual information

Consortium agreement checklist	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/consortiumchecklist/
Contract preparation forms	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm#cpf
Model contracts	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm#modelcontracts

Annex VI: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General

Q: What are Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses'?

A: Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses are implemented either as a 'Series of Events' (SCF) or 'Large Conferences' (LCF) for the purpose of providing training primarily to researchers with up to ten years of experience. The first call for proposals with deadlines in 2003 and 2004 was open to funding of both SCF and LCF whereas the 2005 and 2006 calls only foresee funding of SCF. No more calls are envisaged for LCF.

Q: Can an SCF include conferences?

A: Yes; the type of events can be either training courses or conferences, or a combination of the two. However, it should be noted that the total number of event participants (with or without EU support and incl. keynote speakers) should normally not exceed 150 for each event.

Q: Is there a specific accelerated procedure for short-term events?

A: No. Events which take place less than six months after the corresponding deadline for submission of proposals under the Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses' scheme will not be eligible for funding.

Q: What is the average budget for a 'Series of Events'?

A: As an indication, based on the first call under this action in the Sixth Framework Programme, the size of the projects will vary between approximately €180 000 and €1 400 000.

Q: Which research topics are supported?

A: The action has a bottom-up approach. This means that all fields of science and technology are eligible for funding, and there is no *a priori* distribution of the budget between scientific disciplines.

Q: How does one apply?

A: Interested organisations should first read the SCF Handbook prepared by the Commission in order to understand the rules for participating in this scheme (available on the website of the Marie Curie Actions: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/publications_en.html). Once they have decided to prepare a proposal, applicants should read carefully all relevant documents from the InfoPack available for each call for proposals on the CORDIS website:

http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=192 The legal documents listed in chapter VII of the Guide for Proposers might also help applicants to understand better the evaluation process, the rules for participation, contractual and financial issues, etc. The application is made through the on-line Electronic Proposal Submission System (EPSS): <http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/subprop.cfm>

Host Organisations

Q: What kind of organisations can apply?

A: A 'Series of Events' (SCF) may be proposed by all kinds of legal entities active in research or researcher advanced training (e.g. universities, research organisations, international organisations, industrial/commercial firms, SMEs, ...).

Q: Who precisely are the 'participants' mentioned in the Commission documents?

A: 'Participant' refers to the legal entity taking part in the project as organiser or as co-organiser and with whom the Commission concludes the contract. This should not be confused with 'event participant' which refers to the researcher attending the conference or training course and who is the final beneficiary of support given under the contract.

Q: What is the minimum number of conference/course organisers ('participants') in a Series of Events (SCF)?

A: For Series of Events (SCF) proposals may be made *either* by a single legal entity established in a Member State or an Associated State, *or* by a consortium of two or more mutually independent legal entities of which at least one must be established in a Member State or an Associated State.

If a project has two or more participants, the participants may choose to create a consortium.

Q: Is a conference/course organiser a "host organisation" in the sense referred to in the Work Programme and, if so, how do the rules applicable to hosts translate in this case?

A: Yes, a conference/course organiser is a host organisation, and the rules of the Work Programme apply analogously; e.g. for "recruitment (of researchers)" read "registration" in this case.

Q: Can a conference/course organiser of an SCF be located in a third country?

A: Yes, provided that the project has at least one other participant established in a Member State or Associated State. In any case the participation of third country legal entities must be duly justified in the proposal.

Eligible researchers

Q: Who can benefit from EU support in order to attend the conferences and training events (the 'eligible researchers')?

A: If a proposal is successful, the attendance of researchers with less than ten years of research experience can be supported by the European Commission, with priority being given to those with less than four years' experience. Subject to certain conditions, the attendance of researchers with more than ten years of experience may also be supported.

Q: Is there a way for individual researchers to apply directly to the Commission in order to request grants for attendance at conferences?

A: No. EC support for attendance at conferences is always provided to eligible researchers through the event organisers, if they have already obtained a funding contract from the European Commission.

Q: Where can researchers find the list of events supported by the Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action?

A: For each contract the coordinator must advertise the details of the events and the number of available vacancies on the CORDIS website:

http://mc-opportunities.cordis.lu/home_evt.cfm

Q: Are researchers from third countries eligible for financial support when attending an event under the Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action?

A: Third-country nationals with up to ten years of work experience in research (full time equivalent) could benefit from the European contribution.

Q: Is there a ceiling for the attendance of researchers from third countries?

A: Yes; the proportion of funded researchers from third countries may not exceed 30% of the total funded researchers for each event. Furthermore, the proportion of third-country researchers attending each event may not exceed 30% of the total number in attendance.

Q: Is there a ceiling for the overall attendance of researchers from Member States and Associated States?

A: No. However, no more than 30% of the total number of researchers attending each event may be nationals of the same Member State or Associated State.

Q: Must the team of event participants be the same in each event within an SCF?

A: No; participation in each event should be open to any interested researcher, and the eligibility of each participant for EU financing will be determined each time a new event is organised.

Project implementation

Q: Is the Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action similar to the EuroConferences activity in the previous Framework Programmes?

A: The Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action maintains, to some extent, the objectives of the High-Level Scientific activity under FP5 and the EuroConferences activity under FP4 and FP3, i.e. the training of young researchers and networking of European researchers working outside Europe. Within the FP6 Series of Events, the proposers still have the possibility to organise the same types of events as under the previous Framework Programme. Typically, what were previously referred to as EuroConferences, EuroWorkshops and EuroPhDConferences will now fall into the conferences category, while EuroLabCourses and EuroSummerSchools will be considered as training courses.

Q: Are organisers of the FP5 High-Level Scientific Conferences activity allowed to keep the EuroConference label if they receive support under the FP6 Marie Curie scheme for Conferences and Training Courses'?

A: Yes. You may, of course, give any label to your events, and you could keep this label to stress continuity. But please bear in mind that the Commission support received should be clearly acknowledged in all your communications and publicity, mentioning the official name of the action: 'Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses'.

Q: What is meant by the "coherence" of an SCF covering several themes?

A: From a scientific and/or training point of view this could involve the relation between theory and application, different contributions to the resolution of the same set of problems, etc. From an organisational point of view, one should think of economies of scale in organising the series in the same format, with the same teaching resources, etc.

Q: *Is it permissible to present a series of conferences and summer schools in the same proposal?*

A: Yes, the Series of Events measure has been designed specifically for this purpose, thus encouraging the potential coordinators in building synergies to reach the critical mass while respecting the coherence of the project.

Q: *Is it possible to apply for a single conference?*

A: No. The 2005 and 2006 calls for proposals only foresee funding for Series of Events. The minimum number of events in a Series is four, and for each event the total number of event participants (with or without EU support and incl. keynote speakers) should normally not exceed 150.

Q: *Is it permissible to submit a proposal for an SCF which would include only training courses?*

A: Yes.

Q: *What are virtual events?*

A: Virtual events are meetings taking place via the web, whereby the participants remain at their own locations and meet in a virtual environment via interconnected computers.

Q: *Is it possible for organisations which are involved as host organisations in another multi-partner Marie Curie action (i.e. RTN, EST, or TOK) to apply for a Series of Events in order to offer workshops or to hold their annual meeting?*

A: Yes, this is possible as long as there is no double funding. The proposal description should clearly demonstrate that the objectives of the proposal go beyond the frame of the existing host contract.

Q: *Can events be organised outside the EU Member States and Associated States?*

A: Yes; third-country locations are eligible. However, any event located in a third country should be well justified in the proposal description.

Q: *What is the minimum and maximum duration of an event?*

A: There is no minimum duration. It is expected that conferences will typically last a few days, while training courses will last from one to a few weeks. The maximum duration is four weeks for each event. Please note that for the purpose of estimating the EU contribution, an average duration of five days for conferences and 12 days for courses (including summer schools) is used by the Commission.

Q: *What is the maximum duration of an SCF project?*

A: The maximum duration of a Marie Curie Conference and Training Courses project is four years.

Q: *Should the number of days counted in a conference or training course include Saturdays and Sundays or only weekdays?*

A: Saturdays and Sundays should be counted in the total number of days if the programme of the event has scheduled activities during these days.

Financial and contractual issues

Q: How can the funding be used in Series of Events?

A: First of all, funding is available for the benefit of the eligible researchers as a contribution to their travel costs, their daily living expenses, and the cost of their participation in the conferences and training courses.

Furthermore, the EC funding comprises a contribution to the costs linked to the organisation of the events (including new equipment).

Finally, funding is available to cover that part of the expenses related to project management (including the audit).

Q: Are the costs related to the preparation of a Series of Events by the coordinator (and partners) considered as eligible for EU funding?

A: Some of the costs related to the preparation of the Series of Events may be covered by the contribution to project management provided that these costs occur after the start date of the project.

Q: Are personnel costs related to the events secretariat, the creation of a website, the design of invitations, etc. eligible for EU funding?

A: Some of these costs may be covered by the contribution to organisational costs

Q: As regards travel and living allowances, do the organisers have to collect the plane tickets, train tickets and hotel bills from every eligible researcher? How are they supposed to report the actual costs?

A: The contribution to travel and living expenses of the funded event participants must cover real costs. The coordinator should make sure to keep all the necessary documents required by the auditors when preparing the periodic management reports and financial statements

Q: Are the costs related to travel and daily allowance of the keynote speakers and experts who will give lectures and training eligible for EU funding? If yes, are there any requirements regarding the nationality or research experience of those speakers and experts?

A: Yes, these costs are eligible for EU funding and should be presented as a part of the organisational costs. There is no specific requirement regarding the nationality and research experience of the speakers. However, since speakers are counted as event participants, they must be taken into account by the coordinator when checking the nationality balance of the event.

Q: Are the costs associated with producing lecture notes and proceedings eligible for EU funding?

A: Yes, these costs are eligible for EU funding and should be presented as a part of the organisational costs.

Q: In the table of eligible expenses in the Work Programme (section 2.8.2.), what is meant by 'A: Living Allowance'?

A: This refers to the contribution covering the subsistence expenses of the researchers attending the event(s). The contribution can cover up to 100% of the real expenses of each eligible event participant up to a maximum per day and per eligible event participant. This maximum is set at €150 multiplied by the correction coefficients of section 2.8.1 Table 3 of the Work Programme. (The correction coefficients are applied to take into account the cost of living in the country/countries where the event(s) take(s) place.)

Q: In the table of eligible expenses in the Work Programme (section 2.8.2.), what is meant by 'B: Travel Allowance'?

A: This refers to a contribution to cover the costs for the eligible researcher of travelling between his/her location of origin and the location of the event(s). The contribution can cover up to 100% of the real costs of each eligible event participant. However, it is capped per eligible event participant to the rates provided in section 2.8.1 Table 2 of the Work Programme.

Q: In the table of eligible expenses in the Work Programme (section 2.8.2.), what is meant by 'E: Contribution to the participation expenses of eligible researchers'?

A: This refers to the contribution to the event participation fees. The contribution can cover up to 100% of the participation fees of each eligible event participant on the basis of the official rates publicised for the event.

Q: In the table of eligible expenses in the Work Programme (section 2.8.2.), what is meant by 'F: Contribution to the research/training/transfer of knowledge programme expenses'?

A: These are all the cost incurred for the organisation of the event(s). They may include in particular the costs for publication, publicity, venue rental, event secretariat, as well as the costs linked to the participation of the keynote speakers (travel, subsistence, etc.). Please note that these costs may only be partially covered by the EU contribution depending on the proportion of eligible researchers attending the event financed by the EU compared to the total number of researchers attending.

Q: In the table of eligible expenses in the Work Programme (section 2.8.2.), what is meant by 'G: management activities (including audit certification)'?

A: These expenses cover the management of the contract and should not exceed 7% of the EC contribution. These expenses may include, for instance, the work expended on the preparation of the contract deliverables and the costs linked to the audit certification of the claimed costs.

Q: In the table of eligible expenses in the Work Programme (section 2.8.2.), what is meant by 'I: Other types of eligible expenses/specific conditions'?

A: These expenses include the costs of purchase or leasing with option to buy new equipment necessary for the project. These expenses, which must be duly justified on the basis of real costs, are subject to the depreciation rules of the equipment according to the applicable accounting principles. Only in exceptional cases, duly justified by the use of the equipment and if its final destination is determined, the Commission may accept to reimburse the expenses related to the purchase or leasing with option to buy of new equipment without depreciation. An example of such expenses would be the upgrade of the video and/or audio facilities in the lecture hall of the event venue.

Q: What happens if the participation in a conference/course is lower than foreseen? Do the organisers have to reimburse part of the EC funding?

A: The coordinator needs to explain any deviation to the contract and must provide an updated implementation plan (including financial aspects) in the periodic reports. Transfer of unused funds from one reporting period to the next may be allowed if well justified.

Proposal preparation and submission

Q: When is the best time to apply for a Series of Events?

A: There should be at least six months between the deadline for the submission of the proposal and the starting date of the (first) event. Events taking place earlier than that will be ineligible.

Q: Can individuals apply to the Commission for conference attendance?

A: No, individual applications should be submitted directly to the organisers. Researchers should therefore contact the project coordinators who will give them all the necessary information.

Q: In the proposal form A4, should the keynote speakers be presented as 'event participants' and included in the "Total number of event participants"?

A: Yes.

Q: In the proposal form A4, where should the applicants indicate the requested contribution from the EC to the participation of eligible researchers?

A: Applicants are not required to state this amount themselves in the A4 form. The Commission will estimate the maximum EC contribution on the basis of the number of eligible event participants, as indicated in the A4 form.

Q: In the proposal form A4, how constraining is the information given about the composition of the audience for each event (in groups 1, 2 or 3)?

A: This information will be used to estimate the requested contribution, which will be used in the negotiation of the proposal. It is understood that these figures may change in the course of the project. However the distribution of the event participants should be respected as much as possible.

Q: Can the costs of the invited speakers and of the organising or scientific committees be covered by the EU contribution?

A: Yes, these expenses are eligible since they are part of the total organisational costs of the events. Please note, however, that the EU contribution to such expenses will be proportional to the number of eligible researchers supported. Thus, if an event is attended by 50 researchers of whom only 30% are eligible for EU funding, the EC contribution will cover no more than 30% of the total organisational costs.

Q: When preparing a proposal, how can one calculate the EU contribution?

A: Applicants do not need to calculate the EC contribution since it will be estimated directly by the Commission based on the information provided in the administrative forms of the proposal. Note that proposers are asked to indicate in form A4 the total organisational costs of the events; the Commission will use this amount to work out the maximum EC contribution to organisational expenses.

Q: With a Series of Events is there a risk of getting close to profit-making formats?

A: All proposals showing an intended profit will be rejected. Furthermore, the systematic follow-up of the contracts should guard against any profit-making in the course of the project.

Evaluation

Q: Is there a preference for certain areas of research for Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses?

A: No, the action will cover all research fields ('bottom-up' approach). However, the evaluation criteria (both "scientific quality" and "Community added value and relevance to the objectives of the scheme") place emphasis on subjects of relevance to Europe, and of a multidisciplinary, intersectorial, or leading-edge nature.

Q: Could the Commission decide to fund only some events in a proposed series?

A: The evaluation panel will judge the quality of the proposal as a whole. If the events proposed are of unequal quality or if some of them are not considered as justifiable for the project, the panel will mark down the proposal accordingly. The panel could recommend that the Commission negotiates a revised project, but it is up to the Commission to decide whether to follow this recommendation. It should be noted in this context that special event locations (including third countries) should be explicitly justified in the proposal.

Q: How does the weighting system for project evaluations work? If a threshold of 70% is set for the total of the evaluation, how do you view individual thresholds for individual evaluation criteria? For example, does it mean that a conference cannot be financed if the training value was marked lower than four by the experts?

A: If any individual criterion value is below its individual threshold, the proposal will be rejected. In theory, a proposal may get a mark higher than the global threshold but may still be rejected because it failed on one individual criterion. It should be noted that criteria with high individual thresholds have low weights: the discrimination between the best proposals is effectively done by the criteria with the higher weight.

Q: How are proposals evaluated? Who are the evaluators? How many evaluators assess each proposal? How are evaluators selected? Does everybody have access to the guidelines for evaluators?

A: The Guidance Notes for Evaluators address these issues in detail. The general principles are set out in the Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Project Selection Procedures (the "Evaluation Manual"). These documents are available at the Marie Curie web page: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/pdf/guidance_evaluators.pdf and at <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm#evalproc>.

Q: What is the average duration between a call for proposal's deadline and the signing of the contract between the European Commission and the host institution?

A: It usually takes about six months from the deadline for proposal submissions until the signing of the contract.