



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND | C2W

Call 2021-2022

Guide for evaluators

November 2021 – v.1



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1 Introduction

1.1 C2W in brief

C2W is an individual-driven research training and career development programme for Experienced Researchers (ERs), based on incoming mobility. C2W aims to provide ERs with the expertise and experience needed to become the next generation of leaders with strong expertise and interdisciplinary skills. **C2W will offer 30 fellowships of 24 months each.** C2W will have a bottom-up approach, which means that Fellows will be **free to choose their research topic** (provided it falls within the competence of UMONS or UNamur) and their principal supervisor (more than 400 possible Principal Investigators (PIs)). C2W also offers a free choice between UMONS and UNamur as host institution. This choice will ensure that the proposed individual project meets the Fellows' individual training needs, and thus supports their career development. To ensure the interdisciplinary nature of the research, the Fellow will be supervised by a co-PI with skills in a discipline other than that of the PI. The programme will publish **2 calls for proposals to recruit 15 Fellows each.**

C2W will offer a competitive contract and excellent research conditions. The evaluation and selection process will follow the principles of the Charter & Code, following the OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) principles, and will use international peer review.

1.2 Call timeline



The timeline of the first call of C2W is the following:

- ⇒ Call opening: Wednesday, December 1st, 2021 at 14:00 Brussels time (UTC + 2)
- ⇒ Call closing: Monday, March 7th 2022 at precisely 16:00 Brussels time (UTC + 2)
- Eligibility check: March 7th – March 15th 2022
- ⇒ Evaluation: March – July 2022
- ⇒ Information to applicants: July 2022
- ⇒ Start of projects: Between August and October 2022

Fellowship duration: 24 months

2 Evaluation procedure



2.1 Expert selection

All evaluators must hold a PhD Degree (for academic ones) and must have an excellent scientific track record, as well as experience in project management and PhD/Postdoc supervision (for academic ones).

C2W will engage evaluators residing outside Belgium only and each evaluator may evaluate only one proposal from the entire C2W programme

2.2 Conflict of interest

All evaluators must check the *Declaration of No Conflict of Interest* on the evaluation platform. C2W will follow the definition of Conflict of Interest as described in the EU Grants Model Contract for Experts. In case of a Conflict of Interest, the evaluator may not accept to review the proposal. In cases of Potential Conflict of Interest, the evaluator must contact the Project Coordinator (PC), who shall decide whether the evaluator may evaluate the proposal. The evaluator must inform the PC immediately when a Conflict of Interest becomes apparent during the review of proposals. The PC will then decide on actions, including removal of the evaluator from the proposal or the entire evaluation process and replacement by another evaluator. Applicants also have the right to exclude a maximum of 5 evaluators (non-grata experts) from the assessment of their proposal.

A conflict of interest exists if an evaluator:

- was involved in the preparation of a proposal;
- is a director, trustee or partner or is in any way involved in the management of an applicant;
- is employed or contracted by one of the applicants;
- has close family ties or other close personal relationship with the applicant /PI/co-PI;
- has (or has had during the last five years) a scientific collaboration with the applicant/PI/co-PI; or has joint publications with the applicant/PI/co-PI;

- has (or has had) a relationship of scientific rivalry or professional hostility with the applicant;
- has (or has had), a mentor/mentee relationship with the applicant;
- Exceptions may be made if:
 - the evaluator works in a different department/laboratory/institute from the one where the action is to be carried out and
 - the departments/laboratories/institutes within the organization concerned operate with a high degree of autonomy.

Potential Conflict of Interest exists if an evaluator:

- employment of the evaluator by one of the applicants in the last three years;
- involvement of the evaluator in a contract, grant, prize or membership of management structures or research collaboration with an applicant or Fellow in the last three years;
- any other situation that could cast doubt on his/her ability to participate in the evaluation impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an outside third party.

2.3 Access to forms and documents

The evaluator will be granted confidential access to a dedicated application platform where the evaluator can access:

- An ID part to specify his details including bank account
- A research and training project of maximum 10 pages describing the quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives, the interdisciplinary aspect of the project, the quality and appropriateness of the secondment, the appropriateness of the training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the hosting group, the appropriateness of the supervision and the hosting arrangements (quality of the PI and Co-PI), the quality of the strategy for the dissemination, communication and exploitation of project results and activities, the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts, the coherence, feasibility and effectiveness of the work plan, the appropriateness of management structure and procedures, including risk management and the information on ethics issues (this last one is not included in the 10 pages). A template has been provided to the candidates.
- A detailed CV, including a complete publication list; a template has been provided to the candidates within the template of the research project proposal.

The evaluator will also be granted access to the following forms/documents:

- Check box Declaration of No Conflict of Interest
- Check box Code of Conduct for evaluators (file to download and read)
- An evaluation form for each proposal (on line).
- An ethics assessment briefing, to examine whether any potential ethical implications have been addressed by the candidate.

2.4 Evaluation criteria

The peer evaluators involved in the evaluation process will evaluate the eligible proposals against the criteria described hereunder and will appreciate answers to unclear points in the interview phase.

There are three main evaluation criteria, namely Excellence, Impact and Implementation that are separated into sub-criteria.

2.4.1 Excellence (60%)

- Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; appropriate consideration of gender aspects if any
- Specific focus on level of interdisciplinarity of the project (including relevance of co-PI and secondments)
- Specific focus on level of innovativeness of the project
- Quality and appropriateness of the training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host
- Quality of the PIs and co-PI, of supervision and of the integration in the team/institution (including secondments)
- Potential of the researcher to reach or re-enforce professional maturity/independence during the fellowship

2.4.2 Impact (25%)

- Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship
- Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results
- Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences

2.4.2 Quality and efficiency of the implementation Impact (15%)

- Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources

- Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management
- Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure) and relevance of the secondment in terms of complementarity

2.5 Scoring

Each External Evaluator Panel (EEP) will reach a consensus score for each of the three criteria for each proposal. Following MSCA practice, this will be a score between 0 – 5 for each criterion, decimal points may be given. They are briefed to not score each sub-criterion, but to use these to help them make an assessment for the overall criterion

Scoring corresponds to the following options :

0 - Proposal fails to address criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information

1 - Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses

2 - Fair. Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses

3 - Good. Proposal addresses the criterion well, but several shortcomings are present

4 - Very Good. Proposal addresses criterion very well, small number of shortcomings are present

5 - Excellent. Proposal addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor

A weighting percentage will be applied to the scores given for each evaluation criterion for the peer evaluation phase resulting in a weighted score. A weighted total score will be calculated based on the scores of the three individual criteria and converted into a percentage of the maximum score. To ensure overall quality of ranked (retained) proposals, a score value equal to 0 or 1 in one criterion automatically leads to the rejection of the proposal. Moreover, C2W will apply a threshold of 70% of the total score. The final score will be calculated based on the results of peer review and interview phases with a weighting of 80% for the peer review and 20% for the interview.

Peer evaluation phase			
	Excellence	Impact	Implementation
Weighting	60%	25%	15%
Priority in case of ex aequo	1	2	3

2.6 In practice

The C2W Team will match each proposal with 3 non-Belgian external evaluators (EEPs) selected from the C2W Evaluator Database in concerned discipline.

The external experts will receive the complete application file together and a guide for the evaluator. They will also receive a briefing on ethics guidelines to help them assess whether ethical implications of the projects have been properly addressed.

This phase of the **evaluation process** will take place **remotely**. Each evaluator will review the proposal according to the evaluation and selection criteria, will give a score for each of the 3 criteria and will write an Individual Evaluation Report (IER) which will be submitted through the online evaluation system.

Each External Evaluator Panel (EEP) will reach a consensus score for each of the three criteria for each proposal. Following MSCA practice, this will be a score between 0 – 5 for each criterion, decimal points may be given. External experts are briefed to not score each sub-criterion, but to use these to help them make an assessment for the overall criterion.

The 3 evaluators will get together in a teleconferencing consensus meeting to reach consensus on the score and comments (strengths and weaknesses of the proposal). One evaluator will be appointed as rapporteur, who will write an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) (form can be downloaded from the evaluation system), that must reflect the comments of all evaluators. All evaluators must sign the ESR (via the online evaluation system) to show their agreement.

Applicants of ranked proposals will be invited for an **interview** to present their project (3 slides, 5 minutes) to EEP's (external evaluators). The interview will allow the external evaluators to clarify eventual unclear issues or other critical information not included in the proposal and to evaluate the ability of the applicant to present and defend its project (15 minutes). Interview will be conducted in English and remotely. Each evaluator will give a score (0-5) and the Panel reaches a consensus score for each applicant. The rapporteur will write the Interview report.

When the evaluations of the proposal attributed to you is received, you will be paid according to the data you entered when you registered (€100/evaluator and +€100 for the evaluator in charge of the reporting)

2.7 General remarks on evaluation criteria

- You are required to evaluate the proposal as submitted, not its potential if some changes were to be made.
- You are kindly requested to provide detailed comments to help candidates improve.

- You are requested to evaluate proposals in an impartial and consistent manner, irrespective of the origin or identity of the candidate.
- Ethics implications: your role is to examine whether the research programme proposed raises any ethical issues and whether they are addressed by the candidate. This will help C2W management services to examine whether formal ethics procedures should be followed for the successful projects. This is not an evaluation criterion and you must not evaluate this aspect neither in a negative nor positive way.
- Secondment provides a specific expertise, necessary for the project and not available at the hosing group; it implies mobility for a longer period than a short research visit to collect data or to do field work. Candidates are instructed to justify the importance of the secondment and describe the expertise offered. They are also invited to describe the institution offering the secondment. You must evaluate whether the secondment is justified and whether it offers complementary expertise.

3 Contact

For any questions related to C2W:
C2W Project Management
Department of Research Administration
Place du Parc, 22
7000 MONS, Belgium

E-mail: C2W@umons.ac.be

Privileged language for communication will be English, but support can be provided in French.

4 Personal Data Protection

Université de Mons (UMONS) – 20 Place du Parc, 7000 Mons is the Data Controller of the personal data collected in the context of applications to C2W. In their capacity, UMONS respects the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27/04/2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR).

The data collected by UMONS through the dedicated area for evaluators at the C2W submission platform is solely gathered for the purposes of the evaluation procedure. The personal data include the first name, surname, e-mail address and bank information. By agreeing to evaluate C2W applications, the evaluators agree with the processing of this personal data as part of their application.

UMONS commits to taking the appropriate measures to guarantee its confidential treatment. The personnel of internal UMONS/UNamur services has access to this data only to the extent necessary for the execution of its corresponding tasks (e.g. contact with evaluators, remuneration of evaluators).

Expert's name and data's will be conserved in password-protected servers for an indeterminate duration to constitute the External Evaluator Panels (EEP's) for evaluation of the proposals and can potentially be reused for other external peer review, unless there is explicit disagreement.

UMONS's or UNamur's staff has access to this data only to the extent necessary for the execution of its corresponding tasks (e.g. submission of an application, evaluation of an application, recruitment of a candidate, conduct of the research project). Besides internal UMONS/UNamur services, the data is transmitted to external evaluators under confidentiality clauses, as part of the evaluation process.

The data is accessible to our IT subcontractor in a country outside EU, [Tech Transfer Software | Wellspring](https://www.wellspring.com/privacy-policy) <https://www.wellspring.com/privacy-policy>

The privacy charter is available via <https://web.umons.ac.be/app/uploads/2019/12/Charte-Vie-privée-UMONS-20190605.pdf>

Applicants can address their queries on the treatment of their Personal Data to the UMONS Data Protection Officer (DPO).

e-mail : dpo@umons.ac.be

UMONS, 20 Place du Parc, 7000 Mons.