Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Focus on MSCA COFUND

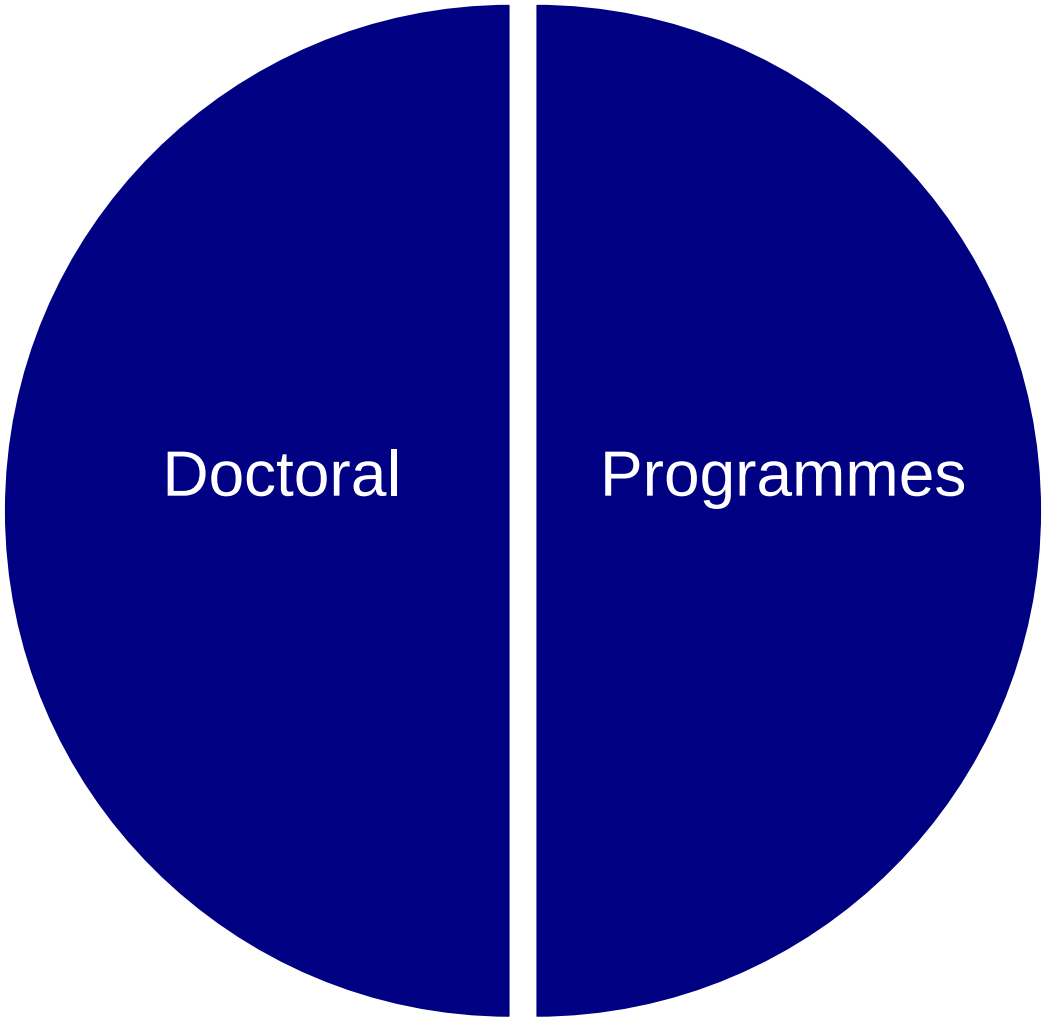
REA.A4 – Jozsef MIKITA

European Commission

What is MSCA COFUND?

Mono-beneficiary action:	• new or existing national, regional, institutional schemes for doctoral training
Focus:	• best practice, high standards & excellent working conditions, sustainable structuring effects

COFUND Modalities



MSCA COFUND – For whom?

Single legal entity established in an EU Member State

Single legal entity established in HE associated country

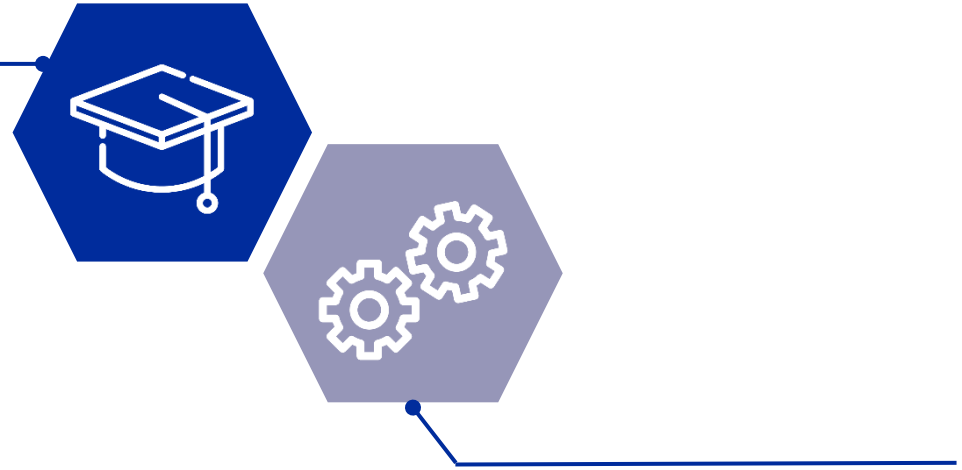
COFUND Academic & non-academic sectors

Academic sector

Higher education establishments

Non-profits

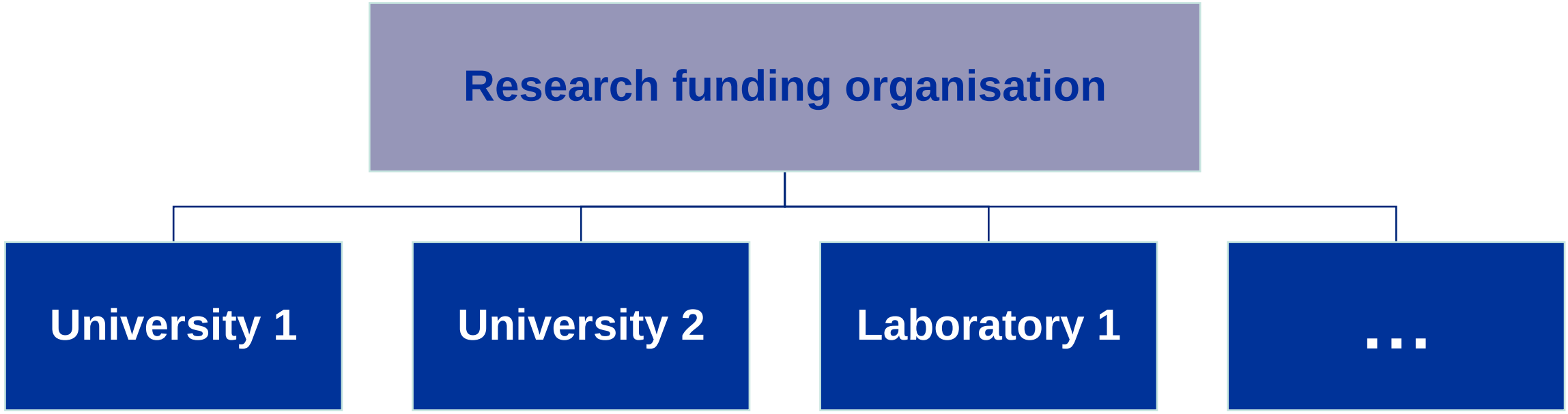
International European Research Organisations



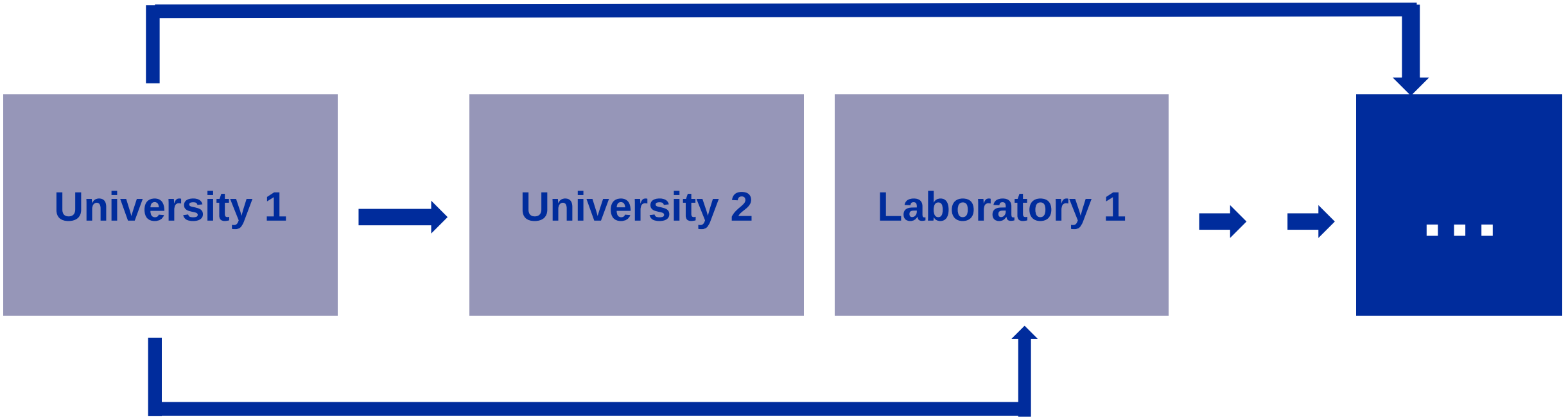
Non-academic sector

Any socio-economic actor not included in academic sector

COFUND – Possible structures
1 - Hierarchical



COFUND – Possible structures
1 - Horizontal



COFUND – Possible structures
3 – Single Point



COFUND partners

Implementing partners

Associated partners



COFUND Fundamentals

Co-funding	• Max. EUR 10m/beneficiary/call
Duration	• Programme: max. 60 months Fellowship: min. 3 months
Recruitment	• Fellows: min. 3 fellows must be recruited

COFUND – Award criteria

Excellence (50%)

Impact (30%)

Implementation (20%)

Overview of changes in WP 2026-2027

Change	Justification
Introduce minimum score threshold of 3 on all criteria	Ensure a minimum quality level on each criterion and align with corporate rules in Horizon Europe
Increase the max duration of secondments from 1/3 to half of fellowship duration	Provide more flexibility for secondments
Review and increase 2026-2027 allowances	Adapt allowances according to based on figures provided by Eurostat
Add criterion under excellence focusing on research and innovation objectives (CR 1.1). The assessment of this sub-criterion remains a compliance-check – no qualitative assessment of S&T	Ensure a clear research component is evident in the proposal to align with the MSCA's focus on excellence in research and training
Remove exception to the mobility rule	Avoid vague rules that cause issues in interpretation during evaluation and implementation
Remove exception to providing a dissemination and exploitation plan for projects with implementing partners	Safeguard fair evaluation procedures for all projects and ensure project impact

COFUND - Budget

Award criterion 'Excellence' 1.2: '*…and* ***quality and attractiveness of the appointment conditions, including competitiveness of the salary*** *for the standards of the hosting country'*

For recruited researchers & institutional contributions

per person-month *

- **Doctoral programmes**

EUR 3,500

Any cost items of the programme supported

* For more details: unit-mga_he_en.pdf

COFUND Budget - Conditions

Total amount of programme to be specified

- **Amount for researchers**
- **Amount for organisation(s)**

Minimum monthly gross remuneration + mobility costs

- **Doctoral candidates: EUR 3,500***

*Min. EUR 1,750 (doctoral) if fixed-amount fellowship

COFUND Budget – Part A

Participant number	Organisation short name	Role	Country	Academic sector	IO	No of recruited researchers	Number of person months (Employment)	Number of person months (Fellowship)	Contributions for recruited researchers		Total	Own resources	Financial contributions	Total estimated project income
									Employment Contract	Fixed amount fellowship				
1				No	No									
Total														

Part A of the proposal lists the Beneficiary and (if applicable) the Associated Partners (APs) involved in the proposal. Implementing Partners (IPs) are not presented in Part A. The beneficiary is 'Participant number 1' followed by the APs;

The beneficiary must encode under the column 'Own resources' its own financial input to the programme, and under the column 'Financial contribution' the financial support coming from IPs (if applicable).
The beneficiary must indicate for the APs – each in its relevant row - under the column 'Financial contribution' any financial support they intend to provide for the proposal;

The values (per category and overall) introduced in **Part A** must match exactly what is presented in **Part B**.

Cost categories	COFUND allowance = EU contribution (A) (EUR/person-month)	Own resources = provided by the Beneficiary (B) (EUR/person-month)	Financial contribution = provided by the Implementing/Associated Partners - if applicable (C) (EUR/person-month)	Total cost = COFUND allowance + Own resources + Financial contribution (A+B+C) (EUR/person-month)
Remuneration*				**
Mobility allowance***				**
Family allowance***				
Travel allowance***				
Research costs***				
Other (training, etc.) ***				
Management costs ***				
Indirect costs***				
Total amount of COFUND allowance = the sum of the above categories	**3 500 (for Doctoral)**			
Number of fellows				
Number of recruitment month/fellow				
TOTAL	**EUR 3 500** x **number of fellows** x **number of recruitment month/fellow**			

COFUND Budget – Part B

*The monthly gross remuneration, i.e. salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs or compulsory deductions under national legislation linked to in the remuneration;

**The monthly gross remuneration and the mobility costs must be: not lower than EUR 3500 for Doctoral fellows (50% of these amounts in case of fixed-amount fellowships);

***If applicable, delete otherwise. Other lines can be included for categories not shown in the template above;

****Choose the applicable rate according to the type of programme and delete the other. In case of fixed-amount fellowships the rates will be 50%.

I. COFUND RED FLAGS - selection committees

Award criterion ‘Excellence’ 1.2

- ‘*Quality and novelty of the selection/recruitment process for the researchers (transparency,* ***composition and organisation of selection committees***, ..).. *evaluation criteria, equal opportunities, the gender dimension and other diversity aspects)..’*

Doctoral programmes

- Independent evaluators from outside the partnership; no COI; at all stages of the process

II. COFUND RED FLAGS – supervision arrangements

Award criterion ‘Excellence’ 1.5

- *‘Quality, novelty and pertinence of the **supervision**, career guidance and career development arrangements’*
- Applicants may contact a supervisor but no pre-selection;
- In case of contact: clear rationale + explanation to be added in the COFUND proposal;
- Supervisor cannot be involved in the drafting of the application;
- No pre-approval from the supervisor in the submission process.

NO ROLE for supervisors in the selection/recruitment process

III. COFUND RED FLAGS – underpayment of fellows

The monthly **gross remuneration**, i.e. salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs or compulsory deductions under national legislation linked to in the remuneration, **and the mobility costs** for the benefit of the researchers must be:

For researchers recruited under an employment contract:	• not lower than EUR 3500 (for doctoral candidates);
For researchers recruited under a fixed-amount fellowship:	• not lower than EUR 1750 (for doctoral candidates).

IV. COFUND RED FLAGS
Use of generative AI

The effective evaluation/assessment/ selection of proposals (by the co-funded programmes)

CANNOT BE DELEGATED TO AI TOOLS

Programmes must set up evaluation/ selection committees

composed of **INDEPENDENT EXPERTS** to perform this task.



Deadlines and budget

Call	Opening / Closing	Budget
COFUND-2027	8 December 2026 / 6 April 2027	€51.25m

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Thank you



https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-marie-sklodowska-curie-actions_en

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