




**European Commission
Research Directorate General
Human Resources and Mobility**

A light gray silhouette map of Europe serves as a background for the central text.

**MARIE CURIE
EXCELLENCE AWARDS
(EXA)**

Handbook



MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

May 2003

**This handbook explains the principles of
Marie Curie Excellence Awards (EXA)
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 Conferences and Training Courses (SCF/LCF)
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 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 may be sent by e-mail to:

rtd-mariecurieactions@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 II of this document. Only those texts have a legal status and can be referred to for the purpose of any legal or administrative proceedings.

THE ESSENTIALS

What are they?

A Marie Curie Excellence Award is a Prize awarded to a researcher who has reached superior research results in a scientific field.

Who can apply?

Individual researchers of all nationalities, who have taken part at least for twelve months, in one or more training and mobility actions supported by the Community, can apply themselves or be proposed by a third party.

Which research topics can be awarded?

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

What is the profile of a Prize Holder?

The Prize Holder is a scientist of any nationality who has benefited, at least for one year, from European Community training and mobility support in research and has achieved a degree of excellence that deserves a public recognition.

How much funding is foreseen for the Award?

It is intended to award up to five Prizes per year of 50.000 € each.

How can the Prize money be used?

There are no restrictions on the usage of the Prize money.

What will be expected from the Prize Holder?

The Prize Holder will be expected to participate in public events, which promote and improve the visibility and recognition of the achievement in the context of the European research area.

When can I apply?

A "call for proposals" was published on 17 December 2002. There are two deadlines by which proposals must arrive at the Commission; These are **the 20th May 2003 and 18th May 2004**, (both at 17:00 Brussels local time). An additional call is expected with deadlines in 2005 and 2006.

How do I apply?

Firstly, after reading this document download an "InfoPack" that provides the material you need to prepare a proposal. Secondly, you should consult the legal documents, in particular, the "Work Programme" upon which this handbook is based (references can be found in annex II of this document).

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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 will run 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.

The purpose of this document is to explain one out of the 11 different actions within the HRM activity, the **Marie Curie Excellence Awards (EXA)**. 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 Purpose of the Marie Curie Excellence Awards

The Marie Curie Excellence Awards are one out of three new actions devoted to the promotion and recognition of scientific Excellence. Like the Marie Curie Chairs and Marie Curie Excellence Grants, the Marie Curie Excellence Awards were created to increase the visibility and attractiveness of European research:

"These actions focus on the promotion and recognition of Excellence in European Research, thereby increasing its visibility and attractiveness. They aim at promoting European research teams, especially in new and/or emerging areas of research, and at highlighting personal achievements of European researchers, with a view to supporting their further development and international recognition, while also promoting the diffusion of their work for the benefit of the scientific community."

Work Programme, section 2.2

The specific objectives of Marie Curie Excellence Awards are the following:

"These [Awards] are scientific prizes to give public recognition to excellence achieved by research workers who have in the past benefited from training and mobility support by the Community."

Work Programme, section 2.3.3.2

The Excellence Awards are a mechanism to highlight personal achievements of outstanding mobile researchers with a view to supporting their future career development and international recognition. Through its focus on past mobility of the candidates the action emphasises the role of transnational mobility and exchange of expertise in the achievement of scientific excellence.

“The action will give the opportunity to acknowledge periods of mobility and transnational training in the scientific community and to disseminate research results achieved by European researchers.”

Work Programme, section 2.3.3.2

Like the other Excellence actions, the Marie Curie Excellence Awards will enhance the dissemination of research results for the benefit of the scientific community. In order to achieve this aim, the Prize Holder will be expected to participate in public events in the context of the European Research Area.

2. How does it work?

This section explains the “life cycle” of the Excellence Awards broken down into five stages. Please also see the flow chart on the following page.

Stage 1: Proposal Preparation

Each eligible researcher who, after his/her mobility period (of at least one year) is of the opinion that the results he/she has achieved in a specific scientific field, demonstrate excellence and contribute significantly to the progress of knowledge in that scientific field, can prepare a proposal to the Commission. Such a proposal can be prepared also by a private person or an organisation on behalf of an excellent, mobile scientist. In both cases the proposal 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.

Applications will then be assessed in a two-step process. Firstly, the Commission will arrange for the proposal to be evaluated by individual experts who will assess it on the evaluation criterion « Quality of Research ». At the end of this process each applicant will receive a report describing the consensus opinion reached by the independent experts.

Stage 3: Marie Curie Grand Jury and Commission selection decision

Taking into account the opinions of the experts the Commission will rank the proposals. A short list of not more than ten of the best candidates is then submitted to the Marie Curie Grand Jury which will be composed of a number of highly renowned and recognised public personalities of different backgrounds. Taking into consideration the consensus opinion of the evaluation experts on each of the ten short listed proposals, the Grand Jury will subsequently evaluate them on the criteria « Relevance to the Objective of the Scheme » and « Added Value to the Community ». On the basis of these deliberations of the Grand Jury the Commission will proceed to approve the final list of selected Prize Holders.

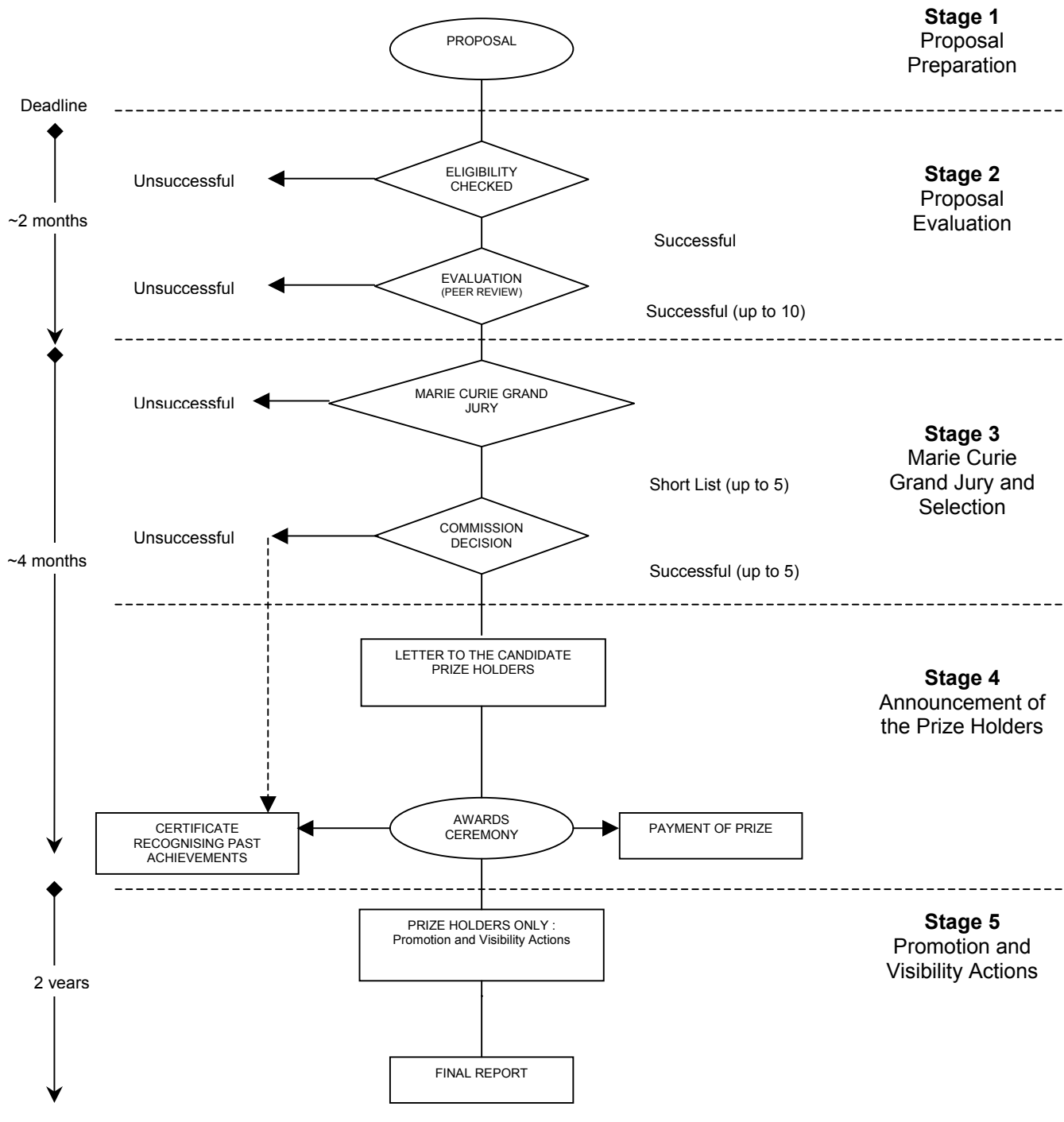
Stage 4: Announcement of the Winners 2003

The Prizes will be awarded by means of an Award letter, which will be sent to each of the selected candidate Prize Holders who will be requested to confirm their willingness to receive the Prize and to fill in a simple form with some basic administrative details such as their banking information. The Prize Holders of the 2003 Marie Curie Excellence Awards are then announced during a high profile Awards Ceremony in the presence of the members of the Grand Jury along with high-level officials of the Commission and the Commissioner for RTD, Mr. Philippe Busquin.

Stage 5: Promotion and visibility actions

During a period of up to 2 years after the acceptance of the Award the Prize Holder will participate regularly in public events which promote and improve the visibility and recognition of his/her achievements in the context of the European Research Area. At the end of this period the Prize holder will produce a brief report to the Commission.

"LIFE CYCLE" OF A MARIE CURIE EXCELLENCE AWARDS



3. What type of research does it cover?

Due to the specific nature of this action, the Marie Curie Excellence Awards do not reward research proposed for the future, but rather *research results that have already been achieved* by the candidates. Nevertheless, the same general principles for the eligibility of research topics and techniques apply to the Marie Curie Excellence Awards as for all the other Marie Curie actions:

Firstly, the Marie Curie Excellence Awards 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.*

– *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.*

In applying this “bottom-up” approach, there will not be in principle a pre-defined objective in terms of discipline or subject of research for the Marie Curie actions, the selection being carried out on the basis of scientific excellence criteria and pertinence of relationship to the objectives of the actions (see criteria in Annex Mob-B). Except for different specifications in the calls for proposals the distribution of the indicative budget of the calls between the research disciplines will be based “a posteriori” on the proportion of eligible proposals.”

Work Programme, section 2.5.1

Secondly, it should be noted 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.

Finally, 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

4. What is a Prize Holder expected to do ?

4.1 *Publicity and dissemination activities*

During a period of up to 2 years after the acceptance of the Award the Prize holder will be required to participate regularly in public events which promote and improve the visibility and recognition of his/her research results in the context of the European Research Area (ERA)¹:

“The Prize-holders will be expected to participate in public events, which promote and improve the visibility and recognition of the achievements in the context of the European Research Area.”

Work Programme, section 2.3.3.2

Guidance on the choice of events will be provided to the Prize holder together with the Award letter (see section 9).

4.2 *Reporting*

At the end of the period the Prize holder will be required to produce a brief report to the Commission.

This report will contain details on the career development of the researcher and give a brief outline of the usage of the Prize money according to the instructions received from the Commission.

¹ For further reference on this subject please see “Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Towards a European research area” COM(2000) 6 final; “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: A Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area” COM(2001) 331 final

5. Who can compete for an Excellence Award?

5.1 Introduction

The candidates for this Award are *individual researchers*:

“The Prize will be awarded to an individual.”

Work Programme, section 2.3.3.2

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

5.2 The Profile of the Prize Holder

The Marie Curie Excellence Awards are conceived to reward eligible researchers who have achieved significant results in research that deserve a public recognition. Prize Holders will typically have a record of extensive transnational mobility in their research career.

The Prize Holder will be selected in particular on the basis of the scientific and technological excellence of his/her previous research, the significance of his/her contribution to progress of knowledge and the potential for social or economic benefits of the results achieved.

5.3 Eligibility criteria

A single hard criterion determines the eligibility of researchers for the Marie Curie Excellence Awards. This concerns the requirement for the researcher to have benefited *at least for one year* from a mobility or training action of one of the Community's RTD Framework Programmes:

“The candidates shall be among those who have been awarded a Marie Curie Mobility grant under the 6th Framework Programme, or have participated in a mobility or training action of one of the previous Framework Programmes, for a minimum period of 12 months.”

Work Programme, section 2.3.3.2

It should be noted that the reference deadline for determining the eligibility of the researcher on this criterion is *the relevant deadline for submission of proposals*.

A list of the mobility and training actions under the current and previous Framework Programmes that would make the candidates eligible is given here below :

Actions under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6):

- Marie Curie Research Training Networks (RTN)
- Marie Curie Fellowships for Early Stage Research Training (EST),
- Marie Curie Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge (TOK),
- Marie Curie Intra-European Individual Fellowships (EIF),
- Marie Curie Incoming International Fellowships (IIF),
- Marie Curie Outgoing International Fellowships (OIF)

Actions under the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5):

- Marie Curie Fellowship of any kind and category
- International Fellowships
- Appointment as a young researcher in a Research Training Network

Actions under the Fourth Framework Programme (FP4):

- Marie Curie Research Training Grant of any kind and category
- International Fellowships
- Appointment as a young researcher in a Research Training Network

Actions under the Third Framework Programme (FP3):

- HCM Institutional fellowship of any category
- Appointment as a researcher under an HCM Network contract

Actions under the Second Framework Programme (FP2):

- Research Fellowship
- Individual research grant for mobility purposes

Actions under the First Framework Programme (FP1):

- Individual research grant for mobility purposes

Actions outside Framework Programmes:

- PECO 1992 Action: Research Fellowships for Central & Eastern Europe

Contrary to most of the other Marie Curie Actions the eligibility of a researcher for the Marie Curie Excellence Awards is **not** defined in terms of a precise number of years of experience in research, but rather on the basis of the level of excellence reached by the researcher. The Award is not confined either to nationals of any particular country or groups of countries.

Thus a Prize Holder may be **a researcher of any nationality and with any number of years of experience in research.**

5.4 Gender issues

As pointed out in the 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

There is no quota applicable for women researchers who apply for Marie Curie Excellence Awards but 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”.

5.5 Examples of potential Candidates for an Excellence Award

The examples below intend to give the reader an idea of possible career backgrounds of potential Prize Holders but are in no way meant to be models or typical examples which would exclude any other types of career patterns and/or achievements:

EXAMPLE 1:

A Marie Curie Fellow was involved, during her fellowship, in a collaborative research project together with a number of the top quality research groups in and outside of Europe. Also a number of private companies was involved in this highly visible project. She and the group were positioned on the cutting-edge of their research field. Later on, the fellow co-founded a new international company in order to develop and exploit the new technology platform on a larger scale. She became the Managing Director of this new company with an impressive number of (international) staff.

EXAMPLE 2:

After completing a period of mobility in a Research Training Network a researcher was offered a permanent position in one of the participating institutions in order to embark on an ambitious project to solve a major question pertaining to the evolutionary history of a certain micro organism. He joined the world-widely known research group at that institution, and collaborated extensively with other microbiology specialists of the institution as well as with leading specialists of other research organisations throughout Europe. The results of this collaborative European effort not only attracted vast scientific attention (publication in leading scientific journals in Europe and the USA) but were covered also by major newspapers and TV chains. Soon thereafter he was nominated leader of the research group he had joined only four years before.

6. What is the Prize amount and how should it be spent?

6.1 The Prize amount

Each Prize will be worth 50.000 €. It is intended to award up to five prizes per year depending on the quality of the proposals received.

6.2 Usage of the Prize money

There are no restrictions related to the usage of the Prize money, thus the Prize Holder is free to use the Community contribution as s/he wishes.

However, it should be noted in this context, that the participation in public events in some cases might entail certain expenses to be covered by the Prize Holder him/herself.

In practice the organisers of the event(s) are likely to cover the expenses related to travel, accommodation etc. of the Prize Holder but in cases where the organisers do not cover such costs, they should in principle be paid by the Prize Holder him/herself. Nevertheless, *the Commission may consider contributing* to these costs on a case by case basis upon request from the Prize Holder.

7. Submission of Proposals

7.1 Call for proposals

The call for proposal ref. **FP6-2002-Mobility-9** for the **Marie Curie Excellence Awards** was published on 17th December 2002 (OJ ref. C 315). It includes the timetable of the deadlines for submission of proposals. There are 2 deadlines by which proposals must arrive at the Commission offices. These deadlines are the **20th May 2003** and **18th May 2004 (both 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 Marie Curie web page.

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.

7.2 Preparing a proposal

In the case of Marie Curie Excellence Awards, the proposals are presented either by the candidate him/herself or by a third party. The third party could be any other individual or legal person that wishes to support the candidature of a particular researcher:

"The candidates can propose themselves or they can be nominated by others."

Work Programme, section 2.3.3.2

If the proposal is made by a third party the submitting party should make sure to obtain the explicit agreement of the candidate before submitting the proposal on his/her behalf.

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

http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=33

Instructions on how to prepare and submit a proposal are given in the **Guide for Proposers for Marie Curie Excellence Awards**.

A complete proposal consists of the following 2 parts:

Part A: A series of administrative forms. For Excellence Awards all proposals should contain *at least the forms A1 & A3*. These forms are mandatory for any proposal to be considered complete. Furthermore, if the proposal is put forward by an institution on behalf of the candidate, the administrative details of this institution should be provided in the form A2. (If the proposal is made by a third party individual the contact details of this person should be annexed to the proposal e.g. in the form of a letter of recommendation or other.)

Part B: This is the free-text description of the proposal. 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.

7.3 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 award, if the proposal is selected. The proposer 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 recovery of the funds.

7.4 Methods for submission

There are three possible ways to submit the proposal:

- Submission via the Commission's EPSS (Electronic Proposal Submission System);
- Submission on CD-ROM or diskette;
- Submission on paper.

Details concerning each of these options are given in the "Guide for Proposers". Note that other methods of submission (e.g. via e-mail or fax) will not be accepted.

NOTE:

Applicants should note that in order to use the EPSS they have to request a login and password, which will then be sent to them by post or by e-mail. This process may take several days.

8. Evaluation of proposals

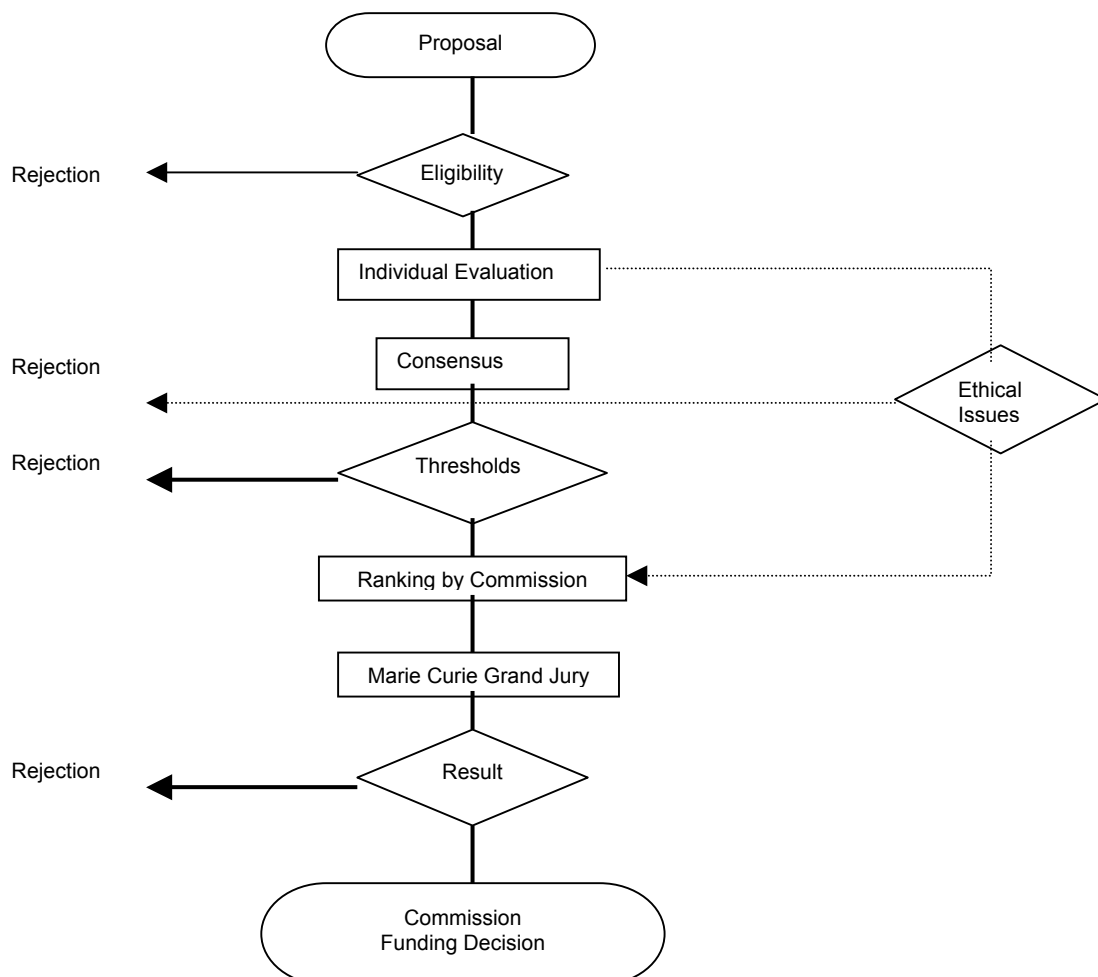
8.1 General Principles

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.

8.2 The 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 in a two-step process according to the principles of “peer review”. Firstly, the Commission will arrange for the proposal to be evaluated by individual experts who will follow the procedures of the *Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Project Selection Procedures* (the “Evaluation Manual”), and apply the criterion « Quality of Researcher ».

Proposals that involve ethical issues will go through an ethical review, which might lead to the rejection of a proposal or may raise issues, which will be taken into consideration by the Commission.

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 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, the Commission will draw-up a priority list of not more than 10 of the best proposals for consideration by the Marie Curie Grand Jury. This Jury will be made up of high-profile and widely recognised personalities covering a wide spectrum of backgrounds:

“This Grand Jury will be composed of highly renowned and recognised public personalities of different backgrounds, such as from science, industry, humanities and politics. The Jury members will be appointed on the basis of suggestions by the Member States or the Associated States as well as international European interest organisations”.

Work Programme, section

The Grand Jury will evaluate the proposals on the priority list on the criteria « Relevance to the Objective of the Scheme » and « Added Value to the Community ». On the basis of the deliberations of the Grand Jury the Commission will proceed to approve the final list of Prize Holders of the Marie Curie Excellence Awards.

8.3 The Evaluation Criteria

In order to determine the extent to which a proposal addresses the objectives of an action, the independent experts are provided with a set of criteria to which marks are attributed. The full set of criteria is listed in Annex Mob-B of the Work Programme (and reproduced on the next page).

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 consensus mark will be subject to a minimum threshold to ensure the Excellence of the proposal in terms of the quality of the researcher;

Any proposal for which the consensus score of the expert evaluators falls below of the threshold of the criterion “Quality of the Researcher” will be automatically excluded from subsequent evaluation by the Grand Jury.

Evaluation Criteria

HRM evaluation criterion	Specific question to be posed to evaluators	Weighting (%)	Threshold mark (0-5)
Scientific Quality of Project	N/A	N/A	N/A
Quality of Research Training	N/A	N/A	N/A
Quality of the Host	N/A	N/A	N/A
Quality of the Researchers	Scientific and technological excellence of previous research Research results and achievements Significant contribution to progress of knowledge	40 ⁽¹⁾	4 ⁽¹⁾
Management and Feasibility	N/A	N/A	N/A
Relevance to the objectives of the Scheme / Activity	Impact on increasing the attractiveness of Europe for researchers	20 ⁽²⁾	-
Added Value to the Community	Impact on public understanding of science, and on promoting the concept of a European research career Potential for social or economic benefits from the results achieved	40 ⁽²⁾	-

⁽¹⁾ Evaluation by scientific experts in the discipline;

⁽²⁾ Evaluation by the Grand Jury;

9. The Award letter and Ceremony

The Prize monies will be awarded by means of *an Award letter*, which will be sent to each of the selected Prize Holders. The candidates will be requested to confirm their willingness to receive the Prize and to fill in a simple form with some basic administrative details such as their banking information.

The Winners 2003 of the Marie Curie Excellence Awards are then announced during a high profile *Award ceremony* in the presence of the members of the Marie Curie Grand Jury along with high-level officials of the Commission and the Commissioner for RTD, Mr. Philippe Busquin.

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: 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 is launching **in May 2003** the **pan-European Researcher's Mobility Portal**.

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 will the Researcher's Mobility Portal offer?

- **General information about research grants** at EU, international, national or regional level;
- **Available opportunities and job offers** published by the different actors of the European research community (Universities, Industry, Foundations, etc);
- **Information about administrative and legal issues (conditions of entry, social security and tax schemes etc)** as well as about cultural/intercultural and family related aspects;
- **Tailored and customised help desk-function** through the **pan-European network of mobility centres** which will provide personalised assistance in all matters related to researchers' lives when they move from one country to another;
- **General information** about research policy issues relevant for the career development of a researcher;
- **Forum** and other services of particular interest for mobile researchers

Customised assistance: the European Network of Mobility Centres

In addition to the information delivered by the Portal, researchers will have free access to a Europe wide customised assistance service offered by the European Network of Mobility Centres **to be launched in spring 2003**.

The Network, which will involve all EU, Candidate Countries and Associated Countries, will provide assistance in a wide range of areas such as visas, employment conditions, social security, taxation, pension rights, day-care, housing, schooling, language courses, access to the culture of the host country etc.

The location of the centres will cover a wide range of organisations, such as university information centres, research bodies, public authorities, foundations or businesses.

The creation of this integrated *European network of mobility centres* will play a substantial role in the successful implementation of the Portal. Existing or newly created mobility centres in all the Member States and candidate countries will carry out the tailored and customised assistance to incoming and outgoing researchers. In most cases, they will therefore become part of the human network behind the portal, by identifying and selecting relevant resources related to information about rules and regulations (local, national, EU level) and providing further information about opportunities for funding and vacancies.

Annex II: Bibliography

Information on Marie Curie Excellence Awards

Under the sixth Framework Programme (FP6)	http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/action/excellence_en.html
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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=33
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://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=33

Supporting information

Brochure "The Sixth Framework Programme in Brief"	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/inbrief/
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://www.cordis.lu/fp6/society.htm (available from 15 March 2003)
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/contractpreparation/
Model contracts	http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/contracts/

Annex III: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General

Q. How many Prizes will be awarded following each deadline?

A. It is intended to award up to five Prizes per year of 50.000 € each.

Proposal issues

Q. Who applies for a Marie Curie Excellence Award, the prospective Prize Holder or his/her research institution?

A. The proposal can be submitted either by the candidate him/herself or by a third party (i.e. any other individual or legal person that wishes to support the candidature of the particular researcher). Proposers putting forward their own candidature may in any case want to add letters of recommendation from relevant sources to support their candidature.

Q. If a candidate is proposed by a third party (an individual or an organisation), should there be a professional relation between the candidate and that person or organisation?

A. No, there are no requirements for or against any professional relation.

Eligible researchers

Q. What is the profile of a Prize Holder ?

A. S/he will be a scientist of any nationality who has benefited, at least for one year, from European Community training and mobility support in research and who has achieved a degree of excellence which deserves a public recognition.

Q. Can the candidate be a citizen from a country outside the European Union and Associated Countries?

A. Yes. The only condition is that the candidate must be a researcher who has participated in a mobility or training action under one of the RTD Framework Programmes.

Q. Which are the mobility and training actions under the current and previous Framework Programmes that make the candidate eligible?

A. These include the following actions:

- FP6: Marie Curie Research Training Networks (RTN), Marie Curie Fellowships for Early Stage Research Training (EST), Marie Curie Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge (TOK), Marie Curie Intra-European Individual Fellowships (EIF), Marie Curie Incoming International Fellowships (IIF), Marie Curie Outgoing International Fellowships (OIF)
- FP5: Marie Curie Fellowship of any kind and category and International Fellowships. Appointment as a young researcher in a Research Training Network
- FP4: Marie Curie Research Training Grant of any kind and category and International Fellowships. Appointment as a young researcher in a Research Training Network
- FP3: HCM Institutional fellowship of any category. Appointment as a researcher under an HCM Network contract
- FP2: Research Fellowship
- FP1 & FP2: Individual research grant for mobility purposes
- PECO 1992 Action: Research Fellowships for Central & Eastern Europe

Q. Should the candidate be a member of the Marie Curie Fellows Association?

A. No, this is not a requirement.

Q. Are there any specific Awards for women?

A. No. The Award is for both genders. However, 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".

Activities

Q. Is there a preference for certain areas of research for Marie Curie Excellence Awards?

A. No, the action will cover all research fields ("bottom up" approach) and there will not be any pre-defined objectives in terms of disciplines, subjects or nationalities. The Prize Holders will be selected in particular on the basis of the scientific and technological excellence of their previous research, the significance of their contribution to progress of knowledge and the potential for social or economic benefits of the results achieved.

Q. What will be required from the Prize Holder in return for the Prize ?

A. The Prize Holders will be expected to participate in public events, which promote and improve the visibility and recognition of their achievements in the context of the European Research Area.

Q. Will the Prize holder be expected to report to the Commission at any stage ?

A. Yes, a short report shall be sent to the Commission upon its request, at the latest 2 years after the date of the acceptance of the Prize. The report should briefly describe the latest developments in the career of the Prize holder and the usage of the Award money by the Prize Holder.

Q. For how long is a Prize Holder expected to participate in public events?

A. Until the short report is sent to the Commission.

Q. Are there any connections with other EU awards (e.g. the Descartes Prize)?

A. No, the Marie Curie Excellence Awards have their own purpose and their own target group which is separate from that of other awards.

Financial Aspects

Q. Are there restrictions on spending the Prize?

A. No, the Prize Holder is free to use the Community contribution. However, it should be noted in this context, that his/her participation in public events in some cases might entail certain expenses to be covered by the Prize Holder him/herself.

Q. Who will finance the participation in public events ? Does the Prize Holder have to pay this from the Prize money?

A. In principle, the expenses related to travel, accommodation etc. should be paid by the Prize Holder himself. However, in practice the organisers of the event are likely to cover such expenses. In cases where the organisers do not cover the costs, the Commission may consider to contribute to the costs upon request from the Prize Holder.

Evaluation

Q. Who will award the Prize?

A. The Commissioner for Research will hand out the Prize. The Prize Holders will be selected by the Commission following evaluation by panels of experts on thematic disciplines and deliberations by a Marie Curie Grand Jury.

Q. How is the evaluation criterion “Community Added Value” defined?

A. In general it is understood as the contribution made by a proposed project to Community policies. It is for the proposer to highlight specific Community policies and argue how their proposal addresses them. In the case of Marie Curie Excellence Awards, the relevant criterion explicitly includes the impact on public understanding of science, and on promoting the concept of a European research career, as well as the potential for social or economic benefits from the results achieved (Work Programme, Annex II-B). Please note that this does not exclude other contributions to Community policies.

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 will be available shortly at the Marie Curie web page.

Contract

Q. What is the nature of the contractual relationship between the Prize holder and the Commission?

A. When confirming his/her acceptance of the Prize, the Prize Holder will also confirm his/her willingness to provide the Commission with a short report on his/her career development and his/her usage of the Prize money. Furthermore he/she will declare a willingness to participate in public events in order to promote and improve the visibility and recognition of his/her achievements in the context of the European Research Area.