Research Executive Agency

Guidance Notes on Project Management and Reporting

for

Marie Curie Individual Fellowships

(IEF, IIF, IOF, IIFR)

Supporting documents can be downloaded from:
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Individual Fellowship projects are one of the flagships of the People Programme under FP7. They are characterised by a relatively simple project structure (only one beneficiary) and a relatively low budget, compared with other EU research projects. For each project there are scientific and financial reporting obligations and this document aims at providing guidance on the reporting process. As most of the reporting can now be done electronically, the document also provides information on the IT tools to be used.

This document is not addressed to the researcher, but to the beneficiaries of the grant agreement as they are responsible for the reporting under the project.

These guidance notes only apply to the Marie Curie Individual Fellowships under the People Programme and they do not supersede the rules and conditions laid out, in particular, in Council and Parliament Decisions on the Seventh Framework Programme and the specific People Programme, the FP7 rules for participation, the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU and its implementing rules or the grant agreement and its annexes.[1]

Please note that since 15 June 2009 the People Programme and, thus, all grant agreements for Individual Fellowships are managed by the Research Executive Agency (REA). If your grant agreement was signed before 15 June 2009, the Commission has already informed you about the change.

This document is the guidance note to help the beneficiaries to prepare the mid-term review, periodic and final reports requested in Article II.3 and in Article III.5 of the grant agreement. The REA evaluates the reports in accordance with Article II.3 (et seq) of the grant agreement. It may be assisted in this task by independent experts through technical project reviews (Article II.21 of the grant agreement). Payments shall be made after the REA's approval of reports.

2. GENERAL ADVICE

For an efficient and smooth running of the project, you should do the following:

– Check the management pages for Individual Fellowship projects on the Marie Curie website:

  - http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/ief-manage_en.html for IEF,
  - http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/iof-manage_en.html for IOF, and
  - http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/iif-manage_en.html for IIF;

– Read carefully the grant agreement and all its annexes before starting to implement the project (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html#people_ga);

– Inform the researcher about his/her rights and duties as laid down in the grant agreement (http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm?l1=0&l2=3);

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[1] All relevant documents are available on CORDIS under http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html.

- Inform the Financial office in your organisation about the financial rules governing your grant agreement;
- Stay in regular contact with your Project Officer at the REA and inform him/her about any potential problems at an early stage;
- In case of any uncertainty on how to implement your *grant agreement* within the national, regional or local legislation, contact your Mobility National Contact Point (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html – please select "Mobility" as the NCP function), or your Project Officer at the REA.
- Concerning the possibility of some changes in the content of annexes II and III of the *grant agreement*, please refer to the table below and the following link: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html#people_ga

Table: update on Grant Agreement Annexes

Calls having a deadline in	Action
2007	See Annex II (General Conditions Marie Curie Actions mono-beneficiary)
	See Annex III (Specific Provisions for Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship)
2008	See Annex II **Version 2, 2008-10-02** (General Conditions Marie Curie Actions mono-beneficiary)
	See Annex III **Version 2, 2008-10-07** (Specific Provisions for Marie Curie Individual Fellowships: IEF – IIF – IOF – IIFR)
2009	Revised Annexes II and III mentioning REA (**to be published in CORDIS**)

3. REPORTING

The following section describes timing, content and submission modalities of the reports that must be submitted during the implementation of grant agreements of the IEF, IOF, and IIF schemes with different durations.

3.1. When to report

(1) IEF projects

The normal duration of an IEF project is 12-24 months. According to the grant agreement the beneficiary must submit the following reports:

– A Mid-term Report on the first half of the project[2] without financial statement;

– A Periodic Report including a financial statement on the whole project duration (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project);

– A Final Report on the whole project duration (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project).

(2) IOF projects

The normal duration of an IOF project is 24-36 months. It has two periods, the outgoing period (12-24 months) and the compulsory return period (12 months). According to the grant agreement the beneficiary must submit the following reports:

– A Mid-term Report on the first half of the first period[3] without financial statement;

– A Periodic Report for the first period including a financial statement (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the period);

– A Periodic Report for the second period including a financial statement (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project);

– A Final Report on the whole project duration (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project).

(3) IIF projects

For IIF projects there may or may not be a separate return phase following the main project. In this case there are two separate grant agreements (and thus technically two projects) for the two periods, the incoming period (12-24 months) and the return

[2] For grant agreements that have a duration of less than 18 months (and only for those) no mid-term report is necessary, unless stated otherwise in Annex I of the Grant agreement under "7. Grant agreement deliverables".

[3] For grant agreements that have a duration of less than 18 months for the first period (and only for those) no mid-term report is necessary, unless stated otherwise in Annex I of the Grant agreement under "7. Grant agreement deliverables".

period (up to 12 months). According to the grant agreements the beneficiary must submit the following reports over the course of these two projects:

- A Mid-term Report on the first half of the first period/project without financial statement;

- A Periodic Report for the first period/project including a financial statement (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the period/project);

- A Final Report on the whole first period/project (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project).

In case of a Return phase:

- A Periodic Report including a financial statement (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the period/project);

- A Final Report (to be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project).

3.2. What to report

(1) Mid-term report:

The mid-term report is mentioned in Article III.5 (submission of project deliverables) and in Annex I.7 (grant agreement deliverables) of the grant agreement. This report must provide an overview of the achievements of the project relative to its stated objectives (as described in Annex I to the grant agreement) and assess the progress of the researcher training activities.

The mid-term report must include:

- A cover page (see template annexed to these guidelines);

- An Activity Report (see template annexed to these guidelines) including a project management report[4] and a description of the progress of training activities / transfer of knowledge activities / integration activities and an overview of the work progress compared to the original work programme described in Annex I to the grant agreement (to highlight differences, if any, between planned work according to Annex I and the work actually carried out);

(2) Periodic report

According to Article II.3.1 of the grant agreement, the Periodic report must include:

- A cover page (see template annexed to these guidelines);

- An Activity Report giving an overview, including a publishable summary, of the progress of work towards the objectives of the project, including achievements and attainment of any milestones and deliverables identified in Annex I to the grant agreement. The report should include an overview of the work progress

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[4] Please note that for projects from the 2007 and 2008 calls, this report must entail a detailed description of costs related to management and overheads.

compared to the original work programme described in Annex I (for highlighting, if any, differences between planned work and the work actually carried out) and a project management report[5] also explaining the use of the resources;

– A Financial Statement ("Form C").

(3) Final Report

The Final report is complementary to the periodic report(s). According to Article II.3.2 of the grant agreement, this report must include (see template annexed to these guidelines):

– A final publishable summary report covering results, conclusions and socio-economic impact of the project;

– A report covering the wider societal implications of the project, including gender equality actions, ethical issues, efforts to involve other actors and spread awareness as well as a plan for the use and dissemination of the project results.

3.3. How to report

(1) The reporting tools SESAM and FORCE

The REA uses SESAM, the European Commission online reporting tool for Research and Technological projects. SESAM allows for submission of all necessary documents related to the grant agreement except the financial statements ("Form C") that accompany the periodic reports. The latter is submitted via the Commissions online system FORCE.

To access the two applications, a registration by the European Commission Authentication Service (ECAS) is necessary. Further instructions for this can be found under http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal. The registration for both systems should be done only once by the person authorised to manage the project.[6]

To access SESAM, please connect to the following address: http://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sesam/index.do. As soon as a user is registered in SESAM, the list of projects related to the beneficiary/user for which s/he has registered will appear. The user can choose the project s/he wishes to work with.

To access the FORCE system for Form C, please connect to the following address: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/FormC.

(2) Electronic submission and submission on paper

The REA aims at making reporting for the beneficiary as easy as possible and explores if reporting can be paperless in the future. However legal provisions require

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5 Please note that for projects from the 2007 and 2008 calls, this report must entail a detailed description of costs related to management and overheads.

6 Should you have any problem related to this, please contact the Central Helpdesk under ec-fp7-it-helpdesk@ec.europa.eu.

that in addition to electronic submission, a paper copy of each report must also be submitted to the REA by mail.

(a) Mid-term Review Report

The report must be submitted via SESAM, printed out, signed by the Scientist-in-Charge and the Researcher and sent to the REA.

(b) Periodic Report(s)

The report(s) must be submitted via SESAM, printed out, signed by the Scientist-in-Charge and the Researcher and sent to the REA.

(c) Financial statement (Form C) accompanying the Periodic Report(s)

The Form C must be submitted via FORCE, printed out, signed by the Legal Representative, duly dated and stamped, and sent to the REA.

(d) Final Report

The report must be submitted via SESAM, printed out, signed by the Scientist-in-Charge and the Researcher and sent to the REA. The Final Report must be sent together with the periodic report for the last period. All formal mail must be sent to the following address in REA (see also Article 7.1 of the grant agreement):

Research Executive Agency
REA
Marie Curie Actions – Fellowships
COV 2, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

4. SPECIFIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1. Notification of the start date

In some cases, Article 2 of the grant agreement stipulates no fixed date for the project start date. In this case – and only then – the beneficiary needs to notify the REA about the start date some weeks before the effective start of the project. The notification must be signed by the Legal Representative[7] of the beneficiary and sent to the REA by mail.

4.2. Declaration of conformity

(1) For projects from the 2007 calls:

According to Article III.3 of the Annex III of the grant agreement, the beneficiary is obliged to transmit to the Research Executive Agency, a declaration on the

[7] Alternatively, the Legal Representative can be replaced by a person who has the authority to sign on behalf of the institution and has already been identified to the REA. If s/he is not yet identified to the REA, a power of attorney or letter of authorisation for this person must be attached.

Conformity concluded between the beneficiary and the researcher of the agreement with the grant agreement within 20 days of the recruitment of the researcher.

(2) For projects from the 2008 calls and later:

According to Article III.3 of the Annex III (version 2, 2008-10-07) of the grant agreement, the beneficiary is obliged to submit, by electronic means a Declaration on the Conformity of the agreement concluded between the beneficiary and the researcher with the grant agreement, within 20 days of either:

– The entry into force of the grant agreement;

– The appointment of the researcher;

– The start date of the project.

The declaration must be submitted via the SESAM tool. A template for the document is annexed to these guidelines. The feature 'attachments' in SESAM can be used to attach any document (e.g. contract with researcher, if needed, etc.). The Project Officer in the REA will be notified by email as soon as the declaration is submitted via SESAM by the beneficiary.

The final declaration, once submitted via SESAM, must be printed out, duly signed by the Legal Representative[8] of the beneficiary and sent to the REA by regular mail.

4.3. Requests for Amendments to the grant agreement

(1) General remarks

Amendments to the grant agreement (see Article II.31) are exceptional measures to reflect severe changes in the conditions of the original grant agreement. Amendments such as change of banking details or legal data of the beneficiaries need to be implemented as soon as possible. Other requests (e.g. modification of the description of work, extension of the project duration because of suspension) will be accepted only in exceptional and duly justified cases. Any formal request for amendment should only be submitted to the REA after consultation with the Project Officer in the REA.

More information on amendments is available in the Amendments Guide for FP7 Grant agreements on ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/amendments-ga_en.pdf.

(2) Technical procedure

Requests for amendments must be submitted via SESAM. In the SESAM menu 'Amendment Requests' the beneficiary selects the type of amendment to be submitted. Having completed the form the beneficiary can save it, add attachments or submit.

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[8] Alternatively, the Legal Representative can be replaced by a person who has the authority to sign on behalf of the institution and has already been identified to the REA. If s/he is not yet identified to the REA, a power of attorney or letter of authorisation for this person must be attached.

Once the request for amendment is submitted via SESAM, it must be printed out, signed by the Legal Representative, stamped and sent duly signed to the REA by registered mail.

The Project Officer in the REA will be notified by email as soon as an amendment request is submitted in SESAM by the beneficiary.

There are 4 possible statuses of the amendment request in SESAM:

– Submitted – when the beneficiary has submitted the request in SESAM;

– Validated – when the REA has approved the amendment request;

– Rejected – when the REA has rejected the amendment request;

– Implemented – when the amendment has been implemented in the REA and Commission IT systems (e.g. a new partner will? appear in SESAM for reporting).

The beneficiary will be notified by email whenever the status of the amendment is changed.

4.4. Requests for suspension of the grant agreement

In principle the period of the stay of the researcher at the beneficiary's institution must not be interrupted.

However, the beneficiary shall immediately inform the Research Executive Agency of any event affecting or delaying the implementation of the project and s/he can propose to suspend part, or all, of the project if:

– Force majeure or exceptional circumstances render the execution of the project excessively difficult or uneconomic (Article II.7.2); or

– Due to personal, family (including maternity/parental leave) or professional reasons of the researcher not foreseen in Annex I of the grant agreement (Article III.4.1).

5. QUESTIONNAIRES

The European Commission as the institution responsible for the People programme needs information from project participants to assess the impact of the Marie Curie actions and for its reporting to the European Parliament and to the Council. Therefore, it is necessary that the beneficiary completes in SESAM the evaluation and follow-up questionnaires referred to in points h) and i) of Article III.2 of the grant agreement. Furthermore, the beneficiary must:

– take measures to ensure that the researcher completes the evaluation questionnaires, provided by the REA in SESAM, at the end of the project;

– contact the researcher two years after the end of the project and invite him/her to complete the follow-up questionnaire, provided by the REA in SESAM.

NB: There is no need for registration in SESAM to fill in the questionnaires. The researcher will be requested to specify the grant agreement number only.

6. REPORTING TEMPLATES

The following section of the document provides guidance on how to complete the following documents:

Annex 1: Declaration of Conformity

Annex 2: Mid-term review Report

Annex 3: Periodic Report

Annex 4: Final Report

Annex 5: Assessment questionnaire

Annex 6: Follow-up questionnaire

Please follow the provided structure and complete all of the sections described below. Please make sure that all used acronyms are clearly explained.

Please note that these templates are given as explanatory examples ONLY and should NOT be used for the reporting purposes (reporting is made via SESAM only and you should download the templates there).