



International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)

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“Finishing touch“ for your proposal

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Introduction

- IIF: to move from outside Europe to Europe. 2 years of “incoming phase” in Europe, and 1 possible year of “return” phase outside Europe.
- In my case: PhD in Barcelona, postdoc at University of Queensland (Australia) for 4 years. Then, I returned to Europe with the IIF (only applied for the “incoming phase”).
- Interesting option if you are outside Europe and wish to come back as a postdoc to some European country.

Before the proposal

- A friend told me about the opening of the call. *All the information is in the relevant websites (CORDIS).*
- Started to put everything together well in advance, *around 3 months before the official deadline.* It takes time to make your proposal ready! Don't leave it until the last week! *~ 1 month writing the proposal, ~ 1 month polishing.* And then, there are also lots of paperwork! *Take your proposal also to other people for feedback.*
- I already knew my host very well (MPQ). Otherwise: *contact potential hosts well in advance. Arrange also for alternatives with the host in case you don't get the fellowship.*

The project itself

- Topic of the proposal: *think about some nice idea that you would like to see realized, and go for it.*
- Explain *why you are the best person to realize the idea, and why your host is the best host.* And prove it (e.g. because I have this and this papers and so on).

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- **KEEP IT NON-TECHNICAL AND MAKE IT SIMPLE.** Don't write a proposal full of equations! Why? Believe it or not, evaluators are not experts in your specific field. And even if they are, the chances that they are familiarized with your specific research is almost zero. So: it's almost like explaining your research to your grandmother.

The project itself

- I articulated the project following the points from the guidelines. *Make one section from each point in the guidelines, and stick to what they ask. Do not add unnecessary information.*
- I did a quite long introduction. Think that *most evaluators will mostly understand the introduction and the conclusions. So the take-home message must be there.* Some tips: write a nice motivation, why you are the most indicated person for the project, what are your research goals, what is the research background, and why the proposed research is important and timely.
- Importance of the proposed research: *both scientifically and economically.* Some of the people deciding on your project will be politicians! (Some examples of economic importance: material development, patents, licenses, spin-offs, intellectual property...)

After writing the project...

- *You, and your host, will still have to do all the paperwork.* The relevant services at your host should be able to help you with this (e.g. the people from EU Offices in the Max Planck Institutes).
- Evaluation takes time. If you get the fellowship: congratulations! If not: try to improve your CV, and reapply the following year. Competition is quite strong, *so don't despair and keep trying* 😊
- In my case: I got the fellowship, and moved from Australia to Germany (27h flight). Interesting experience to move all my stuff. After landing the first months are crazy, but people from the MPQ helped me a lot. Your new colleagues and host will also be happy to help you 😊.

Things you must DO

- Keep it simple, easy to read, and serious.
- Start writing and planning well ahead in time.
- Prove that you are the best person for the proposed research.
- Prove that your host is the best one possible for the proposed research.
- Explain why **your research** is scientifically and economically important.
- Explain why **you** are important for Europe.
- Present your application as a natural step inside of a well-defined career path that you have thought in advance (show that you have a plan).
- Get feedback from other people about your proposal.

Things you must NOT DO

- Fill everything with equations and technicalities.
- Write everything last week.
- Give the impression that you are not the right person for the project, or that your host is not the best possible one.
- Make any typos, grammatical errors, or use bad English.
- Add unnecessary information.
- Miss any of the required points in the guidelines.

Thank you!