



HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL MSCA PROPOSAL

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HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL MSCA PROPOSAL....

...I don't have a good
answer, but I can tell you
my story.

MY BACKGROUND

- 2007 Master program at **Brno University of Technology** – Faculty of Chemistry
- 2011 Ph.D. program at **Brno University of Technology** – Faculty of Chemistry
- 2012 Postdoc at **Technical University of Denmark**
- 2013 Fulbright Fellow at **Gillings School of Global Public Health, UNC, US**
- 2014 University of Vienna, Austria
- 2016 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Research Council Fellow at Office of Research and Development, National Exposure Research Laboratory, Public Health Chemistry Branch, RTP, Durham, North Carolina, USA
- 2019 **RECETOX**

Developing methods to measure and monitor human exposure to chemicals of significant public health concerns and provide links between science, policy and practice.

MSCA SUBMISSION ATTEMPT #1

Process:

- 1) Contacted MSCA project officer at RECETOX.
- 2) Asked for successful proposals – outgoing.
- 3) Read the MSCA call carefully and read abstracts from previously successful proposals.
- 4) Watched YouTube tutorials on MSCA proposal writing.
- 5) Had external advisor from Duke University to read my proposal.
- 6) Had departmental mentors (3) read my proposal.

Submitted: 09/2018

Title: Investigation of human exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and its potential risk of thyroid cancer and related health outcomes (OnFire)

Type of action: **MSCA-IF-EF-RI**

Decision: **Declined**

PANEL SUMMARY-WHAT WENT WRONG?

Total score: 80.20% (Threshold: 70/100.00)

Excellence 3.9

Impact 3.8

Implementation 4.6

Some of the weaknesses:

*Opportunities for **international networking** by the hosts are not presented in sufficient detail.*

*Regarding the **transfer of knowledge from the researcher to the host**, there is a contradiction in that the researcher plans to give seminars to inform local scientists about differences between USA and EU regulations, when actually it is also envisioned that the researcher will receive training themselves on EU regulations, which makes the researcher not optimally qualified to lecture on the full spectrum of the topic.*

*There is **insufficient detail** regarding the content **of the planned communication** activities targeting the general public and measures to assess how the public will benefit from this knowledge.*

*The **allocation of time to the various research tasks** is not sufficiently justified.*

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION (OPVV)

- OnFire project was financially supported from Operational Programme Research, Development and Innovation - project MSCAfellow3@MUNI (CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/19_074/0012727)
- OPVV gave me the ground to apply again



EUROPEAN UNION
European Structural and Investment Funds
Operational Programme Research,
Development and Education



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AND SPORTS

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 1ST ATTEMPT



- Time: Preparation basically started after decline of 1st proposal!
- Place: Take the advantage to be at the host institute
- Networking:
 - talked to EVERYBODY at the department about my research
 - IDENTIFIED and CONNECTED with people with similar research interest
- Broder impacts:
 - approach new project partners
 - show that you will be connected in the region in my case CAR, HZS (reintegration)

MSCA SUBMISSION ATTEMPT# 2

- Submitted 09/2019
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances impact on reproductive health of firefighters (INFERNO)
- The objective of the proposal was to evaluate the reproductive health of male firefighters exposed to PFASs and provide important piece of evidence for future legislative actions
- <https://www.recetox.muni.cz/en/about-us/news/inferno-how-do-chemicals-affect-the-reproductive-health-of-firefighters>

MSCA SUBMISSION ATTEMPT# 2_ WHAT HAVE CHANGED

- More time, direct contact with the supervisor
- More time spent on non-scientific parts like the impact
- More people reading the proposal – sci and admin, people outside of your field
- Focused on broader context not only polishing the old one but expand the idea

2ND MSCA SUBMISSION

Ratings

Total score: 92.20%

Excellence 4.3

Impact 5

Implementation 4.8

Decision

- IF_declined
- WF_awarded





THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Take your time, ask people to help you – read, discuss the idea
- Show the importance of your research (possible impact, even in decades) and how you fit – why you are the one who should do it
- Get out of your comfort zone and broaden your research focus to make it approachable to wider audience (infertility)
- Look at the EU strategy (PFAS), SDGs etc.
- Hot topics: Infertility, occupational exposure (health risks in the workplace remain a constant priority for Europe) , firefighters (wildfires)
- Intersectoral collaboration
- **Try for the second time if possible!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.



GOOD LUCK!