H2020 Marie Skłodowska Curie

Innovative Training Networks

Informal guidelines for the Mid-Term Meeting

These guidelines are not an official document of the Research Executive Agency services.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

ITN project consortia shall organise a Mid-Term meeting (MTM) [1]. The MTM assesses the fulfilment of all aspects (scientific, training, management, networking, etc.) described in the Annex I-Description of the Action (DoA) of the Grant agreement (GA). Particular attention is paid to the training activities and networking aspects including activities across different sectors. As such, the MTM is not just a scientific assessment of the Network nor should it be the first point at which problems are brought to the attention of the Research Executive Agency (REA). It should be understood as a constructive dialogue between the network participants and the REA Project Officer and is a valuable source of feedback to both the consortium and the REA.

2. PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR TASKS

The Coordinator shall agree with the REA the date, the venue and the agenda of the meeting at least two months in advance.

The meeting shall be organised before the deadline for the submission of the periodic report covering the first reporting period. It is recommended to take place between Months 18 - 26 of the project.

The Project Coordinator, the scientists-in-charge, the representatives of the Partner Organisations (if any), as well as all the appointed Early Stage Researchers must attend the meeting.

The REA may choose to appoint an external expert (called Monitor) to conduct the MTM in place of, or in addition to, the Project Officer. The external expert is subject to full confidentiality agreements and therefore should be fully included in all discussions. This expert will be independent, with no conflict of interest and possess the scientific background to assess the project.

Checklist for Coordinator and Fellows:

The Coordinator:

- □ Propose a date and venue for the meeting not later than 2-3 months in advance. The venue should be easily reachable from Brussels.
- □ Propose an agenda to the Project Officer.
- □ Submit through the Participant Portal (PP) via the continuous reporting tool a Mid-term report[2] (called Draft Periodic report in the Deliverables list) - not later than 1 month before the meeting.
- □ Check that all deliverables due for the period have been submitted via the continuous reporting tool in the PP before the MTM.
- □ Check that the Researcher Declarations for all recruited fellows are submitted by each beneficiary in the PP (to be submitted within 20 days of the recruitment and in any case before the meeting).
- □ Provide all MTM participants including recruited researchers with the informal guidelines before the meeting.
- □ Organise the logistics for the meeting.
- □ Chair the Mid-Term meeting.
- □ Present an overview of the Mid-term report and of the network's progress and achievements.

[1] According to art. 19.1 of the Grant Agreement (GA).
[2] The Mid-term report template will be sent to the Coordinator by e-mail.

□ After the meeting: circulate the REA's assessment to all Network partners and to arrange for any necessary follow-up.

The Marie Skłodowska Curie fellows:

□ Prepare a slideshow and/or a poster to be presented during the MTM meeting, where they will present their project and the results/achievements so far.

3. THE MID-TERM REPORT

The Mid-term report and the deliverables form the basis of the discussions at the MTM meeting. The report should cover project's implementation for the period under assessment.

The Mid-term report constitutes the narrative part of the periodic report "PART B".

It must be uploaded as a pdf document under the Deliverables Tab via the continuous reporting tool for the deliverable called "Draft periodic report".

In particular, the report should demonstrate the achievements in relation to the initial project objectives, in terms of:

- scientific results
- research training
- networking and transfer of knowledge
- dissemination
- outreach activities
- management

The report should also include up-to-date information on the delivery of recruitment months and should justify any deviation between the work expected to be carried out in accordance with the Description of action (DoA) and the work actually carried out. It should also provide information in relation to any international conferences or events the consortium has organised or taken part in.

Any relevant material highlighting the most significant results of the project (e.g. reviewed scientific publications, invited papers, patent descriptions, media coverage, prizes, awards, etc.) should be attached as separate documents via the PP.

EIDs and EJDs

Please pay attention to EIDs and EJDs specific requirements!

EID: Hosting arrangements should be detailed (to ensure 50% hosting at the premises of the nonacademic partners)

EJD: Details should be given about PhD requirements at each hosting institution, enrolment and recognition of double/joint doctoral degrees and hosting arrangements for the researchers.

4. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

The agenda shall be agreed with the REA Project Officer. The meeting should have a duration of **one working day** (or 2 half days).

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Date, agenda & venue of the meeting need to be agreed with the Project Officer

1) **Introduction:** Short introduction by the REA Project Officer, the External expert (Monitor) and the Project Coordinator *(~15 minutes)*.
2) **Tour de table:** All scientists-in-charge should briefly present their research team and describe their role within the network. Introduction of the Partner Organisations (if any) *(~30 minutes)*.
3) **Coordinator's report:** Presentation of the Network and the Mid-term report covering each of the following aspects *(~between 45 and 60 minutes)*:

   i. **Scientific**

   - The scientific, technological or socio-economic reasons for carrying out research in the field covered by the research;
   - The research objectives of the network;
   - Scientific highlights of the work so far and advancement on the state-of-the-art.

   ii. **Training**

   - The training programme and the career development achievements;
   - Secondments;
   - Complementary skills;
   - Training events open to external participants.

   iii. Networking

   - How the Network functions and how the beneficiaries cooperate in practice;
   - Interaction with private sector;
   - Dissemination and outreach activities.

   iv. Management

   - Recruitment report;
   - Deliverables;
   - Milestones;
   - Ethical issues, if applicable;
   - Management meetings (activities of the Supervisory board, etc.);
   - Financial aspects (if necessary);
   - Critical implementation risks and mitigation actions; • Any proposed re-orientations of the networks' activities.
   - Document management and Open Research Data, if applicable

4) **Fellows' individual reports:** Every fellow funded by the project will present his/her individual research project and the results or achievements so far. Scientific content is expected in the presentations. The following two options or a combination of both are feasible:

Option 1: Slideshow

The fellows should briefly present themselves, their background, and their training experiences within the Network (~10 minutes/fellow).

Most importantly, the fellows should show the main objectives of their projects, methodology used and main results obtained so far. The end of the presentation should include the fellows' expectations on the possible impact of the action on their future career.

Option 2: Poster session

The fellows should prepare a poster showing the main objectives of their projects, methodology used and main results obtained so far.

This session should take about 2 hours (depending on the number of fellows); with each fellow presenting shortly in an interactive manner the poster to all others (ca. 10 minutes each).

At the beginning of the presentation, the fellows should briefly introduce themselves; their background, and their training experiences within the Network. The end of the presentation should include fellows' expectations on the possible impact of the action on their future career.

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Best practice

Provide the Project Officer with a document listing the recruited researchers and summarizing the following information:

Name, age, host institution, country of origin, country of recruitment, secondments performed and foreseen, trainings, basic studies with dates, research goals regarding deliverables and milestones and plans for the future.

5. MEETING BETWEEN THE MC FELLOWS AND THE REA REPRESENTATIVE

This meeting is intended to allow the researchers to discuss with the REA representative about their experiences within the Network in terms of training, progress and impact on their future careers. The meeting shall last from 1 up to 2, 5 hours approximately, depending on the number of fellows.

It is up to the researchers to decide if they wish to meet the REA representative all together or in smaller groups. Should any of the researchers wish to meet bilaterally with the Project Officer; this is also possible upon request.

Expected duration :

- One meeting with all researchers together: 60min/90min approximately

- Smaller groups: 30 min/meeting (3 or 4 meetings maximum)

- Individual meetings (upon request): 10 to 15 min /meeting (maximum duration 2,5 hours)

Main focus will be on:

i) **Administration**: Researcher Declarations, Grant Agreement provisions awareness, working conditions (employment contracts, eligible allowances, visa issues, administrative support), tuition fees.
ii) **Supervision and integration**: Quality of the supervision, integration within the research team/the network/the host institution/ the country.
iii) **Training**: Effectiveness of the Career Development Plan, secondments, PhD courses, attendance of external courses/workshops/conferences, language courses and complementary skills training.
iv) **Scientific**: Progress of projects, time schedule, achievements (publications/patents, etc.),

> ***Best practice***
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> Should the researchers meet all together with the Project Officer, the ESR representative(s) (if any) may summarize the ESRs' feedback in a couple of slides to briefly present their experience in the network and the project (by highlighting what is positive and what could be improved). Questions could be also collected in advance as a basis for discussion during the meeting.

acknowledgement of funding source.

5) **Restricted session:** Meeting between coordinator/partners/financial managers and Project Officer to discuss financial issues and periodic report (~30 minutes).
6) **Feedback and open discussion:** Feedback from the REA Project Officer and the External Expert (Monitor) and discussion on the output of the Network so far, on possible training areas for future exploitation or the impact on fellows' future careers development (~ between 30 - 60 minutes).
7) **Site visit (optional):** Review how the host institution is operating to meeting the project objectives.

6. ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE PROJECT ASSESSMENT

Scientific

- Is the collaborative research being focused on the objectives set out in the DoA?
- Are all the teams contributing to the project as foreseen in the DoA?
- Is there meaningful working co-operation between the teams?

Research Training Programme

- Is it in line with the plan as established in DoA?
- Are all the fellows being satisfactorily integrated in the project?
- Are they being given sufficient opportunities to interact with Network researchers outside their own team?
- Are there appropriate secondment opportunities available?
- Is the complementarity and multidisciplinarity being sufficiently exploited within the Network in its training programme?
- Is sufficient complementary training (e.g. presentational skills, language skills) being organised both by the Network and by the individual research teams?
- Are Partner organisations involved in the training/secondment activities?
- Industry exposure

MC Fellows

- Appointment of fellows to date as foreseen by the Grant Agreement?
- Are the fellows sufficiently informed about their role and the role of the other participants?
- Are they aware of all the allowances they are entitled to?
- Are they also aware about the possibilities offered to them via networking (e.g. to attend network meetings, secondments etc.)?
- Are all the fellows recruited under an employment contract?

Management

- Is the organisation of the Network and the distribution of tasks between the teams well adapted?
- Is the Network co-ordinator demonstrating the necessary scientific and organisational competence?
- Is full advantage being taken of modern communication and Internet-based services?
- Has the necessary decision-making structure been established within the network?
- Are all the participants aware of the basic rules (e.g. eligibility criteria, allowable costs etc.)?