



Outreach Activities Working Group

Guidelines for Outreach Activities in the FP7 Marie Curie Actions (MCA's)



Introduction

In the MCA's, Outreach entails research-related communications initiatives directed to the general public, rather than the research community. The goal of this activity is to create awareness among the general public about the research work performed in the MCA's and its implications for citizens. As well as raising the profile of MCA with the general public, outreach activities should also introduce students from schools and universities to science, research and innovation. These students should be encouraged and motivated to pursue careers in science .

Moreover, Outreach offers crucial added value for MC projects, and the communication of science to the public is part of a researcher's responsibility as defined by the European Charter for Researchers. As a consequence, since 2011, applicants to most MC calls (ITN, IEF, IIP, IOF, CIG, IAPP) have been asked to include outreach activities as part of the career development plan of the fellows in their proposals. Accordingly an evaluation sub-criterion has been added under the Impact section. "Impact of the proposed outreach activities (* to be evaluated in the light of the principles of the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers')". The relevant point in the European Charter for Researchers is:

"Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the public will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for science and technology and also the public's concerns".

Recommendations

Evaluators are asked to give special attention to the criterion "Impact" under the following headings:

- **Objective:** Is the overriding objective of the activity well-defined? Is it measurable? Is the activity appropriate for the audience?
- **Benchmarking:** Is there a credible approach to defining a baseline against which results can be measured? For example, to measure the success of an awareness raising activity, is there a measure of the existing level of awareness before the activity starts?
- **Audience and messages:** How well is the target audience defined? Are the proposed messages appropriate to that audience?
- **Channels and tools:** Are the communications channels and tools proposed suitable for the audience concerned?
- **Deliverables:** Are there clearly documented and defined deliverables, with a clear timetable?
- **Value for money:** Are the scale and resource requirements of the activity appropriate for the size of audience which is likely to be reached?
- **Measurement:** How will the Outreach results obtained from the individual activity and/or the whole project be measured?.

In addition, evaluators are advised to make recommendations on how outreach activities can be better defined and planned in order to increase their impact in reaching the public. In cases where proposals do not include an outreach activity plan, evaluators are invited to suggest to the Commission that such actions to be added during the negotiation phase.



We offer here some practical examples of outreach activities with points to consider in their evaluation. This list is indicative and should not be taken as a catalogue of all possible outreach activities.

- **Marie Curie Ambassadors:** Marie Curie fellows acting as "Ambassadors" visit schools, universities, community organisations, etc. to promote their research field to students and public audiences. They also assist teachers in preparing and delivering teaching materials.

Approximately how many students be involved? What do they already know about research, science, the EU approach to research and about Marie Curie, the person and scientist? What are they going to be told? Will changes in their attitudes towards research be measured e.g. by a questionnaire?

- **Workshop Day:** A Marie Curie project runs a workshop/activity day in areas related to the raising of scientific awareness, for school students and their parents and university students.

As above. Approximately how many students will be involved? What do they already know about research, why the EU is investing in research and science, and about Marie Curie herself? What are they going to be told? Will changes in their attitudes towards research be measured e.g. by a questionnaire?

- **Summer-School Week:** Students spend one week in a summer school where they receive a first hand experience from the Marie Curie fellows about their current research activities or wider scientific issues; the Marie Curie fellows prepare specific activities, lectures and experiments.

As above. Approximately how many students will be involved? What do they already know about research, and about Marie Curie herself? What are they going to be told? Will changes in their attitudes towards research be measured e.g. by a questionnaire?

- **Marie Curie Project Open Day:** Students and the general public visit the research institutions or labs and receive a first hand experience or lectures. Such an event is typically organised as a continuation of project meeting (for example a Mid-Term Review meeting; the responsible PO and PTA can attend the event and follow up the different activities and their impact)

As above. Approximately how many students will be involved? What do they already know about research, about Marie Curie? What are they going to see? How interesting is it likely to be? Will changes in their attitudes towards research be measured e.g. by a questionnaire? Have local media been invited and have interviews with the fellows been planned.?

- **Public talks, TV-Talks, podcasts and articles in Newspapers:** Marie Curie fellows give a public talk/TV interview or write an article in the local newspaper about the results of the project and how these results could be relevant to the general public.

What is the audience for the article or programme? Is the publication or TV station favourable towards science? What do they already know about research, about Marie Curie? Does the researcher have a real story to tell? What level of interest is there likely to be?

- **e-Newsletters:** Marie Curie fellows develop a web-based document to be released on internet to the attention of the public at large (e.g. Wikipedia).

What is the audience for the document? Does the researcher have a real story to tell? What level of interest is there likely to be?

- **Multimedia releases:** Marie Curie fellows make video-clips to be released on internet, in spaces open to the public at large

What is the audience for the video-clip? Does the researcher have a real story to tell? What level of interest is there likely to be? How much resource will it take to make?