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1. What are the goals of the Marie Curie Programme? And the COFUND and IRSES actions?

The Marie Curie Programme aims to strengthen the human potential in research and technology in Europe by stimulating people to become researchers, encouraging European researchers to stay in Europe, attracting to Europe the best researchers from the entire world and sending researchers out of Europe for periods of training. More simply it's a suite of mobility programmes, helping researchers - regardless of nationality, American researchers can apply - to move within Europe, to come to Europe, or to go out of Europe for training. Some of the programmes cover the entire cost, including salaries, others are targeted at, for example, travel costs.

The COFUND and IRSES actions are two of the actions within the Marie Curie Programme

COFUND is an action where we will fund 40% of a research fellowship programme run in Europe under the condition that international mobility is introduced into the programme. While the organisations cofunded must be in Europe, the fellowship schemes they run could, for example, have as one of their aims the promotion of fellowships to and from the Americas.

IRSES (International Research Staff Exchange Scheme) exists to assist with travel and subsistence costs when exchanging research staff between countries for periods of up to 12 months. This does not mean just researchers, but where appropriate technicians, administrators etc. Research Institutes in the USA can participate in these exchanges.

2. We were surprised to learn that US Research Administrators can become Reviewers. Is this new?

It has always been the case. In many of the actions we use the normal academic review process and the reviewers would be active peer researchers. However even here, since our programme is global, we prefer to have a number of the evaluators coming from outside of Europe. In the cases, for example COFUND above, where we need to review not only the

research, but the management quality of the programme we also need some people with research and administration experience.

3. What academic and professional backgrounds and experience do you need as a reviewer?

There is no formal background or experience; the reviewers chosen are the peers of those submitting the applications. Each of the review panels has a chair and set of vice chairs who are typically distinguished researchers in the appropriate field. While it is formally the work of the European Commission's Research Executive Agency to choose the reviewers we are guided firmly by the chair and vice chairs.

4. How often are Reviewers needed?

For the Marie Curie Programme we have about ten calls per year, each of which needs evaluation. For the largest of these calls this year we received nearly 3000 proposals. At three reviewers per proposal we need between 600 and 800 people to cope with this, just for one call .

5. Do Reviewers actually travel to Brussels or are the reviews done virtually?

Both, but in fact usually it is a mixture. For most, but not all, calls we ask three reviewers to carry out independent reviews virtually, but then bring them to Brussels to discuss the proposal and reach a consensus view. However, we very occasionally run the entire review remotely, and occasionally (but still infrequently) run the entire review in Brussels.

6. Are expenses covered?

Yes, travel expenses are reimbursed and we provide *per diem* expenses while the reviewers are in Brussels. In addition we pay an honorarium of €450 per day. For the virtual work we have a table for each call which says how many days will be paid for a given number of proposals reviewed.

7. Can you tell our members the benefits of being a Reviewer?

The most common comment we have from reviewers is that taking part in the process really makes you understand the programme fully and helps in writing your own funding proposals. Reviewers also value the time they spend in Brussels as it is an opportunity to network with colleagues who they might not meet in the normal course of their work.

8. How can NCURA members become a Reviewer?

Every reviewer needs to be registered in our database. Just go to <http://ec.europa.eu/research/rea/> and you will see a link entitled 'Evaluators'. There is also much more information on the programme and the calls linked from the same page.