



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Green Charter

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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Green Charter¹

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) are the European Union's flagship programme for the mobility and training of researchers, as well as the development of doctoral programmes, with a strong structuring effect on participating institutions. Following the European Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges, the MSCA Green Charter lays down a set of general principles and objectives that promote the sustainable implementation of research activities in line with the European Green Deal,² the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.³

The MSCA Green Charter constitutes a code of good practice for all recipients of MSCA funding – both individuals and institutions – and promotes the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in all aspects of project implementation. In so doing, the Charter seeks to reduce the environmental footprint of MSCA-funded projects, to raise awareness of environmental sustainability, and to serve as a catalyst in promoting best practice in sustainable research management.

The MSCA encourage international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility. While physical mobility remains a central component of the MSCA, the Charter encourages researchers and participating organisations to take the lead in avoiding unnecessary travel, in the creative use of teleconferencing tools, and in reducing their carbon emissions in a way that sets a positive example to others within the research community.

All participants in MSCA-funded projects are encouraged to adhere to the Charter on a "best effort" basis, and to commit to as many of its provisions as possible during the implementation of their respective projects. This should not compromise the bottom-up nature of the programme, where topics are chosen freely by the applicants and the main drivers are scientific excellence and innovation. The measures below should serve as guiding principles; they are non-exhaustive and can be complemented by other initiatives.

1. Researcher-related measures

- Mainstream sustainability and environmental considerations in relevant aspects of the project's implementation, including teaching and learning, and seek to avoid negative environmental impacts throughout the project lifecycle, from planning through to dissemination and exploitation;
- Prevent or minimise the production of waste and harmful substances and – where possible – sort, reuse and recycle any waste by-products unavoidably produced as a result of the project;
- Prevent or minimise the production of harmful emissions, including greenhouse gases, as a result of the project's implementation;

¹ Version: 1, Date of release: 12 April 2021

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final): https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

³ United Nations. *The 17 goals*: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

- Prioritise low carbon forms of transportation for all project-related travel, including commuting, where possible and reasonable;
- Employ teleconferencing tools as a complement to physical attendance at events, where such attendance is not strictly necessary nor advantageous;
- Minimise the use of energy, water, or other scarce resources in the implementation of the project.

2. Institutional-related measures

- Provide support and guidance to MSCA researchers and seconded staff in monitoring and minimising the environmental impact of their respective research activities;
- Promote the use of sustainable, renewable forms of energy, where available, and monitor and seek to reduce energy and water consumption in the context of the project;
- Promote green purchasing for all project-related materials and the use of sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics and consumable items, including the use of reusable, recyclable and/or the most biodegradable alternatives;
- Encourage the use of – and provide the necessary infrastructure for – teleconferencing and hybrid conferencing in those cases where physical presence is not strictly necessary, and provide training to researchers in the efficient use of such tools;
- Support the use of the most sustainable and low-carbon forms of transportation possible for all aspects of project implementation, including for project meetings and conference attendance, where feasible, even where other more economical and/or faster travel options exist;
- Support the use of carbon offsetting in those cases where carbon emissions cannot be avoided;
- Support MSCA researchers in developing greater awareness on environmental sustainability.

3. Consortium-related measures (for multi-beneficiary projects)

- Actively involve and engage MSCA researchers and seconded staff in all aspects of the consortium's efforts at implementing the provisions of this Charter;
- Actively minimise the environmental impact of the project and promote the sharing of best practice within the consortium;
- Promote the use of teleconferencing and online tools, including for training and project meetings, as a complement to physical mobility, where this is possible and realistic;
- Ensure that all project-related events where physical attendance is necessary are organised as sustainably as possible, with sustainability considerations integrated into relevant decisions relating to number and duration of events, location, travel

arrangements, accommodation, catering, handouts, etc. Prioritise the location of events that are easily accessible by low-carbon forms of transportation or – where unavoidable – by direct connections;

- Promote green purchasing for all project-related materials and sustainable alternatives to the use of single-use plastics and consumable items, including the use of reusable, recyclable and/or biodegradable alternatives;
- Promote participation in – and where possible offer at the consortium-level – training on issues of sustainable research management and environmental awareness.

4. Outreach (applicable to MSCA researchers and participating institutions)

- Promote awareness of sustainability issues arising from the research project and of sustainability goals and initiatives more generally (such as the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals), including in the context of the project's outreach, communication and dissemination activities;
- Share ideas and examples of best practice for improving the sustainability of research projects, including on social media, and to help inspire others to reduce the environmental impact of their research and research-related activities.

Success stories and further reading

Several researchers and beneficiaries supported by the MSCA have already successfully implemented some of the measures foreseen in the MSCA Green Charter. For an overview of these success stories consult the dedicated Green Charter's webpage. A non-exhaustive list of relevant resources and guidance material is also available.

For more information: https://ec.europa.eu/msca/green_charter



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