

Terms and Conditions

A. Applying to the Fellowship

1. Applicants must adhere to the mobility rules of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: researchers cannot apply for a Fellowship in Türkiye if they have resided or carried out their main activity in Türkiye for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately preceding the call deadline. Exceptions to this rule, such as for refugees or compulsory national service, are outlined in the accompanying FAQ document. The current call deadline is **June 30th, 2024, 17:00 CET**.
2. By submitting an application electronically, you affirm that all supplied information is accurate and truthful. ECOSPHERE reserves the right to withdraw a Fellowship or terminate employment at the Host Institution if any supplied information is later found to be false or misleading.
3. Only fully completed applications with all required documentation will be considered. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. Applicants must ensure that they follow the checklist provided in the Guide for Applicants to avoid submission of incomplete applications.
4. As part of the application, applicants must nominate one designated ECOSPHERE Supervisors—either from YTU or from DEU. Prior to their application submission, candidates must contact their chosen Supervisors to ensure their willingness to act as direct managers and support the fellow's project. A directory of eligible ECOSPHERE Supervisors is available in the Call documentation and on the ECOSPHERE website.
5. Applications must be submitted through the ECOSPHERE online portal.
6. Originals of documents such as diplomas and transcripts may be requested at the time of signing the employment contract.
7. Applications must be submitted by **June 30th, 2024, 17:00 CET**. Late submissions will not be considered. Upon successful receipt of an application, a confirmation email will be automatically sent to the provided email address. If confirmation is not received within 24 hours, please contact technical support at info@ecosphere-msca.org.tr.
8. All personal information provided during the application process will be handled with strict confidentiality and in compliance with applicable data protection legislation.
9. If applicants encounter technical issues with the online portal, assistance is readily available. In such cases, technical support can be contacted at info@ecosphere-msca.org.tr.
10. Eligibility criteria, including the mobility rule, will be verified during the initial application stage and re-verified throughout the selection process.
11. Applicants should specify any plans for secondment within their application, outlining how it aligns with their research objectives.
12. Applicants are able to revise their submission after the initial application up until the submission deadline.

B. Evaluation and Selection

13. Our evaluation and selection process is conducted with transparency, fairness, and full alignment with the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and [The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#).
14. For detailed information on evaluation criteria, scoring, ranking, and cut-off thresholds, please refer to the Guide for Applicants. The evaluation and selection process consists of three phases: (1) Eligibility check, (2) Review process, and (3) Interviews (conducted online).
15. Additional documentation and further proof of documents may be requested during the eligibility check phase. Applicants have the option to withdraw their application until the conclusion of this phase.
16. After the completion of the entire evaluation process, feedback will be provided to all eligible applications.
17. To ensure there is no conflict of interest between the applicant and the evaluators during the review/interview phases, evaluators will sign a Conflict of Interest declaration.
18. All applicants will be entitled to seek redress. Requests must be submitted within 14 days after the announcement of the evaluation outcome.

C. The Offer

19. Successful candidates will receive the offer in two stages:
 - (1) Fellowship Award by ECOSPHERE
 - (2) Contractual employment offer by the host institutions (YTU or DEU)
20. To participate in the program successfully, applicants must provide written and signed acceptance at each stage of the offer.
21. If the host institutions (DEU or YTU) are unable to provide assistance for the Fellowship and ECOSPHERE management cannot arrange another host, the Fellowship may be withdrawn. Similarly, the host institutions reserve the right to withdraw an offer if the program is discontinued for any reason.
22. In addition to the information provided during the application, the host institution may require additional personal information to complete the employment offer. Requests will be made in accordance with the host institution's data management policies.
23. Successful Fellows are expected to commence the Fellowship as soon as possible, allowing sufficient time for ECOSPHERE Management and the host institutions to implement the Award, and for the Fellow to obtain permission to enter and work in Turkey. A start date will be discussed with the Fellow and included in the initial offer of employment.

D. Employment as an ECOSPHERE Fellow

24. At the Host Institution, the Fellow will be employed as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow or equivalent status under a fixed-term contract, working full-time for a

duration of up to 24 months. The following are the standard terms and conditions of the employment contract, which will apply uniformly across all institutions:

- a. Job title
 - b. Description of the researcher's appointment and status within the ECOSPHERE Programme (e.g., ECOSPHERE Postdoctoral Research Fellow)
 - c. Fellowship duration
 - d. Expected weekly working hours
 - e. Details of Supervisors, including their roles and responsibilities in the research
 - f. Salary and allowances provided to the Fellow, including mobility allowances
 - g. Vacation and other leave entitlements (e.g., sickness, maternity leave)
 - h. Arrangements regarding intellectual property rights, confidentiality, and other institute policies between the host institution, the secondment institute (if applicable), and the researcher
 - i. Termination or dismissal grounds and notice periods
25. The ECOSPHERE Fellowship Award includes the following components:
- a. A living allowance of EUR 3,980 per month (gross salary)
 - b. No additional allowance is provided for family members
26. These allowances cover any employer costs incurred by the Host Institution in employing the Fellow.
27. All salary payments are subject to taxation and deductions in accordance with Host Institution policies and Turkish law.
28. Additionally, the Award provides up to EUR 800 per month in research funding for the Fellowship. This funding covers consumables, equipment, travel, living expenses related to the project, conference participation, workshops, research trips, and scientific publication costs.
29. Fellows' primary responsibilities include completing project tasks outlined in their Fellowship applications. They are also required to participate in activities promoting professional development. Fellows may be assigned additional duties, such as supervision and teaching, with permission from their host institution, provided these duties do not hinder their primary responsibilities.
30. If circumstances arise that prevent the Fellow from fulfilling their project tasks, they should promptly inform both their Supervisor and the ECOSPHERE program manager.
31. The Fellow is expected to complete the entire Fellowship period. Except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., parental leave, military service, or prolonged illness), Fellowships cannot be suspended. Any suspensions must adhere to the employment terms and procedures of the host institution, as well as applicable national regulations.
32. Fellows are subject to the policies of their host institution regarding paid or unpaid work beyond their contracted hours.
33. Fellows will conduct their work at the premises of their host institution, ensuring they have sufficient laboratory space and resources to conduct research. Any

secondment host will provide the necessary space and resources for the agreed-upon secondment.

34. Fellows will receive training on the policies and procedures of the Host Institution to ensure their safety, with laboratory and administrative staff available to assist with any issues.
35. Occasionally, the Fellow may be required to work at another organization's site, particularly during an industry secondment. Their employment contract with the Host Institution remains in effect, and they may need to sign additional agreements (e.g., non-disclosure agreements, intellectual property rights agreements, safety documentation) as part of their interactions with the other organization.
36. Fellows will receive the same insurance coverage and benefits as regular employees, including maternity leave entitlements, in accordance with Turkish law.
37. The duration of maternity leave typically lasts for 16 weeks, with 8 weeks before the expected date of childbirth and 8 weeks after childbirth. It's important to inform the project manager as far in advance as possible if a fellow anticipates taking maternity leave, to ensure that necessary arrangements can be made to support her during her absence.
38. The host institutions operate in accordance with Turkish Industrial Property Law concerning intellectual property (IP) rights and adhere to the Intellectual and Artistic Works Law in research. Employment terms will align with these laws. Intellectual property developed by ECOSPHERE Fellows will be handled by the host institution where the Fellow is employed. Supervisors and Fellows may also be required to complete and sign agreements and assignments as mandated by these laws.

E. Eligibility Criteria

39. Applicants may be of any nationality.
40. Applicants must be fluent in English (written and spoken).
41. Applicants must comply with the Transnational Mobility Rule: at the call deadline, researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country where their Host Institution is located for more than 12 months within the 3 years immediately preceding the time of recruitment.
 - a. Compulsory national service and /or short stays, such as holidays, are not taken into account.
 - b. For refugees protected under the 1951 Refugee Convention (Geneva Convention), any period spent undergoing the refugee procedure (i.e., before being granted refugee status) will not be considered as part of the 'period of residence/activity in the beneficiary's country,' regardless of whether they were actively engaged in research during that time.
42. Applicants must be Experienced Researchers, as defined by the MSCA: at the time of the call deadline, applicants must have a doctoral degree or, if not, at least 8

years of Full-Time Equivalent Research Experience, measured from the date of award of the doctoral degree.

43. The proposal must adhere to the following criteria:
 - a. Must be completed in English
 - b. Submission must occur via the online portal before the call deadline.
 - c. It must adhere to the ethical standards set forth by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and the ECOSPHERE program.
 - d. The proposal should focus on an ECOSPHERE-defined thematic area and include identification of an ECOSPHERE supervisor.
 - e. The proposed research should be feasible to conduct while being hosted at the institution affiliated with the ECOSPHERE Supervisor
44. Each applicant is permitted to submit only one application per Call.
45. The designated Supervisor for the project must consent to serve as Supervisor for the entire duration of the Fellowship.

F. Ethics

46. All ECOSPHERE Fellows must follow their host institution's research ethics policy. The Fellows will be required to commit to conducting their research in accordance with the Turkish Council of Higher Education's Guidelines for Scientific Research and Publication Ethics.
47. ECOSPHERE will not fund research activities aimed at human cloning, modification of genetic heritage, or human embryos.
48. Applicants are required to undergo an Ethics Self-Assessment following the guidelines outlined in the Horizon Europe EU Grants ethics self-assessment guidelines during the application process. If any ethical concerns are identified, applicants will be asked to provide a statement upon submission, and a separate ethics review will be conducted concurrently with the Evaluation and Selection Process to verify eligibility.

G. Reporting

49. Fellows will report directly to their primary Supervisor at their host institution. This ensures a clear line of communication and accountability for the Fellow's research progress.
50. In addition to a primary Supervisor, a secondary supervisor from an external institution or industry partner may be assigned by the ECOSPHERE Program. This supervisor's role is to provide additional mentorship and support the Fellow's career development.
51. Personal Career Development Plan (PCDP): Within the first month of the Fellowship, each Fellow must draft a PCDP with their Supervisors and the ECOSPHERE Management Team. This plan will outline specific training and development objectives tailored to the Fellow's career stage, expertise, and the Fellowship duration. The PCDP will be subject to an annual review and update.

52. Fellows are required to submit semi-annually Progress Reports outlining their research progress in relation to the Fellowship plan, PCDP, and any adjustments arising from regular meetings with Supervisors and other academic mentors.

H. Public Announcement

53. In all public communications, including announcements and publications, Fellows are required to acknowledge the funding and support received for their research. This acknowledgment should prominently feature the following statement to indicate co-funding by the European Union:

"This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation Program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 101126655."

54. Additionally, any other financial or intellectual support must be acknowledged as directed by the ECOSPHERE Program Manager or the Fellow's Supervisor. For contributions from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK), the following wording should be used:

"This project is supported in part by a research grant from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) under the grant number 123C459."

55. Below are the detailed guidelines for various types of publications:

- a. Journal Articles: The acknowledgment must be included in a dedicated 'Acknowledgments' section typically placed before the reference list.
- b. Conference Presentations and Posters: The acknowledgment should appear at the bottom of the presentation slides or posters, ensuring that the font size is readable from a reasonable distance.
- c. Public Reports and White Papers: An 'Acknowledgments' section should be included at the end of the executive summary or introduction.
- d. Digital Content (Websites, Blogs, Social Media): For digital platforms, the acknowledgment should be placed visibly within the content associated with the research or at the end of the article/post.
- e. Outreach Materials (Brochures, Newsletters, Press Releases): Include the acknowledgment in a prominent location, such as the footer or as a footnote on the first or last page.
- f. Patent Applications: The acknowledgment should be included within the description of the invention, often at the end of the background section or the beginning of the detailed description.
- g. Software and Databases: Include acknowledgment in the 'About' section or documentation where details of the development team and funding sources are usually listed.
- h. Visual Media (Video, Infographics): The acknowledgment should be visibly presented either at the beginning or end of the video or infographic.
- i. Educational Materials and Teaching Aids: Acknowledgments should be included on the cover page or the page immediately following the table of contents.

56. When applicable, the use of logos and branding elements for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Horizon Europe, and TÜBİTAK must comply with the provided visual identity guidelines. These elements will be available on the ECOSPHERE website.
57. The ECOSPHERE Program Management Team will monitor acknowledgments to ensure compliance. Fellows must maintain records of all public communications and dissemination for reporting and verification purposes.
58. Fellows are expected to keep a meticulous record of all their public announcements and publications, including copies of articles, conference presentations, and other relevant materials, as part of the project's documentation.
59. Fellows are reminded that compliance with these acknowledgment requirements is a prerequisite for their funding. Failure to adhere may lead to corrective actions by the ECOSPHERE Program.

i. Data Management and Protection

60. Personal data collected from Fellows will be used solely for purposes directly related to the execution of the ECOSPHERE Program. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. date of birth,
 - b. contact information,
 - c. residency history,
 - d. educational and employment records, family status, and gender.The data will be securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel involved in the recruitment and management of the Fellowship. The ECOSPHERE team endeavors to delete any redundant or personal information not listed above. Upon the conclusion of the necessary retention period, and in accordance with legal and contractual obligations, all personal data will be securely destroyed.
61. Personal data will be collected via a secure Submission Management System operated by the ECO-SPHERE management team. Access to this data will be limited to individuals directly involved in the Program's administration and will be subject to strict data protection protocols.
62. Personal data will subsequently be stored on the project's server, on a restricted access computerized recruitment database in accordance with the provisions of the *Data Protection Act* ([Personal Data Protection Law](#)). This information will be disclosed only to those involved in the recruitment process and will not be shared with any third party.
63. Personal data may be shared with host institutions and the European Research Executive Agency for the sole purpose of facilitating the award and the administration of fellowships. All data shared will comply with relevant data protection legislation and will not extend beyond the scope required for Programme operation.
64. Personal data will be retained by the Programme for a period of 18 months from the date of the last activity or as mandated by law, after which it will be securely destroyed unless required for legitimate and lawful purposes.

65. Research data generated by fellows will be managed according to the FAIR principles, ensuring that it is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable. A detailed Data Management Plan (DMP) will be developed by the ECOSPHERE Management Committee and updated as required throughout the Programme's duration.
- Data and Output Types: All research data and outputs will adhere to recommended file formats, ensuring they are easily codified and unzipped for use and sharing.
 - Findability: Unique and persistent identifiers such as DOIs will be assigned to all research data to enhance its discoverability.
 - Accessibility: Access to the data will be regulated, following the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary," with clear licensing terms provided.
 - Interoperability: Data will be formatted to facilitate interoperability across various systems, allowing effective data exchange and collaboration.
 - Reusability: Metadata and data will be thoroughly described to allow replication and reuse in various settings, in compliance with community standards and ethical regulations.
 - Curation and Storage: Data will be curated and stored securely on the coordinator and implementing partners' data servers, as well as external repositories compliant with European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) requirements for long-term preservation.
66. Fellows must submit semi-annually reports outlining their research activities, encompassing specifics of their employment contract, work location, travel, participation in dissemination activities, publication and commercialization endeavors, as well as ethical approvals.
67. All reports and documentation produced by fellows are the property of their respective employers, as specified in their employment contract. This information will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders within the ECOSPHERE Program and retained for a duration of 5 years following the conclusion of the last activity.
68. Fellows are expected to attend all the network-wide events organised by the Programme.
69. At the conclusion of their fellowship, Fellows will be invited to participate in a questionnaire administered by the European Research Executive Agency. The feedback gathered from these questionnaires are instrumental in shaping the future design of MSCA and other research initiatives.