



MSCA Audits requirements

MSCA online Audit Event

10th December 2020

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Research Executive Agency

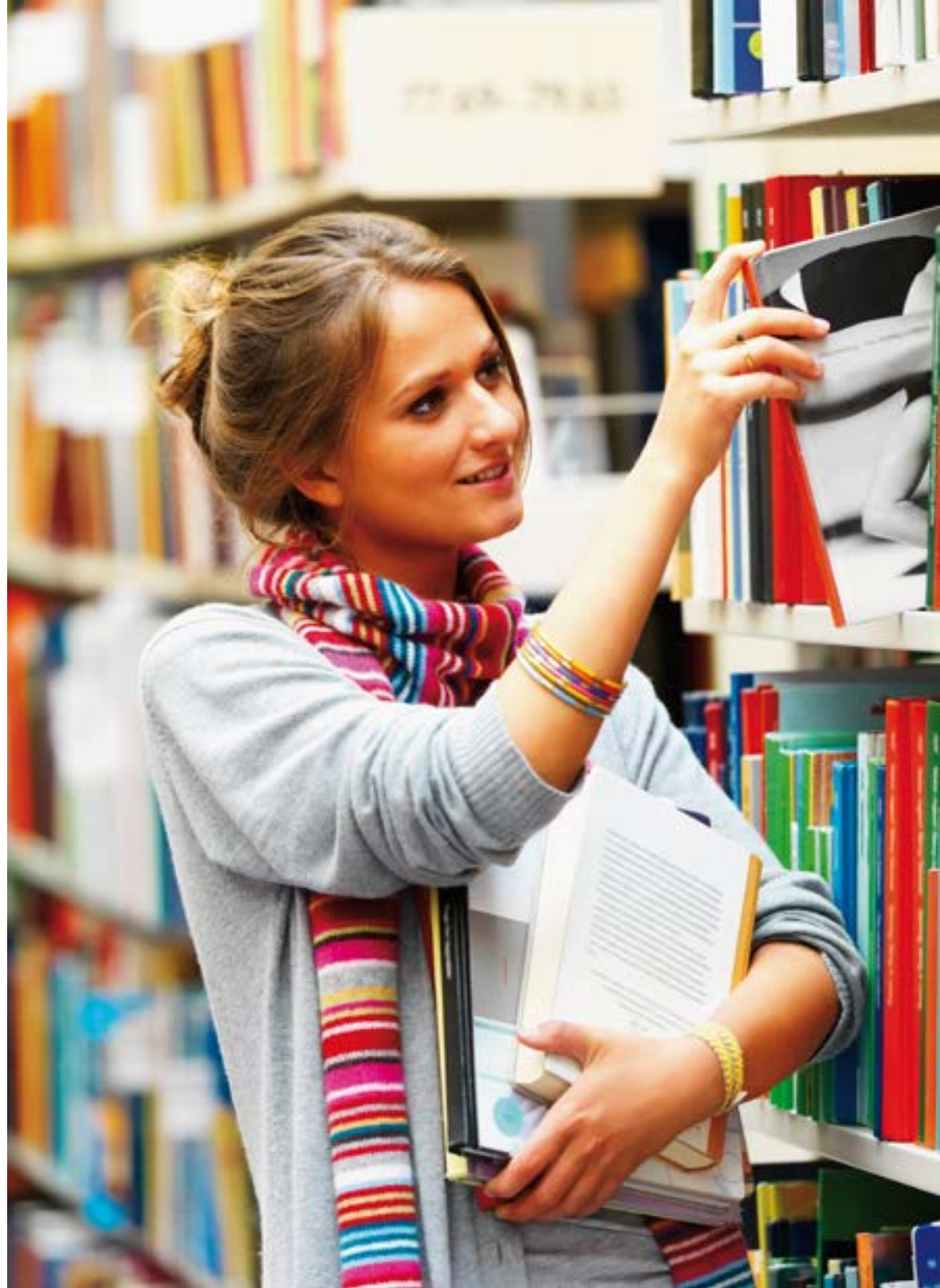
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Introduction

Relevant for MSCA ITN, IF, RISE and COFUND

- Audit Process
- Supporting Documentation
- Grant Agreement obligations

Audit Process



Audit Process

- ***Focus is on Financial Audit***
- ***Audit cycle***
 - **LoA, info requested before the audit takes place**
 - **On the spot mission**
 - **Contradictory procedure**
 - **Final audit report + Letter of Closure**

Audit Process

Selection of Beneficiaries:

- Randomly selected by Commission's Central Audit Service;
- Risky cases, leads from "the outside", OLAF or REA operational services (e.g. issues, irregularities etc.).

Audit Objectives

- **Focus on events triggering the reimbursements of unit costs;**
- **Controls of eligibility conditions of work and promotion of the action.**

MSCA: Exclusively unit costs

➤ *1 Unit = 1 researcher month*

Costs Reported = Researcher months x Unit Costs

➤ *Two Categories:*

- *Researcher unit costs*
- *Institutional unit costs*

➤ *Audit focuses on Researcher unit costs and GA obligations*

Cost categories

ITN & IF Cost Categories*

	Costs for recruited researchers			Institutional costs	
	Living Allowance (correction coefficient to be applied**)	Mobility Allowance	Family Allowance (when eligible)	Research, training & networking costs	Management & indirect costs
ITN	€ 3 270	€ 600	€ 500	€ 1 800	€ 1 200
IF	€ 4 880	€ 600	€ 500	€ 800	€ 650

* Work Programme 2018-2020 amounts, however correct amounts from relevant WP must be applied

** See Work Programme for Country-specific correction coefficient to be applied

Cost categories

RISE Cost Categories*

Costs for seconded staff members (top-up allowance)	Institutional Costs	
	Research, training & networking costs	Management & indirect costs
€ 2 100	€ 1 800	€ 700

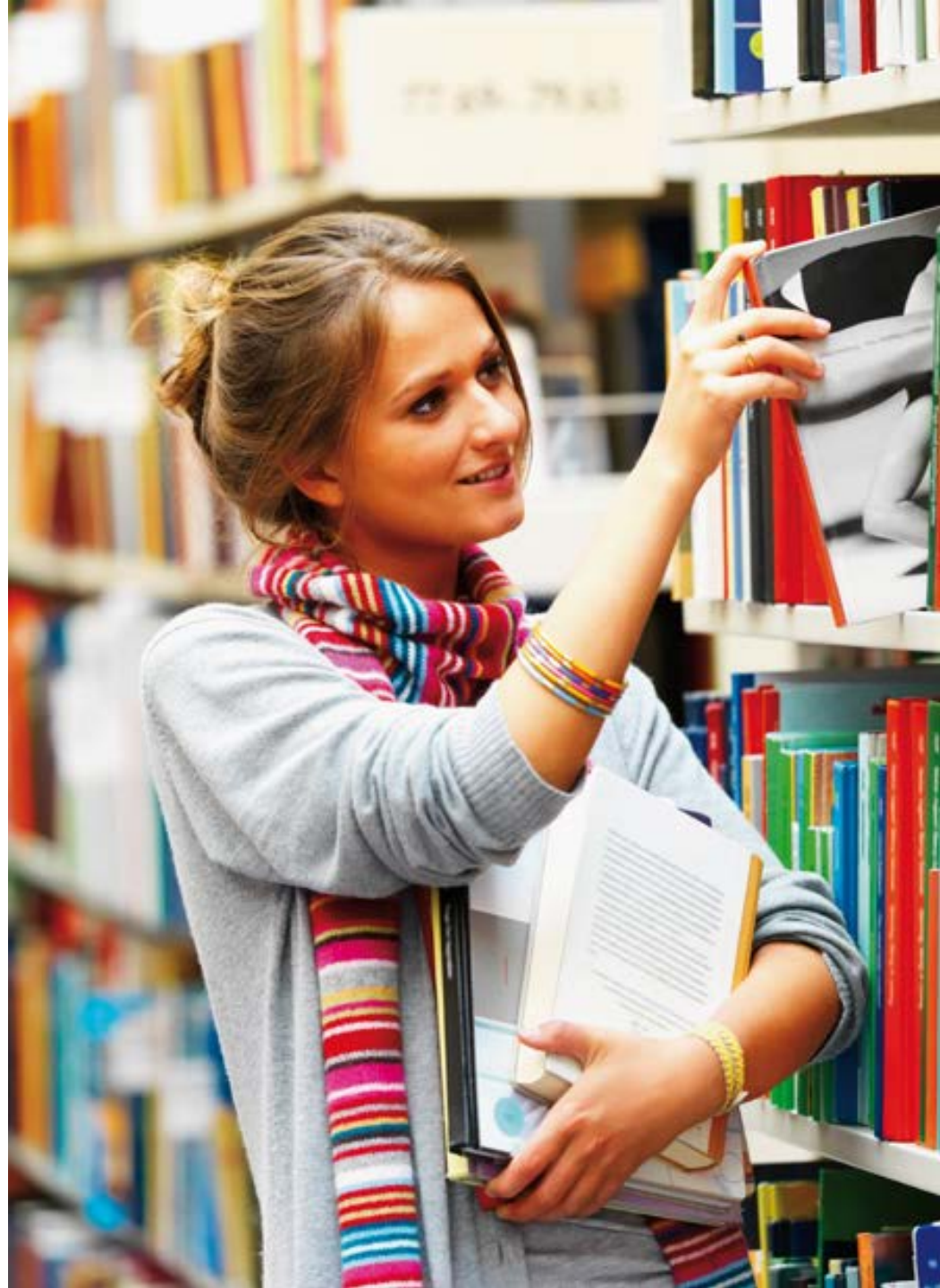
COFUND Cost Categories

Check also minimum total remuneration

	Costs for researchers	Institutional costs
ESR	EU contribution: €1935	EU contribution: €325
ER	EU contribution: €2740	

* Work Programme 2018-2020 amounts, however correct amounts from relevant WP must be applied

Supporting documentation



Obligation to keep records

Article 18.1.2 of the AGA

*"The beneficiary must keep adequate **records and other supporting documentation** to prove the number of units declared and that the costs for the recruited researchers (living allowance, mobility allowance, family allowance) have been fully incurred for the benefit of the researchers."*

Supporting documentation (1)

1. Payroll and HR dpt. :

- a) Payslips
- b) CV's (ER or ESR)
- c) Employment contracts (signed and original)
- d) bank statements

2. Other dpt. :

Lab book, attendance lists, conference abstract, library records, travel expenses, diplomas, publications, etc.

3. Reports to supervisors

Supporting documentation (2)

4. **Minutes of meetings, emails, etc.**
5. **For stays in another entity or secondments during the period:**
 - a) Copy of travel / accommodation documents;
 - b) Report to supervisor
 - c) timesheets (not mandatory but appreciated)
6. **Beneficiary did not receive any contributions from another EU funding programme** (except for COFUND): MGT representation letter + List of projects

Researcher allowances

Must be fully used for the researcher

- Normally paid as salary – includes employer's eligible social security charges and taxes
- Mobility and family allowances can be paid against invoices such as rent – full amount must still be used for the researcher

Researcher allowances

Determine eligibility of institutional costs

- Eligibility of the Researcher: part of the audit scope
- Researcher unit costs eligible → institutional unit costs eligible
- However, if REA receives evidence that the project was not properly implemented – e.g. training not provided – grant may exceptionally be reduced.

**Grant
Agreement
obligations**



Check during the audit

- **Vacancies publications** (Euraxess) → Cofund & ITN
- **Evidence of the call to engage the experienced researchers:** the call shall be open, transparent, impartial, merit-based and equitable (absence of Conflict of interests → self-declaration) → Cofund & ITN
- **Same working conditions** as the local researcher → Cofund & RISE
- **Code of conduct** → ITN, IF, RISE, Cofund

Recruitment

- **ITN & IF:** Beneficiaries must recruit researchers directly.
- **COFUND:** Beneficiaries/Partner Organisations must recruit researchers directly.
- Recruitments via **other means** (e.g. temporary work agency) are **NOT allowed for ITN, IF & COFUND.**

Pay attention to the Work Programme year

- Some rules change over **different Work Programmes**, therefore **check your grant** is in compliance with the correct WP
- E.g.: ITN-EID, from 2016 onwards secondments must be international.

Audits in particular for Cofund

Some findings of Cofund audits Without financial impact:

- **Promotion of the Action (Art 38)**
- **Information on EU Emblem (Art 38)**
- **Working conditions (Art 32.1, 15.1 - Cofund); access to facilities, etc.**

Recurring findings

Recurring findings under H2020

1. Incorrect time claimed due to (40%):

- *clerical errors,*
- *early terminations or delays not taken into account,*
- *Fellow worked not full time,*
- *Fellow showing to be elsewhere instead of at the premises, (i.e. all other means, including social media – e.g. LinkedIn - that can demonstrate that the researcher was elsewhere, will be taken into consideration.)*

Recurring findings under H2020

2. Not valid supporting document (33%);

- *Documents produced by the Beneficiary need to be corroborated by alternative evidences*
- *Timesheets are not representing a sufficient evidence. The timesheets are not mandatory.*

3. Not related to the action (14%);

- *Based on the evidences collected it appears that the researcher did not work on the project*

Recurring findings under H2020

4. Agreed cost methodology not applied (13%)

- *The payments of the salary does not correspond to the allowance the researcher is entitled to receive (underpayment).*

Thank you