



# COVID-19 Flexibility

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*19.11.2020*



# COVID-19 guidance

- *The outbreak of COVID-19 affecting Europe has had consequences on the mobility of the fellows and on the project implementation.*
- *As beneficiaries, you are responsible for putting in place **contingency measures** to safeguard as much as possible the implementation of the project.*

*Please also (1) refer to the advice of your **national authorities** (in terms of health, travel advice, repatriation schemes, interruption of employment) and (2) propose **measures** which are **reasonable** and safeguard the health of the staff involved in the project and limit as much as possible the impact the situation linked to the coronavirus has on the implementation of your project.*

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ ***Cancellation of events***

*For meetings/events/checks that cannot take place, it is possible to **postpone** them, organize them via **video-conference** or **cancel** them (with a prior agreement of the REA).*

***Institutional costs can be used to cover the costs of cancelled events.***

## ➤ ***Secondments***

*If they cannot take place, they can be cancelled, postponed or carried out remotely (depending on their feasibility).*

***Justified deviations will be accepted.***

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Extensions\***

*Beneficiaries may request an amendment for an extension of up to 6 months of initial project duration due to the COVID-19 situation.*

*Request for **extensions can be submitted once the situation is back to normal** to allow the implementation of delayed projects tasks/meetings/secondments.*

*Flexibility is offered as to when extension can be granted (e.g. delayed recruitment to offer fellows 36PM contracts).*

***The maximum grant amount indicated in Article 5 H2020 MGA cannot be increased.***

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Teleworking**

**Teleworking arrangements are acceptable** with remote supervision (in the country of the recruiting beneficiary or in the fellow's country of origin – third country or EU MS).

*The beneficiary needs to agree.*

*The security and safety of the fellows needs to be assured.*

*The fellows are fully paid even in those cases where the research work is not continuing as planned.*

*For projects with field/lab work planned, a shift of tasks is recommended.*

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Type of contract**

*In case fellows start working remotely and beneficiaries are prevented under national law to issue a regular employment contract (e.g. staff should be hosted at premises), the REA can accept that the fellow is contracted with **a fixed-amount fellowship on a temporary basis**.*

*Once things are back to normal, the beneficiary will need to ensure that the researcher is hosted at its premises and that he/she receives a regular employment contract.*

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Part-time**

*The option should be full time teleworking, with full monthly payment to the researcher.*

*If not possible , **part-time** can be accepted if:*

*(1) the fellow has explicitly agreed*

*(2) the fellow has explicitly agreed with the subsequent temporary reduction of the salary*

*(3) the researcher's contract is extended accordingly to allow him/her to finalize the work*

*Fellows working part-time can benefit from **unemployment allowances** as fellows are covered by the social security systems of the country in which they have been recruited.*

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Suspension**

*A suspension is not advisable.*

*However, it can be accepted if:*

- (1) the researcher has explicitly agreed with the suspension*
- (2) the researcher has explicitly agreed with the subsequent temporary suspension of the salary*
- (3) the researcher's contract is extended accordingly to allow him/her to finalize the work*



# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Mobility rule**

*In line with its efforts to support MSCA beneficiaries and researchers in this force majeure situations, REA will consider adopting a flexible approach whenever possible, based on a case-by-case analysis.*

*Therefore, please report all such cases to your project officer who will assess the situation.*

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Payment of allowances**

*Fellows need to be **paid all the allowances foreseen in Annex 2, including the mobility allowance** (even if the fellow is working remotely)*

## ➤ **Extra funds**

*If force majeure entails extra costs for the implementation of the action, it will be the beneficiaries that must bear them (since they were not budgeted and the maximum grant amount set out in Article 5.1 cannot be increased).*

## ➤ **Flexibility in the use of institutional costs**

*They can be used to cover additional costs due to force majeure, as well as extensions of the fellow's contracts outside the frame of the project.*

# COVID-19 guidance

## ➤ **Reporting**

*Given the Covid 19 situation, flexibility will be given regarding the completeness of reports submitted in relation to interim/final payments.*

*If beneficiaries cannot submit all reporting elements, the deadline for submitting the reports (60 days following the end of the RP) may be extended.*

*Deviations will need to be reported as well as contingency measures to minimize the impact on project implementation.*

# COVID-19 guidance

- *Any deviation from the grant agreement will be assessed by the REA on a **case-by-case basis** as well as a possible application of the rules on force majeure - Article 51 of the GA.*
- *Therefore coordinators should send an **official letter via PPGMS** or **formal notification and***
  - (1) **describe the situation** which has prevented them from fulfilling their obligations*
  - (2) describe the **measures they have taken** in order to limit as much as possible the impact the situation linked to the coronavirus had on the implementation of the project*
  - (3) describe the **effects the situation will have on the project** (e.g. postponed/cancelled secondments, fellows teleworking, etc.).*

# COVID-19 guidance

➤ *When the situation is back to normal, we will assess each situation and we might decide to:*

*(1) **amend the GA** to address the declared deviations;  
(2) apply the **rules on force majeure** to accept for example costs which would otherwise be ineligible in the frame of a payment.*

➤ *Please also consult **FAQs** on the **Funding and Tenders Opportunities Portal***

➤ *A "Coronavirus" page has been created on the **MSCA website** with related information for the MSCA Community.*

*Thank you.*

*In case of additional questions you can contact your project officers.*