



ITN SEPOMO

Guide for applicants

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This guide aims to provide practical information to potential applicants on how to apply, together with a description of the assessment procedure.

For further and up-to-date information, please visit the website www.sepomo.eu.



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1. ABOUT ITN SEPOMO

Supported and co-funded by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie ITN Programme, the SEPOMO European Training Network provides 15 PhD positions. These positions have been advertised in the first call, launched December 1, 2016. A second call has been opened March 13, 2017.

The SEPOMO European Training Network aims to attract qualified international Early Stage Researchers for high quality PhD training. The aim of the programme is to increase the international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility of researchers, in line with the principles of the [European Charter and Code for Researchers](#), and specifically the [Code of Conduct for Recruitment](#). The most talented and motivated students will be selected for a 3-year advanced multidisciplinary research training, preferably starting June 2017 (10 positions) and October 2017 (5 positions).

1.1 About the research programme

We aim to bring the performance of organic solar cells forward by taking advantage of the so far unexplored degree of freedom of photogenerated species in organic materials, their spin. As a PhD in our network, you will contribute to the development of several novel routes to enhance the efficiency of organic solar cells by understanding and exploiting the electronic spin interactions. This will allow us to address crucial bottlenecks in state-of-the-art organic solar cells: we will increase their efficiency by reducing the dominant recombination losses and by enhancing the light harvesting and exciton generation, e.g. by means of internal upconversion of excited states.

1.2 Participating host organizations

Selected researchers will enroll in one of the 15 positions offered by the 11 host organizations participating in the SEPOMO network.

1. University of Groningen (NL)
2. University of Oxford (UK)
3. Technical University of Chemnitz (DE)
4. Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg (DE)
5. University of Mons (BE)
6. Technical University of Dresden (DE)
7. Heliatek GmbH (DE)
8. Eurecat (ES)
9. Institute of Materials Science of Barcelona (ES)
10. University of Angers (FR)
11. Merck Chemicals Ltd (UK)

2. CALL FOR APPLICANTS

2.1 Why apply for a position in the SEPOMO European Training Network?

ITNs are financially supported by the European Commission because they provide excellent research, training and career aspects. The benefits of being a PhD student in an ITN network:

- You will get the chance to participate in **specially developed courses** (e.g. on specific techniques, academic soft skills, etc.)
- You can already at a very early stage start **building your personal professional network** due to the embedding of our PhD projects in an academic/industrial network
- You will **be exposed to industry** and the challenges in industry already during the PhD, because we also have partners from industry in our network (who also contribute to the training)
- You will get the opportunity to **spend some time in the labs of other partners** (thereby you will get familiar with other disciplines, techniques, cultures etc.), as the research projects are designed such that they will mostly have interdisciplinary components
- You will be advised by excellent group leaders – they are all **outstanding in their research and trainings**.

2.2 Available positions

Envisaged starting date before, or on, 1 June 2017

1. [Charge transfer at organic donor-acceptor interfaces](#)

University of Groningen, NL

3. [Spin Effects in Organic Solar Cells](#)

University of Oxford, UK

4. [Characterisation of spin dependent loss mechanisms in organic solar cells](#)

Chemnitz University of Technology, DE

5. [Studies of Spin Sensitive Processes in Organic Solar Cells](#) *Applications no longer possible*

Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg, DE

7. [Singlet and triplet electronic excitations in polar molecules: Impact on charge separation at organic interfaces](#)

University of Mons, BE

9. [Triplet harvesting in vacuum deposited organic solar cells](#)

Technical University of Dresden

11. [Structure-processing-performance nexus of solution processed organic thin films](#) *Applications no longer possible*

Fundació EURECAT, ES

13. [Donor-acceptor molecules with tailored band gap and energy levels as donor material for organic solar cells](#)

University of Angérs, FR

14. [Three-dimensional conjugated systems with reduced S-T gap](#)

University of Angérs, FR

15. [Design, characterization and manipulation of electronic spin interactions for efficient and stable organic solar cells](#)

Merck Chemicals LTD, UK

Envisaged starting date before, or on, 1 October 2017

2. [Triplet exciton dynamics](#)

University of Groningen, NL

6. [Qualitative and quantitative characterization of loss mechanisms in organic solar cells](#)

Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg, DE

8. [Triplet migration and annihilation in organic conjugated materials](#)

University of Mons, BE

10. [The influence of spin on competition between charge extraction and recombination in vacuum processed organic solar cells](#)

Heliatek GmbH, DE

12. [Nanoscale morphology and microstructure of organic thin films](#) *Applications no longer possible*

Institute of Materials Science of Barcelona, ES

2.3 Who can apply (eligibility criteria)?

The most important selection criteria are commitment to research and excellence in education, but enthusiasm and team spirit also count.

More specifically:

- Your educational background is in the area chemistry, physics, material sciences, electrical engineering or combinations thereof.
- You have completed a European master's degree or equivalent at the time of recruitment.
- You are an **Early Stage Researcher**.
- The positions are open to all nationalities. However, your application complies with the European Commission's **mobility rule**.
- You have excellent proficiency in English language.
- Participating host organizations may apply additional criteria.

Early Stage Researcher

At the time of recruitment by the host organization, you shall be in the first four years (*full-time equivalent research experience*) of your research career and have not been awarded a doctoral degree.

Full-Time Equivalent Research Experience is measured from the date when you obtained the degree entitling you to embark on a doctorate (either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which you are recruited or seconded), even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged. Part-time research experience will be counted pro-rata.

Mobility rule

At the time of recruitment by the host organization, you must not have resided or carried out your main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the host organization for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the reference date. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

Only applications that are complete, in English and have been submitted before the deadline through the online application form will be considered eligible.

Time of recruitment is defined as the date when you have been first offered the position by a representative of the host organization. This offer will need to comply with the official selection and evaluation procedure. Also, the offer will still need to be officially ratified by the Scientific Board and officially accepted by the decision-making authority of your host organization (e.g. Graduate School, Dean or Director).

2.5 Working conditions and salary

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) offer highly competitive and attractive salary and working conditions.

- Selected candidates will have a fulltime employment contract for the duration of 36 months.
- Selected candidates will receive a salary in accordance with the MSCA regulations for early stage researchers. The basic gross salary (living allowance) is € 3.110,- euro per month. A correction factor will be applied per country, therefore the exact gross salary will be confirmed upon appointment. Please consider that the net salary may be 20-30% lower due to taxes, social benefit premiums etc.
- In addition to the living allowance, selected candidates will benefit from a mobility allowance of gross € 600,- per month. Selected candidates who have a family at the time of recruitment qualify for an additional family allowance of gross € 500,- per month¹.
- Selected candidates will enjoy at least the same standards and working conditions as those applicable to local researchers at the host institution holding a similar position.

¹ 'Family' means persons linked to the researcher by marriage (or a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised) or dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.

2.6 Timeline

FIRST CALL

Opening of the call	: December 1, 2016
Deadline for applications	: January 13, 2017 – 23:59 CET
Decision on eligibility	: before February 1, 2017
Pre-selection by review panel	: before February 1, 2017
First round of interviews	: before February 23, 2017
Second round of interviews	: before March 16, 2017
Ratification by Scientific Board	: before April 1, 2017 (or August 1, 2017)*
Acceptance by host institution	: dependent on host organization*
Enrollment	: June 1, 2017 (or October 1, 2017)**

SECOND CALL

Opening of the call	: March 13, 2017
Deadline for applications	: No deadline. Weekly cut-off dates every Tuesday at 23:59 CET until all positions have been fulfilled.
Decision on eligibility	: within 2 weeks after submission of application
Pre-selection by review panel	: within 4 weeks after submission of application
First round of interviews	: within 6 weeks after submission of application
Second round of interviews	: within 8 weeks after submission of application
Ratification by Scientific Board	: per individual position*
Acceptance by host institution	: dependent on host organization*
Enrollment	: June 1, 2017 (or October 1, 2017)**

** Dependent on the ratification by the Scientific Board and acceptance by the host organization .*

***Precise date of enrolment depends on the position you apply for and on the contracting procedure of the host organization.*

2.7 Content and submission of your application

Your application consists of two parts:

1. An online application form
2. One PDF file containing all your application files

2.7.1 Online application form

To submit your application, please fill in the requested data in the online application form, upload your application file and submit your application. The online application form is available on the website www.sepomo.eu under the tab “Apply” and “Submit your application” (direct link: <http://www.sepomo.eu/apply/submit-your-application>).

For the pre-selection, your name and gender will be hidden from the review panel and Scientific Board to ensure a gender-neutral ranking in compliance with European Commission guidelines.

In the online form, you are requested to fill in different types of information. This information is aimed to facilitate the eligibility check of your application. Please consider the following:

- You may **apply for a maximum of 2 positions** in the SEPOMO network. *The second call will remain open until all positions have been fulfilled. Positions for which a candidate has been shortlisted, will be removed from the options list. In such case, it will no longer be possible to apply for that position.*
- To **indicate your (expected) whereabouts**, please list the start/end dates, country and description of your main activity in the required section.
- Please list your whereabouts in chronological order, starting from 1 June 2014 and ending with 31 October 2017.
- Should you have resided in more than one country within the requested period, please use the “add another whereabouts” to list multiple whereabouts.
- The form allows for a maximum listing of 10 whereabouts. In case you have more (expected) whereabouts, please list these in your CV.
- If you have not graduated yet, please indicate the expected date of your degree being awarded. Please keep in mind that you need to have obtained your degree before the time of recruitment (see paragraph 2.3 for definition of time of recruitment).
- Please **list the names and contact details of two referees**. The review and/or selection panel may contact them for references. Please inform your referees upfront on the possibility of them being contacted by a representative of the SEPOMO network regarding your application. The referees are most likely to be contacted between January and June 2017.

2.7.2 Your application file

Your application should consist of the following documents, in the following order:

1. A complete Curriculum Vitae
2. A copy of your Master certificate (if you have not graduated yet, please provide a copy of your Bachelor certificate)
3. A copy of your grades (if you have not graduated yet, please include Bachelor grades and available grades for your Master)
4. A motivation letter (max. 800 words)
5. Summary of your research experience (max. 1 A4)
6. Copy of TOEFL or IELTS scores, if available*

** The copy of your TOEFL or IELTS scores is optional; all other documents are required. Failure to submit any of these documents will automatically result in a rejection of your application on formal grounds.*

IMPORTANT! PLEASE ENSURE A GENDER-NEUTRAL APPLICATION

To facilitate a first gender-neutral ranking, all applications need to be fully gender-neutral. This means that – in your documents – **all references to given names and gender have to be avoided or hidden!**

3. SELECTION & EVALUATION PROCEDURE

3.1 Eligibility check

All applications will be checked according to the following Eligibility Criteria (EC):

EC1	The applicant has a minimum of 60 ECTS credits in a Master or equivalent in Chemistry, Physics, Material Science, Electrical Engineering, or any other domain that the Scientific Board approves.
EC2	The applicant is an Early Stage Researcher.
EC3	The applicant complies with the mobility rule for the project(s) they have applied for.
EC4	The application is complete, in English and submitted through the online form before the deadline.

Only eligible applications will be processed to the next phase. Ineligible applicants will receive a rejection notification stating the reason(s) for their ineligibility and the possibility for redress within 2 weeks after submission of their application.

3.2 Gender-neutral pre-selection

To guarantee a good balance of skills, nationalities and gender, and to attract the most talented researchers, a first **gender-neutral ranking** based exclusively **on the following excellence criteria** and respective weights will be performed:

- adequacy of the previous studies and marks obtained (35%)
- background in specific areas of relevance for the project (25%)
- professional experience (10%)
- home institution ranking (Shanghai ranking and/or CHE, 10%)
- recommendation letters (10%)
- motivation letter (10%)

Each application will be ranked by at least 3 evaluators:

1. The supervisor(s) of the project(s) the applicant has applied for (1 or 2)
2. One domain specialist (1)
3. Another supervisor in the consortium

We will strive for a balance between academic/non-academic, senior/junior and male/female evaluators as much as possible. Evaluators need to be free of any conflict of interest, e.g. romantic or family relations, economic benefits, emotional life et cetera.

The ranking will result in a longlist of candidates per project. This longlisted shall be approved by the network's Scientific Board.

3.3 First round: interviews by teleconference

Candidates having an excellent ranking in the above criteria will be interviewed for each position through teleconferencing by a selection panel composed of the main supervisor and two domain specialists (of which preferably a balance between academic/non-academic, male/female scientists and junior/senior scientists).

The selection panel for each position will decide how many longlisted candidates they will interview by teleconference. As a guideline, at least 3 candidates per position should be interviewed.

All interviews will be conducted along a jointly established structure to ensure comparable selection.

During this interview, candidates will also be assessed on whether they have the required level of English. Depending on the host organization, candidates may be required to provide official English test scores (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL).

3.4 Second round: on-site interviews

If needed, the maximum two best candidates from the interviews by teleconference will be invited for an on-site interview at the host organization, including a scientific presentation, after which the selection panel will issue recommendations concerning the qualification and selection of the candidates to the Scientific Board.

3.5 Ratification by the Scientific Board

Selection will be on a competitive and meritocratic basis. The final selection will be ratified by the Scientific Board in consultation with the host Universities.

3.6 Contracting by the host organization

Candidates shall be contracted by the respective host organization they are selected by. All candidates will be registered at their respective universities; for the research institutes and industrial partners, the ESRs shall be registered by partner universities.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further and up-to-date information, please visit the website www.sepomo.eu or contact us at sepomo@rug.nl.