European Commission
Research Directorate General
Human Resources and Mobility

MARIE CURIE RESEARCH TRAINING NETWORKS

(RTN)

Reporting Guidance Notes

This document is available on our web-site: http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm#reporting

FOREWORD

All Marie Curie actions rely on a systematic and **continuous** monitoring of **each** project in order to provide:

- guidance to the Project Officers (incl. independent experts) when following the project;
- warnings to the Coordinators when significant deviations to the objectives of the project are observed;
- quantitative and qualitative analysis of the performance of the activities and of the programme.

For the Marie Curie Research Training Networks, the monitoring effort is split in 3 phases:

- continuous assessment during the duration of the project via periodic activity and management reports, questionnaires, vacancy data, on site visits…
- final assessment of the project at the end of the contract via final activity and management reports;
- follow-up of the researchers via questionnaires two years after the end of the project.

The monitoring of the contracts relies extensively on the data provided by the Coordinators (activity and management reports and vacancy tool) and on the questionnaires completed by the event participants to the conference or training course. The Coordinators play an essential role in providing a timely account of the progress of the project and by encouraging the participants in completing the questionnaires.

A fully electronic submission of project reports and deliverables (incl. questionnaires) described in this document is available on the Internet at http://webgate.cec.eu.int/sesam

CONTENTS

1 Introduction

The Reporting Guidance Notes consist of a review of the reports and of the deliverables which are submitted by the project Coordinator on behalf of the consortium. This document provides guidance and instructions to assist the Coordinators in preparing these reports and deliverables for Marie Curie Research Training Networks (RTN). It also describes the procedure for their submission to the Commission.

These Guidance notes do not supersede the rules and conditions laid out, in particular, in Council and Parliament Decisions relevant to the Sixth Framework Programme, the relevant Specific Programme, the Rules for Participation, the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities and its implementing rules or the contract and its annexes.

Outline Report and Vacancy Tool:
The Outline report is a brief overview of the project to be advertised by the Coordinator on the Commission's website. The Vacancy Tool is a Commission's database where network vacancies will be advertised and details of the appointees can be posted. The Coordinator will need to keep up to date the details of the events organised, on the Marie Curie Funding Opportunities Search Tool, so called "Vacancy Tool", which is available at http://MC-opportunities.cordis.lu.

Periodic reports: These reports are required and must be submitted at the end of each period as defined in Article 7 of the project's contract.

- **The periodic activity report**, containing an overview of the activities carried out during the reporting period, describes the progress in relation to the project objectives, the progress towards the milestones and deliverables set for the period, and any problems encountered and corrective actions taken.
- **The periodic management report** includes a detailed justification of the costs incurred and of the resources deployed by each contractor linking them to activities implemented and justifying their necessity. It should be supplied with the **financial statements (Form C)** from each contractor (which may require an **Audit certificate**[2]) and **a summary financial report** consolidating the costs of the contractors.
- **The periodic report on the distribution of the Community's contribution** records the distribution of funding to each contractor during that period.
- **The updated outline report,** which the Coordinator is requested to update at the end of each reporting period.
- The update of the **Project fact sheet**: The initial information of the Project fact sheet will be retrieved from the contract information database, and will be published on Cordis.
- **Supplementary periodic reports** may be required, as specified in the annexes to the contract.

Deliverables: The schedule of deliverables to be submitted to the Commission is specified in Annex 1 to the contract. They are approved as part of the periodic reviews of project progress. In addition to the deliverables already listed as achieved in the Periodic activity reports, each deliverable should be properly recorded in a separate form.

[2] if provided for under Article 7.2 of the contract

Mid-term review report: The RTN Work Programme requires the Programme management to arrange a mid-term review of each network contract.

Final reports: In addition to the periodic reports for the last reporting period, the consortium shall submit the following **final reports** to the Commission after the end of the project. These final reports cumulate and summarise the project's activity over its full duration.

- A **Final activity report**, covering main aspects of the work, objectives, results and conclusions. It also includes a publishable summary.
- A **Final funding distribution report** consolidating the funding distributed to each contractor over the entire duration of the project.
- **Supplementary reports** may be required, as specified in the contract annexes.

Questionnaires: The Coordinator should take measure to ensure that the questionnaires referred to in Article III.2 are completed by the beneficiaries of the action.

Other data requested by the Commission: Contractors are reminded of Article II.3.1.d of the contract – "The consortium shall provide all detailed data requested by the Commission for the purposes of the proper administration of this project".

Reports must be submitted by Coordinator on behalf of the Consortium in writing by means of registered mail with acknowledgement of receipt to the addresses given in Article 11 of the contract and must also be delivered by electronic means, using the electronic submission system available at webgate.cec.eu.int/sesam.

Reports are delivered[3] according to the following schedule:

Reports	Delivery	Approval
Periodic activity report	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	Normally after 45 days
Periodic management report	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	Normally after 45 days
Periodic funding distribution report	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	NA
Update of the Project fact sheet	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	Normally after 45 days
Supplementary periodic reports	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	Normally after 45 days
Deliverables	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	Normally after 45 days
Mid-term review report	At least 1 month in advance of MTR	At MTR-meeting
Final activity report	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period[4]	Normally after 45 days
Final funding distribution report	Within 60 days after the end of the reporting period[5]	Normally after 45 days
Supplementary final reports	Within 45 days after the end of the reporting period	Normally after 45 days

The Commission staff will review **project activity reports** within 45 days after reception. These reports will be deemed approved by the Commission if no comments or requests for changes and

[3] The Delivery deadlines are based on the time of arrival of the *paper* version

[4] May be extended to 90 days after the end of the project, if a substantiated request is made to the Project Officer

corrections are communicated to the consortium within 90 days after the receipt of each of these reports.

For all other reports, the Commission will review these within 45 days upon their reception. However no tacit approval is implied even if no response is received from the Commission within 45 days. The Commission reserves the right to reject such reports at any time, even after the 90 day interval for making the payment has expired.

2 Outline Report and Vacancy Tool

2.1 Outline report

Within two months of the project commencement date, the Coordinator must submit the initial outline report. This comprises a brief overview of the network, including a link to the network's web pages and serves as a source of information on Research Training Networks for the general public. A link will be provided between the outline report and the Vacancy Tool.

The outline report is completed by the Coordinator, using the skeleton, which has already been set up by the Commission. An access code will be provided. Instructions for completing the report can be found at http://europa.eu.int/mariecurie-actions/ . While the Commission will endeavour to verify the accuracy of the outline report, the content is the responsibility of the Coordinator.

For help with updating the outline report, please contact the Commission's Project Officer or send an email to rtd-mariecurieactions@cec.eu.int (Subject: Research Training Networks).

NOTE: The Coordinator must ensure that a network web page is set up as soon as possible (at the latest two months after the project commencement date) and inform the Commission of its URL address.

2.2 Vacancy Tool

Vacancy Tool
The vacancy tool is a user-friendly interface, which has been developed to advertise on the web, for each contract, the following information:

- **The project details** (Coordinator details, project summary: this information will be extracted form the contract);
- **The network vacancies** to be encoded and maintained by the Coordinator (a login will be provided for entering/modifying data). These include the specific tasks of the post, the planned training programme, the level of the post, duration, location etc.
- **The details of the candidates filling the vacancies:** to be updated on an ongoing basis by the Coordinator. When filling in the details of the researchers, a consistency check should be performed automatically (eligibility check, estimated cost of the fellow, and remaining budget on the contract).

The data encoded in the vacancy tool should be used directly by the Commission for following the projects.

Current vacancies will be accessible to the general public although only registered users will be able to create, modify or delete vacancies.

Furthermore, candidates may post their CV on the website in order to be available to host institutions and to receive notification if new posts match their chosen search criteria. CVs can only be browsed by Coordinators.

Instructions on access to and use of the Vacancy Tool is available at http://mc-opportunities.cordis.lu/

3 Periodic reports

3.1 Periodic activity report

The activity report allows the Commission to monitor the contract, to compare the achievements of the project with its stated objectives and to justify the release of the pre-financing. To this end progress should be compared as far as possible with Annex I of the contract.

The Periodic activity report is submitted after each reporting period as defined by Article 6 of the contract (normally once per year).

The report contains the following information and must be prepared in accordance with the template provided in Appendix 1:

- a front page providing general information about the project;
- a summary of the recruitment in the reporting period;
- a summary of the recruitment forecast for the next reporting period
- project achievements during the reporting period consisting descriptions of the:
  - research achievements of the project compared to the original work programme (2-4 pages)
  - activities in training and transfer of knowledge (2-4 pages);
  - management activities (1-2 pages);
- deviations/modifications to the original work program (if applicable)
- additional information which might be considered useful to assess the work during the reporting period (optional).

Additional supporting documents, like: (i) the list of publications directly resulting from the project; (ii) the list of participation in conferences, workshops, etc, specifying attendance by the recruited researchers; (iii) the list of patents and other relevant material providing evidence of the achievements of the network during this period must be attached as separated annexes.

3.2 Periodic management report

The Periodic management report is submitted after each reporting period at the same time as the Periodic activity report.

The Periodic management report includes the following sections:

Section 1 (Appendix 2)

Front page

Part 1 –Comments on claimed costs
Provide a justification of the major costs incurred and resources deployed by each contractor, linking them to activities implemented by each contractor and explaining their necessity. Please explain, when necessary, the origin and motivations for the costs claimed during the

reporting period. In particular, any deviation and/or modification to the initial financial planning of the project should be duly justified.

Part 2 – Project deliverables update

A summary of the recruitment situation for the whole Network as it is on the date of submission.

Part 3 – Financial planning for the remainder of the contract

An updated implementation plan, providing a revision of the overall implementation plan and financial plan if needed

The justification of the costs claimed should possess the following qualities that render the information useful to any reader, including the external auditor and the auditors of the Commission. Therefore, they must be:

Understandable: Excessive detail and overly complex reporting formats should be avoided. Information should be presented fully, but clearly and precisely.

Relevant: Relevant information is timely and covers the full nature and extent of the financial activities presented. Information is relevant if it helps those who use it to carry out their activities.

Reliable: Reliable information represents what it purports to represent. It is accurate, free from bias, complete and verifiable.

Timely: Information should reflect the most recent information available and cover the period in question.

Consistent: Financial reporting should be presented on the same accounting basis, to the extent possible.

Comparable: The basis for accounting and presentation, and the effect of any changes from one period to the next, should be highlighted and clearly explained.

Material: Insignificant events may be disregarded, but there must be full disclosure of all important information. Therefore an item is material if its disclosure is likely to lead the user of accounting.

Section 2

Form C Financial statement per activity for the contractual reporting period, to be completed by each contractor (see Appendix 3)

Provide for each contractor in the project the Form C Financial statement as set out in Annex VI to the contract. *(If special clause 23 has been used then financial statements from members of the organisation should also be provided and the summary financial statement from the contractor)*.

The eligible costs declared by the contractors in Forms C must be declared in EURO. Therefore, costs incurred[5] in currencies other than the Euro shall be reported in Euro on the basis of:

[5] As well as receipts.

• the conversion rate that would have applied on the date that the actual costs were incurred

or

• the rate applicable on the first day of the month following the end of reporting period.

The relevant basis for the conversion rate used must be indicated by the contractor in Form C when submitting costs claims. The choice of one basis must be applied for the whole duration of the project. The conversation rates may be obtained at the following internet address: http://www.ecb.int/stats/eurofxref/ or in the relevant OJ of the European Union.

The main parts of the Form are the following:

General information

Information on the contract, the contractor, the reporting period, …

Box 1: Resources (Third party(is))

Declaration (if relevant) of third parties having made resources available to the contractor on the basis of a prior agreement.

Box 2: Declaration of eligible costs

Declaration of eligible costs per type of activities.

Box 3: Declaration of receipts

Box 4: Declaration of interest generated by the pre-financing

Only for the Coordinator

Box 5: Request for FP6 Financial contribution

Box 6: Audit certificates

Declaration (if relevant) of the reporting periods covered by the audit certificates, name of the auditor(s) and cost per audit certificate.

Box 7: Conversion rates

Declaration of the basis of the conversion rate used.

Box 8: Contractor's certificate

Certification (declaration and signatures) that all information provided in the Form C is complete and true, in conformity with the provisions of the contract and that full supporting documentation to justify that information is available at any moment at the request of the Commission and in the event of an audit by the Commission and/or by the Court of Auditors and/or their authorized representatives.

For more detailed instructions to contractors on the correct completion of the Form C see the Guide to financial issues.

Section 3

Audit certificates are to be submitted with the Form C **if required** for this period (or for any contractor whose EC contribution is more than € 750,000 for the reporting period).
Audit certificates must cover the costs incurred during all precedent periods for which audit certificates have not been provided.

An audit certificate per contractor should be supplied by an independent external auditor or, in the case of a public body or international organisation, by a competent public official, certifying the overall total of eligible costs incurred by that contractor.
An example of model audit certificate is provided in Appendix 4

Section 4

Summary financial report (see Appendix 5)
Include a summary report of total (direct + indirect) costs in euros as claimed by each contractor and activity type, for the reporting period (i.e. a summary of the individual contractor's Form C information).
This should be a summary financial report consolidating the claimed costs in an aggregate form, based on the information provided in Form C;

Note that for contractors subject to special clause 23, a summary financial report must be provided consolidating data from contractors' and members' Form C.

3.3 Periodic report on the distribution of the Community's contribution

The periodic report on the distribution of the Community's contribution is submitted after each reporting period at the same time as the Periodic activity report.

It shows the distribution (in euros[6]) of funds made by the Coordinator to contractors during the reporting period (see Appendix 6).

You may include dated columns of "Repayments", of funding returned to the Coordinator for re-distribution to other contractors, if the case arises (i.e. in case one contractor leaves the project and another takes his place).

3.4 Updated outline report and vacancies (ongoing)

Updated outlined report
It is essential that the outline report is kept up to date. The Coordinator is therefore requested to update it at the end of each reporting period.
Whenever a position is filled or a new position is available, the vacancy tool must be updated.
The web address of the vacancy tool is: http://mc-opportunities.cordis.lu/

3.5 Update of the Project fact sheet

Provide updated information for a revision of the Project fact sheet which is published on Cordis (http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/projects.htm#search). The Coordinator should send a yearly update of the

[6] *not* thousands of euros

description of the activities to the Commission, including any changes to the proposal abstract caused by the project's evolving programme.

3.6 Supplementary periodic reports

Any Supplementary reports which have been specified in any Annexes of the contract to be prepared at each periodic reporting period will also be submitted along with above mentioned periodic reports.

All periodic reports described in Sub-sections 3.1-3.5 shall be submitted *at the same time* and within 45 days following the end of the reporting period in question.

4 Project deliverables

A project deliverable represents a verifiable output of the project which is subject to review by the Commission. The deliverables and the timing of their submission are specified in Annex I to the contract.

Deliverables are often written reports but can also take another form, for example the completion of a prototype, the publishing of proceedings, etc. In such cases the deliverable should nevertheless also be documented in a written record of the achievement of the deliverable[7], including any available supporting material.

Deliverables are submitted to the Commission electronically and on paper as for project reports, unless otherwise specified in Annex I to the contract. Each deliverable has a standard front page (see Appendix 7).

Deliverables should be submitted on the due date as specified in Annex I, with a maximum contractually permitted delay of 45 days. Any delay in the submission of a deliverable must be reported in the Periodic activity report, in the section.

[7] In addition to being listed as an achieved deliverable in the Periodic activity reports

5 The Mid Term Activity report

All Research Training Networks will undergo a Mid-Term Review involving the Coordinator, the scientists in charge, the currently (and possibly previously) appointed early stage and experienced researchers and the Commission Representative(s). The Mid-Term Review report forms the basis for discussion at the meeting.

At least one month in advance Mid-Term Review (MTR) meeting, the Coordinator shall submit the Mid Term Activity report covering the whole period since the project has been started.

The mid-term activity report should be a consolidated text covering the whole period from the beginning of the contract up to the mid-term review point and demonstrating the achievements in relation to the initial objectives.

It should be completed by the individual and confidential mid-term assessment questionnaires, to be filled in by each of the researchers recruited so far by the Network (see section 7.2 of this Reporting Guidance note). Please note that the above are considered as a supplement to the periodic (activity and management) reports and that these should therefore also have been submitted to the Commission in advance of the Mid-Term Review meeting.

The mid-term activity report should be prepared according to the templates provided in Appendix 8.

The mid-term activity report describes the most outstanding or more particularly significant outcome of the work performed during the period covered by this report, in terms of scientific/technological results, research training methodologies, opening up of career opportunities to researchers, international networking of the concerned scientific community, etc. (2-3 pages max)

Any relevant material evidencing this selection of most outstanding/particularly significant results of the project, such as reviewed scientific publications, invited papers, patent descriptions, media coverage, prizes, awards, etc. should be attached as separated annexes.

6 Final reports

At the end of the project, the Coordinator shall submit the periodic reports for the last reporting period as at the close of all the previous periods.
In addition there are final reports to be provided covering the whole duration of the project.

The Coordinator will submit the following overall reports: the **Final activity report** (including a publishable summary), **Final management report**, the **Final funding distribution report**, and any other supplementary reports as required by Annex I to the contract.

6.1 The Final Activity Report

The final activity report should be submitted by Coordinator within 45 days of the end of the project. This report is a consolidated text covering the whole period of the contract and demonstrating the achievements in relation to the initial objectives. In particular, the final report will include:

- an analysis and evaluation of the potential economic and social impact of the achievements of the project;
- a description of the project's activities and future plans regarding the use and dissemination of knowledge;
- an assessment of the equal opportunity promotion actions.

The final activity report should not be submitted as a combined report covering also the last periodic reporting period of the contract. The final activity report must be prepared in accordance with the template provided in Appendix 9.

The final activity report describes the most outstanding or more particularly significant outcome of the work performed during the whole period of the project, in terms of scientific/technological results, research training methodologies, opening up of career opportunities to researchers, international networking of the concerned scientific community, etc. (2-3 pages max)

Any relevant material evidencing this selection of most outstanding/particularly significant results of the project, such as reviewed scientific publications, invited papers, patent descriptions, media coverage, prizes, awards, etc. should be attached as separated annexes.

6.2 Final management report

The Coordinator will also submit within 45 days of the end of the project a Final management report consolidating the costs of all the contractors taking into account any adjustments made by the Commission, in an aggregate form covering the entire duration of the project. In particular, it should review the deviation and/or modification to the initial financial planning of the project. The format for this report is given in Appendix 10.

6.3 Final funding distribution report

The Coordinator will submit within 60 days after receipt of the final payment by the Commission a Final funding distribution report reporting the final, cumulative distribution of funds made to each contractor. The report shows the net payment made to each contractor over the entire duration of the project. The format for this report is the same as the format of the Periodic funding distribution report (see Appendix 6).

6.4 Supplementary final reports

Any Supplementary reports which have been specified in any annexes of the contract to be prepared at the end of the project should be submitted with the other final reports.

6.5 Residual obligations

Contractors have a number of obligations which remain in force after the end of the project and the delivery of the final reports.

Contractors are required by Article II.10.1 of the contract to provide, at any time up to five years after the end of the project, any data necessary for:

- The continuous and systematic review of the Sixth Framework Programme and of the specific priority concerned
- The evaluation and impact assessment of funded activities

Such data may also be published by the Commission in the form of anonymous statistics.

The Commission or the Court of Auditors may also, according to Article II.26 of the contract, at any time during the contract and up to five years after the end of the project, arrange for audits to be carried out, either by outside scientific or technological reviewers or financial auditors, or by the Commission departments themselves including OLAF[8]. Such audits may cover scientific, financial, technological and other aspects (such as financial, accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the project and the contract.

For these reasons, contractors are required by Article II.26.3 of the contract to keep all documentation relating to the contract for **up to five years** from the end of the project.

Contractors also remain bound to certain undertakings of confidentiality, as described in Article II.9 of the contract, and requirements concerning access rights (licences and user rights), as described in Article II.32 of the contract.

[8] Office européen de Lutte Anti-Fraude / European Anti-Fraud Office

7 Questionnaires

The monitoring of the project relies extensively on a direct feedback from the Coordinator through the standard reporting effort but also from the beneficiaries' i.e. the early stage and experienced researchers themselves as well as from the scientists supervising them.

7.1 The Scientist in charge questionnaire

The scientists who will be supervising directly the work of the researchers recruited under the contract will complete the scientist in charge questionnaire. This questionnaire may be completed at the end of the project. The scientists in charge should give their personal evaluation of the project and will have the opportunity to comment and make suggestions to improve the design of the Marie Curie actions.
The scientist in charge questionnaire is available as a web based application at webgate.cec.eu.int/sesam. When logging in, the scientists will need to enter the contract number and the relevant contractual information should be made visible to them. A copy of the questionnaire is also provided in Appendix 11.
The information requested in the questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence by the Commission and will mainly be used for assessing the level of satisfaction of the scientists taking part to the project.

7.2 Mid-Term Assessment questionnaire

At Mid-Term point, the Coordinator should invite the fellows who are currently employed by the Network to complete the mid-term assessment questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to give the Commission some feedback on the overall impact of the network's activity. It is made of 5 sections:

- personal profile;
- host assessment;
- integration into the research environment & training;
- work assessment;
- career impact.

The assessment questionnaire is available as a web based application at webgate.cec.eu.int/sesam. When logging in, the researchers will need to type the contract number and the relevant contractual information should be made visible to them. A copy of the questionnaire is also provided in Appendix 12.
The information requested in the questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence by the Commission and will mainly be used for assessing the level of satisfaction of the fellows.

7.3 The Assessment questionnaire

The Coordinator should invite the fellows at the end of their training period to complete the assessment questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to give the Commission some feedback on the overall impact of the network's activity. It is made of 7 sections:

- personal profile;
- host assessment;
- integration into the research environment & training;
- work assessment;
- career impact;
- evaluation of the Marie Curie action;
- future career.

The assessment questionnaire is available as a web based application at webgate.cec.eu.int/sesam. When logging in, the researchers will need to type the contract number and the relevant contractual information should be made visible to them. A copy of the questionnaire is also provided in Appendix 13.
The information requested in the questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence by the Commission and will mainly be used for assessing the level of satisfaction of the fellows.

7.4 The Follow-up questionnaire

The Coordinator should contact each early stage or experienced researcher who was engaged by the network two years after s/he has finished her/his appointment and ask him/her to complete the follow-up questionnaire. The follow-up questionnaire is made of 3 sections:

- Career progress;
- Recognition of research excellence;
- Scientific outputs.

The follow-up questionnaire is available as a web based application at webgate.cec.eu.int/sesam. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Annex 14. When logging in, the researchers will need to enter the contract number and the relevant contractual information should be made visible to them.
The information requested in the questionnaire will be kept in strict confidence by the Commission and will only be used for assessing the impact of the action and for longitudinal studies.
In order to reach a high response rate, the Coordinators are strongly encouraged to develop an active strategy for maintaining contacts with the former fellows. Costs linked to this activity might be covered under the project management costs.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1: Periodic Activity Report

Appendix 2: Periodic Management Report

Appendix 3: Financial Statement (Form C)

Appendix 4: Audit Certificate

Appendix 5: Summary Financial report

Appendix 6: Periodic Report on Distribution of the Community's distribution

Appendix 7: Front Page for Deliverables

Appendix 8: Mid-term Activity Report

Appendix 9: Final Activity Report

Appendix 10: Final Management report

Appendix 11: Scientist in Charge Questionnaire

Appendix 12: Mid-Term Assessment Questionnaire

Appendix 13: Assessment Questionnaire

Appendix 14: Follow-Up Questionnaire