



## Guide for applicants

### Context

One of VHIO's main missions is to train and inspire the next generation of leading cancer researchers and medical doctors in Oncology to drive impactful health research and innovation practices that will tackle tomorrow's societal challenges. Through the VHIO Academy established in 2021, the institute aims to attract talented international scientists and support them through state-of-the-art training and career development opportunities. To boost VHIO leadership in cancer research we are launching VIDA ("VHIO International postDoctoral programme for translational Research"), a new postdoctoral programme led by VHIO and designed to foster excellence research through the implementation of inclusive recruitment practices and an impactful training portfolio. VIDA will recruit 12 postdoctoral researchers to conduct interdisciplinary and intersectoral research activities in the broad topic of Cancer Research, which will comply with all the principles of Open Science and maintain the highest research quality standards. The VIDA COFUND programme includes the participation of 16 different academic & non-academic partner organisations. The programme will consolidate the research career opportunities of the beneficiaries while strengthening the training portfolio of VHIO Academy and expanding VHIO's network of partner organisations to foster interdisciplinary and intersectoral cancer & Oncology research.

The Programme supports 12 fellows (6 fellows per call) working on projects with a duration of up to 36 months.

The terms and conditions of the VHIO VIDA Programme, in line with the regulations applicable for the Grant Agreement 101179122 signed between the VHIO and the European Commission's Research Executive Agency (REA), are outlined below:

### Research Freedom

Eligible candidates are required to develop their independent research proposals & freedom to choose their host institution; VIDA *will not strictly predefine the research work to be carried out* by the selected fellows. Candidates selected for the second stage will design a research proposal that is aligned with one of the available areas/topics. Scientific/academic merits and excellence of the research proposal will be the only criteria for evaluation. The comprehensive list of possible research themes and supervisors will be available on the [programme website](#).

## Eligibility criteria

Candidates should fulfil the following eligibility criteria at the time of the call deadline. If it becomes clear at any stage of the selection process that one or more of the eligibility criteria have not been fulfilled, the proposal is declared ineligible and is withdrawn from any further examination.

**Mobility:** Researchers may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Spain for more than 12 months in the three years immediately before the call deadline. Short stays for holidays, compulsory military service, or under the Refugee Convention 1951 are excluded.

**Experience:** Researchers must be in possession of a doctoral degree at the deadline of the co-funded programme's call. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as postdoctoral researchers and will be considered eligible to apply. The only exception will be for candidates who are not yet in possession of the PhD degree; in this case, a letter from the organization providing the degree must be included with an estimated date for the award. If the estimated award date does not fit with the evaluation timeline, the candidate will be considered not eligible.

The VHIO Academy ([academy@vhio.net](mailto:academy@vhio.net)) must be contacted prior to submission when claiming an exception due to personal reasons.

Applications must be submitted online and include all the personal information and details requested in the application website to be eligible. No restrictions on nationality, age and/or gender will affect the selection process.

## Evaluation process and criteria

### Evaluation

The evaluation of eligible candidates will be carried out by an external, independent selection panel. The evaluation will be objective, independent, free of conflicts of interest and the selection will be based on merits and equal opportunities. Possible supervisors will NOT be involved at all in the evaluation & selection process.

The review procedure will be carried out in various steps:

- **Eligibility check (Phase 1):** Each application will be carefully checked against the mobility & experience criteria. Applicants will have to demonstrate the academic requirements in order to be eligible for a fellowship according to the postdoctoral researcher definition.
- **Remote evaluation (Phase 2):** Applications passing the eligibility check will be remotely evaluated by the Remote Evaluation Committee (REC) through a peer-review system carried out by independent experts.
- **Invitation of pre-selected candidates (Phase 3):** The short-listed candidates from the remote evaluation phase

(approximately 12 candidates per Open Call) will be invited to present a project proposal aligned with one of the research themes available.

- **Interviews and presentation of the research proposal (Phase 4):** The short-listed candidates from Phase 2 will be invited to an onsite interview session.
- **Final Scoring & Ranking (Phase 5):** Selected candidates (awardees) will be offered the grant. Rejected offers may be offered to candidates from the reserve list.

## Criteria

The selection process is designed to be open, transparent and merit based. Eligible applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

### Phase 1

Criteria	Description	Weighting
<b>Research and working experience</b>	Participation in projects	30%
	Publications	
	Attendance to conferences and events	
	Research skills and competences	
	Technology transfer activities and patents	
	Support letters	
<b>Other</b>	Mobility (research stays)	10%
	Supervision and mentoring	
	Public awareness	
	Non-academic/Industrial experience	
	Suitability of the profile to the programme	
<b>Total Score</b>		40%

### Phase 2

Criteria	Description	Weighting
<b>Research proposal</b>	Description, innovative aspects, alignment with programme thematic areas, work plan and expected results.	30%
<b>Interview</b>	Research skills: Scientific excellence, level of independence, motivation and potential as a future lead researcher, scientific quality of the presentation and answers during the Q&A session	15%
	Interpersonal skills: Professional attitude, team player, reliability & motivation	10%

	Communication skills: English skills and oral communication	5%
<b>Total Score</b>		60%

In addition to the evaluation criteria described above and in line with [The European Charter for Researchers](#), a return after a career break will not be penalized, but rather be regarded as a career evolution. Applicants will be requested to indicate any career break in their CVs. Any mobility experience (geographical, intersectorial, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility) will be regarded as a valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers and will be positively considered. Furthermore, an equal opportunity policy regarding recruitment will be followed, without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence.

Candidates can access the Guide for Evaluators on the [programme's website](#).

## Application process

Applications for the VIDA Programme are accepted exclusively online through our [online application system](#). The application deadline is the 13th of March 2025 at 23:59 CET. Proposals must be written in English.

Applicants will be asked to complete the following information on the application form:

- a) Personal details
- b) Sworn Statement of Compliance with Mobility Rule: Compliance with the mobility rule described above is a mandatory requirement for participation in the current programme. Please fill in the form that you will find under the Related Documents section in the call website and provide proof of compliance according to your personal situation. Examples of documents are ID cards, residence permits, registration documentation, lease agreement, bills, etc. Please note that VHIO may request additional documentation later in the process.
- c) PhD & Previous Postdoc Experience: PhD and Postdoc information (date/country in which PhD was/will be awarded, Name/address of PhD supervisor and Institution, summary of the PhD Work, Summary of previous postdoctoral work, if applicable).
- d) Scientific CV: publications, research experience, grants, awards, patents,
- e) Host Research Group: maximum two laboratories of choice.
- f) Motivation letter: Please state clearly why you wish to work as postdoctoral fellow at VHIO and specifically in the chosen VHIO research group.
- g) Reference letters: candidates are required to provide contacts of two referees. The referees will receive an automatic email to complete the

reference letter electronically. Candidates will be able to see when and whether the reference letters have been submitted.

All personal data requested by VHIO from applicants will be treated in accordance with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2016/679).

## Appointment conditions

Successful candidates will be required to communicate their acceptance and the start date of their project within 15 days of receiving notification of the outcome of the selection process. Fellows are expected to take up their fellowships within 3 months of notification of acceptance.

Upon acceptance of the VIDA fellowship, fellows sign a Work Contract (including Annexes) and a Fellowship Agreement with VHIO, which contains the appointment conditions following VHIO and Grant Agreement 10117912 regulations, in particular:

a) Fellows will be employed 36 months by VHIO under a work contract with full social security and a competitive salary, an annual mobility allowance and research costs. The specific working conditions of VHIO and the MSCA-COFUND programme apply. Annual gross salary: 42.857,14 EUR/ year plus an annual mobility allowance of 6.600€ before taxes (Spanish tax and social security deductions apply). Fellows travelling with their families will receive an annual allowance of 1200 euros € before taxes (Spanish tax and social security deductions apply). Fellows will be granted a total amount of 22.178,18 EUR/year (managed by VHIO) corresponding to Research Costs, Training and Networking activities.

Fellows will receive a personalized career development plan and a training programme for scientific and transferable skills.

b) Fellows will work full time on the project and cannot benefit at the same time from another Marie Skłodowska Curie Action or individual fellowship.

c) Justified breaks in the fellowship will be permitted for reasons of maternal/paternal leave, childcare, military or other civil duties, care of elderly relatives. Requests for breaks for other reasons may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

d) VIDA fellows are considered Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellows.

VHIO is committed to conducting transparent and merit-based recruitment and selection procedures and providing good working conditions for researchers in alignment with the European Charter and Code for Researchers.

## Responsibilities of fellows

Selected fellows will be required to comply with the provisions of the Grant Agreement 101179122 and VHIO regulations, in particular:

### **a) Ethics and scientific practice**

Fellows will respect the fundamental ethical principles, scientific practice and national and international regulations concerning ethical issues in research. For further advice, please see the CORDIS website on ethics, or contact the Academic Office.

### **b) Dissemination and publicity**

Fellows will acknowledge the support of the European Commission under the Marie Skłodowska Curie Cofunding of regional National and International Programmes in any related publications or other media in accordance with Article 17 of the Grant Agreement.

### **c) IPR**

Fellows will adhere to the VHIO IPR Policy.

### **d) Personal Career Development Plan**

Fellows will draft a personal career development plan to be discussed with the supervisor at the start of the fellowship and a follow-up on years 2 and 3 containing the following principal elements:

- Project development and progress with respect to planned activity
- Achievements during the period
- Participation in meetings or conference
- Visits to other research groups
- Any deviation from the original proposal
- Any ethical issues that have arisen during the research activity
- List of publications and presentations at conferences (with acknowledgements to the Programme)
- Participation in trainings and career development activities

### **e) Reporting**

Fellows shall submit additional project reports as required by the Grant Agreement and requested by VHIO.

As Marie Skłodowska Curie fellow, you will also be asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire at the end of the fellowship

## **Helpdesk**

A document containing the Frequently Asked Questions about the Programme can be consulted on the website.

Please contact the VHIO Academy at [academy@vhio.net](mailto:academy@vhio.net) for any queries or assistance.