

## Widening Country Inspiration Story

“Luck plays a part but you also need to create your own luck by being proactive.”

**Name of the fellow:** Adam Bennett

**Country of the host:** Türkiye

**Project Acronym:** DiBDEV

**Project start and end date:** 13.06.2022 – 12.06.2024

**Type of MSCA, Horizon Europe:** Postdoctoral Fellowship

### What is your project about and why is the topic important for science advancement?

This project aims to intercept molecular messages from the brain in the blood of migraine patients to better understand the processes that occur during migraine. Migraine affects 15-25% of adults with symptoms such as severe headache, but studies investigating the molecular drivers of migraine in humans have been hindered by the inaccessibility of the brain. This project involves capturing brain-derived molecules in the blood to gain insight into the processes that occur during migraine.

### Why is your project important for the society?

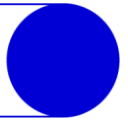
The lack of understanding of migraine has led to some stigma in society. Providing patients with a molecular basis of their condition could help reduce this stigma and encourage them to seek treatment. Disentangling the molecular pathways driving migraine will also enable specific molecules to be targeted with treatments/ diagnostics, which will have a substantial societal impact by reducing individuals' years lived with disability.

### What communication and public engagement measures a have you foreseen?

Communication measures will include non-specialist summaries accompanying scientific articles, as well as submitting an article to [The Conversation](#). The public will be actively engaged through the host university's science festivals and a presentation to students at my old secondary school.

### What kind of support did you get?

The NCP at TÜBİTAK – the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye – put me in contact with the host university's project office, which familiarised me with the application process. The NCP then provided me with some publicly available former applications, which were crucial in helping me understand how to prepare my own application. The NCP also helped me to understand the specific application language and the different sections. The supervisor helped with the development of practical ideas – to keep things realistic – and filled in knowledge gaps in the proposal, as well as provided information about wider university facilities. Making use of online resources (MSCA official documents, YouTube videos, MSCA-NET handbook) was essential. A friend who is a Postdoctoral Fellow helped me by reviewing my application and giving me feedback.



### Why did you choose a widening country as a host?

I moved to Türkiye for personal reasons (my partner lives there and we were unable to see each other during the COVID-19 pandemic). However, the pandemic also meant that all conferences were online and I had access from Türkiye, so I spent a few weeks attending conferences and conducting peer reviews whilst setting up my life in the country. This allowed me to stay engaged with academic life. I managed to secure a postdoc and applied for the fellowship after learning of its benefits for researchers' career development.

### How did you find your host organisation?

I found a job offer for a postdoc on EURAXESS and contacted the supervisor's former international postdoc student who I found online and who highly recommended the lab. I spoke with the supervisor and, even though I was not a neuroscientist, the proposed field of research seemed to fit my background well.

### What tips can you give other researchers who would like to apply for MSCA?

Luck plays a part, of course, but you also need to create your own luck by being proactive. Search for supervisors renowned in your field or keep an eye on EURAXESS for offers – the supervisor may need their own funding so that there are sufficient project resources. The application experience and feedback from evaluators can greatly improve an application's chances. Stepping outside your field can be challenging but will also create opportunities for development and enhance the two-way transfer of knowledge.

More information on the project:



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stage of their career across all disciplines. The MSCA also support cooperation between industry and academia and provide innovative trainings and career developments.

The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) enable talented researchers to work on project in Europe and beyond. They aim at enhancing the innovative potential of postdoctoral researchers through advanced trainings, international and intersectoral mobility.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.

