

## Widening Country Inspiration Story

“Prioritise career development beyond research, emphasising training in new techniques and transferable skills.”

**Name of the fellow:** Rene Herrera Diaz

**Country of the host:** Slovenia

**Project Acronym:** MULTI-WOOD

**Project start and end date:**

01.09.2023 – 31.08.2025

**Type of MSCA, Horizon Europe:**

Postdoctoral Fellowship



### What is your project about?

The MULTI-WOOD project develops eco-friendly wood modification, improving UV protection, moisture resistance, and fire-retardancy with bio-based formulations. The utilisation of bio-waste fractions ensures sustainability and reduces the environmental impact. The project advances our understanding of wood structure at micro and nanoscales, employing innovative methodologies and analytical techniques to provide solutions for improved wood performance while minimising environmental impact.

### Why is your project important for society?

The project is crucial for society as it transforms low-value resources into high-value multifunctional compounds, aligning with a holistic biorefinery approach. Creating a market for bio-based chemical products from biomass residue promotes rural development. Additionally, the project prioritises gender equality through inclusive communication and consideration of gender aspects in research.

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

Dissemination includes scientific articles in open-access journals, a new non-destructive techniques database, and seminars/trainings. Involving researchers, industry, and stakeholders ensures broad impact. This approach fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and application of research in diverse fields like composites or cosmetics.

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

I selected Slovenia, a widening country, due to the exceptional quality and facilities offered by the host institute, InnoRenew CoE. The institute's multidisciplinary research environment was fundamental in my decision. The regional setting of Slovenia further complemented the social environment, creating an ideal backdrop for fruitful research activities.

### How did you find your host organisation?

I discovered my host organisation, InnoRenew CoE, through established connections. The director (Andreja Kutnar), chaired a relevant COST action I was involved in, and my prior research collaboration with my supervisor (Anna Sandak), set the centre as my top choice for the MSCA application.

### What kind of support did you get?

During the application process for the Postdoctoral Fellowship, the National Contact Point (NCP) of my country provided insights through informative online webinars detailing the application process and grant conditions in my own language. Additionally, I participated in online workshops hosted by the country of the fellowship, gaining crucial insights. To enhance my application, I reached out to successful applicants from the host country who generously shared tips and pertinent information. The [MSCA portal](#) served as a comprehensive resource, offering guidelines and links elucidating the call, forms, and the entire application process. This multifaceted support significantly contributed to the success of my application.

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

Prioritise career development beyond research, emphasising training in new techniques and transferable skills. Ensure scientific innovation with a focused, comprehensive approach. Highlight infrastructure needs and detail project management. Avoid redundancy and stress avant-garde methodology. Address gender/ethical considerations. Clearly outline actions for effective dissemination and communication, ensuring maximum impact.

More information on the project:



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stages 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.

