Widening Country Inspiration Story

"Use all available resources, like previous successful proposals and the MSCA-NET Doctoral Networks Handbook."

Organisation name: Ruđer Bošković Institute
Organisation type: Public research organisation
Country: Croatia
Project Acronym: DANIO-ReCODE
Project start and end date: 1.11.2024 - 31.10.2028
Type of MSC action, Horizon Europe: Doctoral Networks
Is your organisation a coordinator? No

What is your project about?

DANIO-ReCODE is a collaborative project that trains new researchers to understand how vertebrates regenerate tissues, using zebrafish—a fish that can regrow heart, brain, and eye tissues—as a model. By studying zebrafish, we aim to uncover the molecular mechanisms of regeneration. The project uses advanced technologies like genome editing and artificial intelligence. This research could advance regenerative medicine, helping to repair or replace damaged human tissues.

Why is your project important for society?

Regenerative medicine seeks to replace damaged tissues without transplants. By studying zebrafish tissue regeneration, DANIO-ReCODE could help develop new treatments for heart failure, brain injuries, and diabetes. This knowledge could accelerate human regeneration research, potentially reversing injuries and diseases.

What communication and public engagement measures have you foreseen?

To engage society, we will try to inspire young people and build trust through outreach activities. Our researchers will join events like the European Researchers' Night, visit schools, and create engaging visuals. We will maintain a public website and use social media to share updates. Researchers will be trained in innovative communication to effectively share findings.

What kind of support did you get?

During the application process, we received valuable support from the Croatian National Contact Points (NCPs). We attended an MSCA Doctoral Networks (DN) information day organised by them, providing relevant information, evaluator insights, and success stories. The NCPs shared essential resources like the MSCA-NET Doctoral Networks Handbook and other proposal-writing materials; the handbook was indispensable. They also pre-screened our proposal, highlighting areas in non-scientific

sections to improve and ensuring all mandatory elements were included.
We also benefited from experience and best practices from a successful application from the previous year.

How did you find the partners in your consortium?

We began by contacting a potential coordinator, who agreed to lead the network. We then identified the key expertise needed for success and individually invited potential experts, considering gender balance in our selections. Most accepted enthusiastically, with only a few declining.

What tips can you give other organisations that would like to apply for MSCA?

Identify needed expertise early and contact experts—people are often keen to join such projects. Reach out to associated partners, especially large corporations, well in advance, as approvals can take time; direct contacts work better than official channels. Start proposal writing early; ask partners to contribute with their sections. Define Work Packages and assign leaders promptly. Use all available resources, like previous successful grants and the MSCA-NET DN Handbook.

More information on the project:

The Marie Sklodowska-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 Doctoral Networks (DN) offer doctoral programmes implemented by partnerships of organisations from different sectors across Europe and beyond to train highly skilled doctoral candidates, stimulate their creativity, enhance their innovation capacities and boost their employability in the long-term.

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.