Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
Info Session for individual Fellowships
June 2, 2015

Testimony from a Supervisor for a Global Fellowship
Olivier Lambert (RBINS)
Presentation outline

1. Brief presentation of our Global Fellowship project
   - Supervisor
   - Fellow
   - Proposal
   - Complementarity between partners of the project

2. Submission process

3. Evaluation
   - Strengths
   - Weaknesses

4. Major advantages of the Marie Curie Global Fellowships

5. Potential issues
1. Brief presentation of our Global Fellowship project

Olivier Lambert (Supervisor)

- Paleontologist at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS, one of the ten Federal Scientific Institutes and Museums, Host Institution)

- Main research interests: evolutionary history marine mammals and adaptations to the aquatic environment (with a special focus on fossil odontocetes, echolocating toothed cetaceans)

- Why at the RBINS?
  - Rich fossil localities in the area of Antwerp
  - One of the largest collections of fossil marine mammals in Europe
  - Long tradition for the study of fossil and extant cetaceans in Belgium (e.g., works by P.-J. Van Beneden)
Felix Marx (Fellow)

- Austrian

- **Master** in Sciences at the University of Bristol (**UK**, Paleontology and Evolution)

- **PhD** thesis at the University of Otago (**New Zealand**): *Evolutionary relationships and disparity of baleen whales (Mysticeti)*

- **Postdoc** in progress at the National Museum of Nature and Science (**Japan**), focused on baleen whale evolution
Proposal

"The oldest and the rarest - combining insight from both hemispheres to gain a global picture of baleen whale origins and macroevolution"

3- years postdoc:

2 years at Monash University and Victoria Museum (Victoria, Australia; Partner Institutions)

- Study of collections (from Australia and USA)
- Collaboration with Pr. Alistair Evans and Dr. Erich Fitzgerald
- Fieldwork in Australia

1 year at RBINS (Brussels; Host Institution)

- Study of collections (from Belgium and Africa)
- Collaboration with Olivier Lambert
- Fieldwork in Belgium and Peru
Complementarity between partners of the project (Supervisor, Fellow, and Partner Institution researchers)

- Similar general interests (macroevolution, phylogeny, radiations...)
- Focus on different groups of cetaceans (toothed whales vs baleen whales)

- Different methodologies (for phylogeny and disparity analyses)
- Specimens from different geographic areas
  Collections from northern and southern hemispheres
  Collaborative fieldwork in different regions (Australia, Belgium, Peru)
2. Submission process

- Straightforward
- Submission form = about 45 pages
- Many explanations and comments available in the application system
- Considering the number of persons and institutions involved at various degrees by the proposal, about one month needed for filling the application form

First talk about the proposal in August 2014 - proposal submitted in September 2014 – project accepted in February 2015 (and starting in November 2015)

- Good coordination necessary, and therefore good contacts with the host and partner institutions more than needed (including administrative tasks after acceptation)
3. Evaluation

Criteria:

a. **Excellence**

Strengths: good presentation, quality of supervisors and applicant (including publication record)

Weaknesses: lack of details for the transferable skills and practical aspects of the training

b. **Impact**

Strengths: potential to enhance the scientific profile of the applicant, well planned outreach activities and publication of the results in high impact journals

Weaknesses: /
c. Implementation

Strengths: convincing work plan, quality of the facilities in host institutions, complementary knowledge of scientists involved

Weaknesses: management structure not enough detailed

Support from different institutions and researchers (with support letters) most likely positively noted
4. Major advantages of the Marie Curie Global Fellowships

- High **flexibility**!! (an Austrian researcher finishing his postdoc in Japan, who will start with 2 years in Australia, whereas being officially hosted by a Belgian institution...)

  Opportunity to work globally

  Links with several research institutions (incl. museums and universities)

- At the **European level** (no need to come back to a specific country, especially useful for highly mobile researchers or for researchers whose research field is not well established in every European country)

- 3 years, not bad...
5. Potential issues

- Once the project starts, the 12-month return period (here in Belgium) is mandatory (or the host organization has to reimburse the total amount received!)

=> You may miss other opportunities...

- Possible mismatch between tax system of the country of the host institution (here Belgium) and living costs in the country of the partner institution (here Australia)