

# APPLYING FOR A MARIE CURIE INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP: THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

**Jonas Juan-Mateu**

**Postdoctoral researcher, ULB-Center for Diabetes Research**



# My profile and MSCA project

## My project:

'Alternative Splicing Networks in Pancreatic Beta Cells' (BETA-SPLICENET)

Individual Fellowships 2014 (IF)

Panel: Life Sciences

- **Why:** international mobility, renowned fellowship, well-paid
- **When:** PhD + ½ year post-doc
- **Where:** from Barcelona (Hospital Sant Pau- UB) to Brussels (UCL)
- **What:** from Muscular Dystrophies (Barcelona) to Type 1 Diabetes (Brussels)

# 1. Thinking about the proposal

## Am I suitable for a Marie Curie IF?

- Yes! (if you have a PhD or 4 years of research experience)
- What really matters is your proposal and not so much your CV

## When starting to think about the proposal?

- Now! Takes time to find the appropriate host group and to write the proposal
- Some universities have specific regulations and deadlines

## Where to go?

- Extremely important choice (weighted in the evaluation report)
- Balance competence/experience between you and the host group (define a win-win situation)

## Who to contact (“scientist in charge”)?

- Also extremely important choice (CV of supervisor/host group is weighted in the evaluation report)
- Role of research networks (someone that can provide you with future collaborators)

## **2. Writing the proposal**

### **Start writing with enough time**

- Almost 1 month > 30 pages: every word counts

### **Read other (successful and unsuccessful) proposals**

### **Contact ‘MC professionals’**

- Research managers from the host institution can help you to understand the evaluation criteria and will be extremely important during the negotiation period

### **Read carefully the guide on how to complete the proposal and write each section accordingly**

### **Sell yourself**

- Don't be modest but be honest
- Emphasize your skills that would be important for the project and for the host group
- Define a project that connects to your previous experience but that can help to boost your career

## 2. Writing the proposal

### **Follow precisely the structure of the template**

- Bullet points facilitate the work of the evaluator and provide an answer for each sub-item
- The length of each section should correlate with its weight in the evaluation report

### **Always seek for novelty, originality, credibility and appropriateness**

- Choose a novel/original research topic, innovative methods/approaches, combine different fields, multidisciplinary
- Design a credible proposal with a coherent workplan with deliverables, risks and alternative approaches
- Explain the complementarity between you and the host group and how this will impact on a successful project

# 3. Structure of the proposal: important points

## 1. Summary

## 2. Excellence

- ii. Quality, innovative aspects and credibility of the research **50% weight**
- iii. Clarity and quality of transfer of knowledge/training
- iv. Quality of the supervision and the hosting arrangements
- v. Capacity of the researcher to reach a position of professional maturity in research

## 3. Impact

**30% weight**

- i. Enhancing research-related human resources, skills, and working conditions to realise the potential of individuals and to provide new career perspectives
- ii. Effectiveness of the proposed measures for communication and results dissemination

## 4. Implementation

- i. Overall coherence and effectiveness of the work plan **20% weight**
- ii. Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures
- iii. Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)
- iv. Competences, experience and complementarity of the participating organisations

## 5. CV of the experienced researcher

## 6. Ethical aspects

## 7. Letters of commitment of partner organisations

# 3. Structure of the proposal: important points

## 2. Excellence **50% weight**

- **Quality:** Emphasize the importance of the questions you want to address for the specific scientific area
- **Innovation:** Highlight novel and creative aspects of your approach compared to the state of the art
- **Credibility:** Provide evidence on the potential feasibility of the approach. Preliminary data if you have any. Link the project with your previous experience
- **Clarity of training:** Explain how you will get trained to obtain new competences
- **Potential outcomes of your project:** impacts on science (your field and other fields), on society, on Europe...
- **Explain how this will open up career possibilities for you:** explain your plans for the future, how this project would be a staircase in your career, the possibilities to find a position in the future, obtain a network of collaborators, gain expertise in this particular domain...

# 3. Structure of the proposal: important points

## 3. Impact **30% weight**

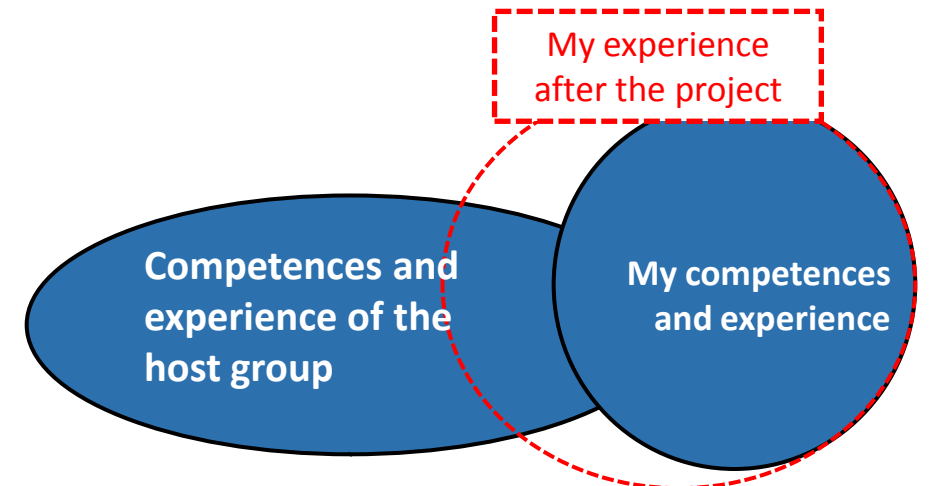
- **Impact on your career:** Explain how the fellowship will contribute to the development of your scientific independence and help to fill a leadership position in the future (develop expertise, collaborate with senior scientists, participate in conferences, etc)
- **Impact on European society:** Describe the potential of your project on novel methodologies, potential industrial impact, synergies between national activities, bridge of disciplinary fields or groups, ect. How your project will benefit the EU excellence and competitiveness because it will reinforce....



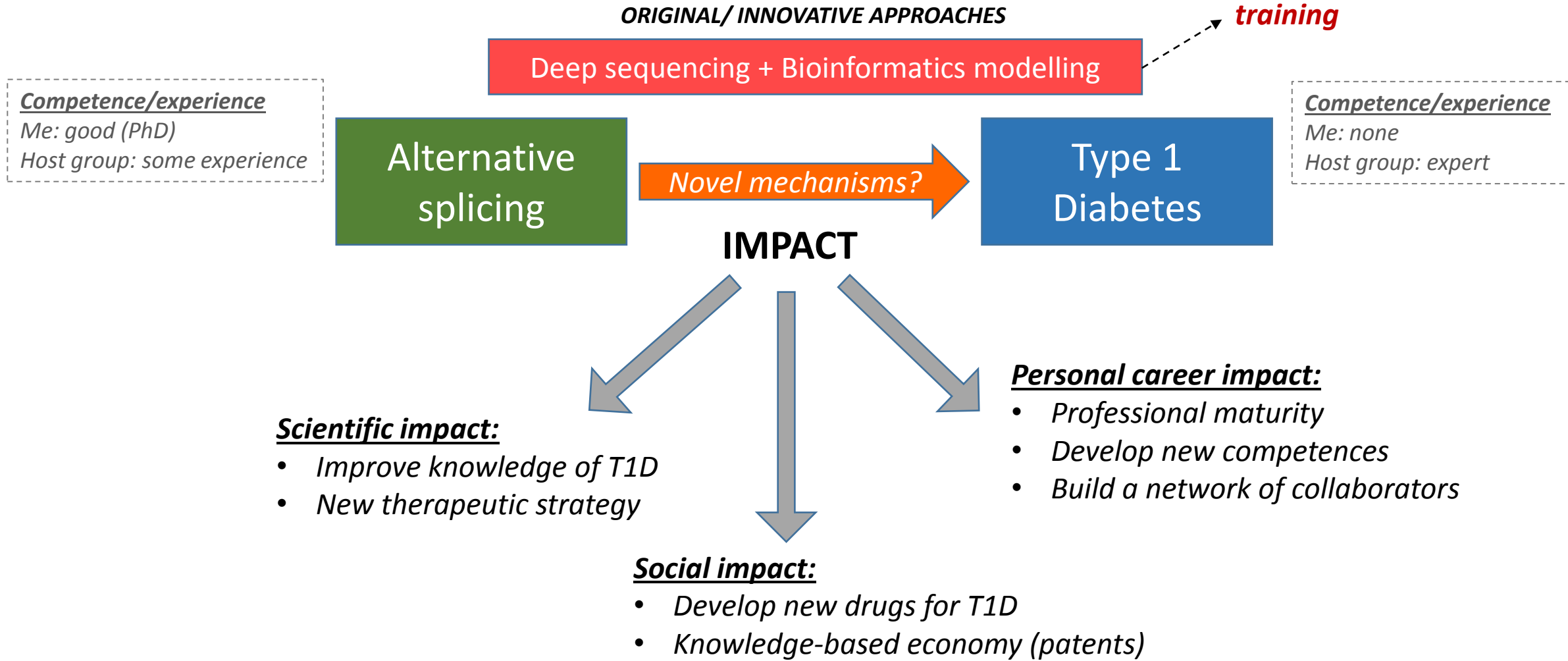
# 3. Structure of the proposal: important points

## 4. Implementation 20% weight

- **Coherence and effectiveness:** Provide a rational work plan with well defined tasks, death lines, deliverables, control points, etc.. Design a Gantt chart
- **Appropriateness of management:** Describe the organization of your project including meetings, quarterly reports, supervision, risks, alternative approaches, training courses, etc.
- **Appropriateness of the institutional environment:** what intellectual and technical infrastructure the institute has that is relevant for carrying out your project
- **Competences and complementarity of the participating organizations:** how the fellowship will be beneficial for both you and the host group. Check your CV and the host organization to identify complementarities



# SCHEMATIC SUMMARY OF MY MSCA PROJECT



**Merci**  
**Bedankt**  
**Danke**