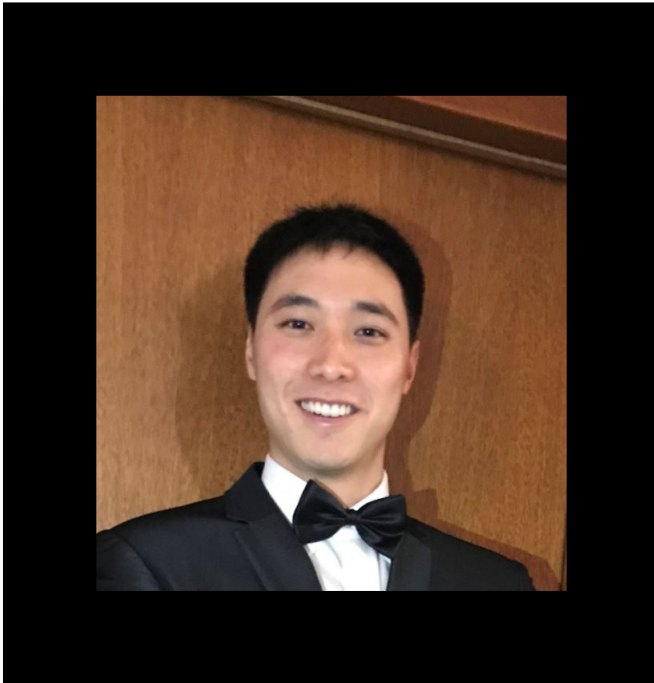# Why I applied for the MSCA IF and how I did it

Dr. Terry Chien-Jen Yang

30/04/2020

CSIRO Energy, Newcastle, Australia

My Background

- BEng (2010) & PhD (2016) in Photovoltaic Eng. (Solar Cells) at **UNSW** in Sydney, Australia.

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow** at PV-Lab, **EPFL** in Neuchâtel, Switzerland (June 2017 - May 2019).

- Now - postdoctoral research fellow in the Solar Technologies Group at **CSIRO Energy** in Newcastle, Australia (since August 2019).

- **>9 years** of experience in **solar cell** research.

- (Co-)author of **>23 journal articles**.

- Total funding, grants, honours & awards: **>€240,000**.

Why I applied for the MSCA IF?

1. Always wanted to live and explore Europe for a few years. On my **"bucket list"**.

2. Great addition to my CV having spent 9 years in Australia for the BEng and PhD degrees at UNSW in solar cell research. Usually PhD pursuing a career in academia will do **2-3** postdoc placements before a permanent position.

3. Opportunity to work at one of the **top research** institutions for solar cell research.

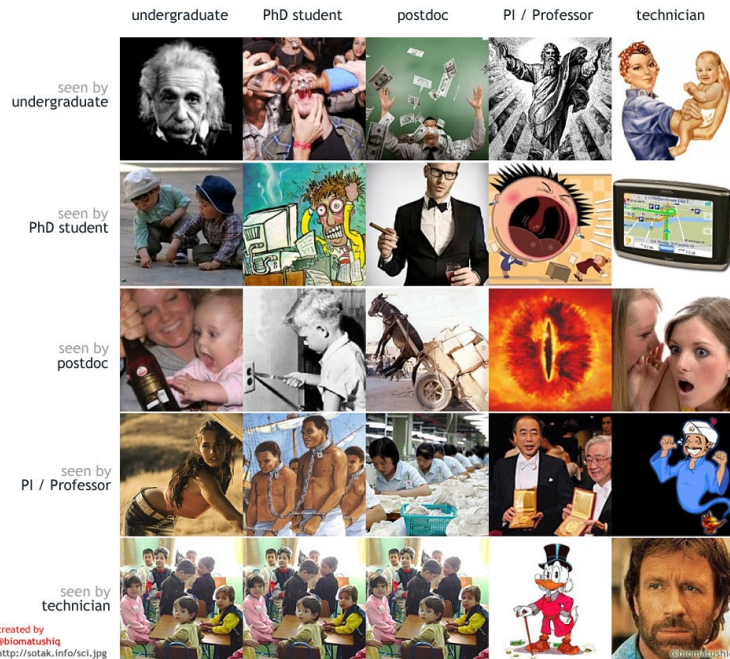# Applying for a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship

10 Top Tips

1. Start early (deadline is **10th September 2020**), but many institutions have internal deadlines 2 weeks before that!

   Deadline: 10 / 09 / 2020

10 Top Tips

How people in science see each other

2. Find a **host/principle investigator (PI)/supervisor** Prof., A/Prof., or Lecturer from a European Institution. Preferably one that has hosted a Marie Sklodowska-Curie postdoc fellow in the past.

- Discuss the project with your **host/PI**.

- Direct you to the people from the host institution research office, which usually provide internal information on how to apply for the grant.

- Introduce you to people, e.g. **postdocs, secretary** to help you.

- Provide a short CV needed for a section in the proposal.

- Provide secondments or overseas institution (global fellowships).

- Provide feedback once you have written the first draft proposal.

- Note: your **host/PI** will be busy, so please try to minimize their work. Read through all the necessary information beforehand.

10 Top Tips

3. Find an **existing proposal**. One that was successful or very close to the cut off mark >85/100.

10 Top Tips

4. Choose a **topic** that you are familiar with, but doesn't have to be your exact PhD topic.

5. When writing **PLEASE** make the topic **understandable** to readers/reviewers who may not be in your field. **I cannot stress this enough**. Most of us researchers (me included) get lost in our fields which can be so specific that we tend to forget that others won't have a clue what we're talking about. My suggestion, start **broadly** (i.e. what is the **big picture?**) and then get **technical**.

10 Top Tips
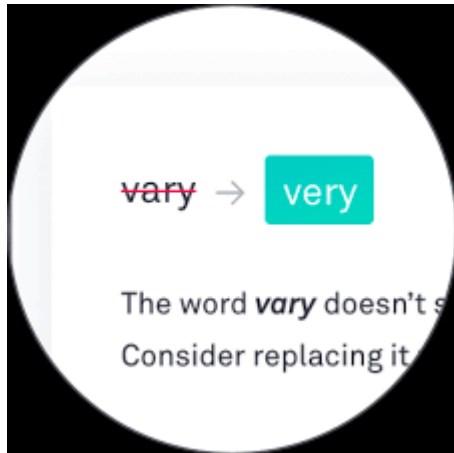
6. Make your proposal **stand out**. Pretty pictures, clean graphs, etc.

7. Make sure you answer **all** the points in the proposal template.

8. Find people (host/PI, friends, colleagues, paid proof-readers, etc) to read over it and provide **comments** and **correct errors**. No **spelilng mistkaes** or **grammatical errors**.

10 Top Tips

9. Submit **early** because you can do this **multiple times**. Only the most **recent** upload will be the one that counts. Avoid the issue that the online submission system does not jam 1 hour before the deadline.

10. Don't be **upset** if your proposal is not successful. The success rate is **≈14%**, that means the majority of applicants will not be successful. And remember you're already competing with the best PhDs around the world.

MARIE CURIE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Good Luck!

Let's get writing